

Leadership – Transitional vs. Transformative

Erv Snyder to First Parish Church, Brunswick, Maine

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When I arrived at college my goal was to emerge as an engineer. About 6 weeks later after my early encounters with integral calculus it became very clear that an engineering degree was not in my future. Several changes of major later I graduated with a bachelor's degree in history. All of my life I have read and studied history, stories about world events, biographies and autobiographies. I love stories. What they tell about the people who influenced their communities, stories about leadership.

Chris is going to read to us from Judges, chapter 7, about Gideon. Before Israel had kings, the leaders of the Israelite tribes were called judges and Gideon was one of them. When the Midianites decided that they had had enough of the pesky Israelites they, with their allies, assembled a large army to eliminate those troublesome clans. The word went out to all of the tribes of Israel and defenders gathered. The story is that, as with Moses, when Gideon received God's call to lead and save the Israelites he tried to decline the role. After arguing with God and receiving a sign through wet and dry wool fleeces Gideon finally accepted the assignment. Then he received further instructions from God about the size of the Israelite army.

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Several months ago our Inquiring Minds reading group read and discussed Doris Kerns Goodwin's recent book *Leadership In Turbulent Times*. Previously Doris had published single biographies about four of our presidents, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson. To write this book she went back and analyzed what it was about each of these presidents' actions that had lasting impacts. She identified two seemingly antithetical types of leadership, transactional and transformative actions. She wrote: "*Transactional leaders operate pragmatically. They appeal to the self-interest of their followers, using quid pro quos, bargains,*

trades, and rewards to solicit support and influence the behavior of their followers.

Transformational leaders inspire followers to identify with something larger than themselves - the organization, the community, the region, the country - and finally, to the more abstract identification with the ideals of that country. Such leaders call for sacrifice in the pursuit of moral principles and higher goals, validating such altruism by looking beyond the present moment to frame a future worth striving for.” In the story about Gideon we have seen the example of his transactional leadership.

In November, 1731, about 44 years before our revolution Robert Rogers was born to Scotts-Irish immigrants, James and Mary Rogers, in the neighborhood of what is now Methuen, MA. Robert was the 4th of 5 brothers and a sister. In 1739, as the neighborhood of their 44 acre farm became too crowded for Robert’s father, the family loaded up an ox cart and headed 35 miles northwest into New Hampshire to the 365 acres which had been purchased and which homestead they named Mountalona in memory of the Mounterloney Mountains of Ireland that the parents had left sometime between 1728 and 1731.

During the long winter days father James read to the children from the few books in his spare library brought from Ireland. The titles included Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrim’s Progress and the Geneva Bible. That Geneva Bible was the most significant English translation of the Bible, preceding the King James version by 41 years. Perhaps young Robert heard the story of Gideon during his father’s readings. Robert never had any formal schooling. He did learn farming, trapping and hunting not only from his parents but also from the native Americans, including members of the Mohawk tribe who lived in the vicinity of Mountaloma. In 1748 the Roberts’ farm was burned by an Abanaki raiding party.

The French and Indian War covered the period 1754 and 1763. You may recall that in 1755 English General Braddock marched an English and colonial force west through Virginia intending to attack the French at Fort Duquesne in the vicinity of what is now Pittsburg. But Braddock had his forces decimated by the French and their allied native Americans because he was unwilling to adapt to the tactics employed by the native Americans and the French. In that same year, 1755, in the northern

colony 24 year old Robert Rogers enlisted 50 local men into the N. H. militia and became their captain. He became recognized by the local English officers for his successes in using small detachments of men including allied native Americans to defend English forces in the vicinity of Fort William Henry at the southern end of Lake George in New York. How many here remember the introduction of one of the first 3D movies – Ft Ti? It was about the French and Indian battles with the British around Fort Ticonderoga at the base of Lake Champlain.

Well, early in that war the fort was known under its French name as Carillon. During the years from 1755 – 1758 and even later Robert Rogers was given numerous assignments, some deep in the frozen winter, to lead scouting parties and small unit actions against the French at and near Carillon. In 1758 the English under General Abercrombie and Lord Howe suffered a major defeat trying to take the fort. The French abandoned the fort the following year. In any event, because of his service Rogers was promoted to the rank of Major in the British forces. In 1757 he was ordered to write standards for the type of small unit actions that he had become noted for. He defined 28 rules to guide the type of actions he pioneered. Those principles were designed to assist the unit known as “Rogers Rangers”. Those rules are still the foundation used in training and instructing U. S. Army Rangers. The list of those principles exemplified the transactional leadership that Robert Rogers employed.

As the French and Indian War continued Rogers was given additional assignments which took him along the southern shore of Lake Erie and as far as Detroit. While in that area he had an amicable meeting with Chief Pontiac, leader of the Ottawas, several years before Pontiac’s Rebellion. At the end of that war Rogers was assigned the task of taking the news of the British victory to the western most outpost at Fort Michilamackinac, a trip from eastern New York to the northwest boundary of Michigan which rivaled in distance that traveled later by explorers Lewis and Clark. Throughout this time Robert Rogers developed and employed elements of transactional leadership.

But his real passion, evidenced between the end of the French and Indian Wars and the Revolution was his transformational idea that settlers living east of the Allegany Mountains should give up folly of the idea of traveling west beyond the mountains to find wealth in gold and other minerals. They should rather travel west to reap the immense wealth presented by the rich farm lands in what would

later be known as our Northwest Territories – Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Illinois. Rogers was not very successful in persuading many of his transformational vision. Then the American Revolution occurred and as a Tory, sadly, he moved to England where he lived the remainder of his life telling stories of his wilderness adventures.

In her *Leadership* book Doris Goodwin recounted instances in which each of her 4 subjects used transactional leadership. Lincoln developed personal rapport with the soldiers in the Union army by broadly publishing to the men that his door was always open to them. Several hundred soldiers took him up on the offer. When he had opportunity to be with them such as at City Point with General Grant, Lincoln met with the men and ate the same rations which were available to them. It was in some measure due to that relationship and Lincoln's furlough policy at the time of the election that Abe was elected to his second term. Those were examples of some of the transactional leadership demonstrated by Abraham Lincoln.

Similarly, Teddy Roosevelt, when he served as the Police Commissioner in NYC, he would surprise patrolmen by confronting them on the streets of the city after dark and walking their midnight beat with them, establishing a new relationship between police leadership and line officers. Through such practices he was able to reign in some of the graft and corruption which had plagued the force. In further transactional leadership, as President he initiated and oversaw the peace conference in Portsmouth, N. H., which brought an end to the Russo/Japanese war. And through unprecedented mediation efforts he brought a settlement to the months long anthracite coal strike which threatened the ability to obtain winter heating fuel for Pennsylvania, New York and New England.

Franklin Roosevelt's transactional leadership started right off at the beginning of his first term with the "bank holidays" which were designed to reduce the liquidity pressures on local and national banks, the establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corp to give some of the unemployed meaningful opportunities to obtain income and his establishment of the "lend/lease" programs that assisted Great Britain and the Soviet Union to maintain their defenses during the early years of World War II. An example of Lyndon Johnson's transactional leadership was the steps he took shortly after being sworn to shepherd through the House and the Senate the major tax reform bill that JFK had designed but Kennedy was unable to get through the legislature.

However, as Kearns-Goodwin pointed out, each of these presidents will be ultimately remembered for one or more of the transformative programs which they promoted. The most obvious program of Abraham Lincoln's was the Emancipation Proclamation which literally altered the focus and the outcome of the war. Theodore Roosevelt's transformative leadership was embodied in the monopoly busting anti-trust laws which have enhanced competition in the market place to the benefit of all. One of FDR's transformative laws was the Social Security Act promoted by our neighbor, Francis Perkins, from right up the road here in Newcastle, ME. Lyndon Johnson's examples of transformative leadership include both the Civil Rights Act, another unreachable goal of JFK, and the Voting Rights Act. Kearns-Goodwin wrote, which I think is true of each of these 4 men, *"Indeed, if ever an argument can be made for the conclusive importance of the character and intelligence of the leader in fraught times, at home and abroad, it will come to rest on the broad shoulders of Franklin Delano Roosevelt."*

Over the past few months here at First Parish we have heard a lot about the experiences and leadership of Moses. Transactional examples of Moses leadership included the plagues; water, frogs, lice, flies, first born, etc.; with which he tried to convince the Pharaoh to release the Hebrews. There were the stories of the manna and quails which God had Moses instruct the people about how and when to harvest. But the transformative leadership which God provided for Moses was written on the tablets from Mt. Sinai – Thou shalt have no other gods before me, honour thy father and mother, thou shalt not kill, neither shalt thou steal, nor bear false witness against thy neighbor, nor covet thy neighbour's house or his field or anything that is thy neighbour's.

And we have stories of the transactional events by which the leadership of Jesus arrested the attention of his followers starting with his turning water into wine at the wedding feast; he restored the sight of the blind man; he told the ill man let down through the roof to take up his bed and walk; he granted the request of the Roman soldier restoring the soldier's daughter to health; he turned over the tables of the moneychangers and drove them from the temple for converting "My house [which] shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."; with two loaves and five fishes he fed the five thousand; he calmed the waves on the Sea of Galilee; he had the disciples put

their nets over the other side of the boat to bring in a large catch and there were other such examples of transactional leadership. Those stories led up to the climax of TRANSFORMATIONAL events unfolding with the Friday crucifixion and resolving in the Sunday morning words “He is not here, He is risen.”

Let’s conclude this morning considering how Jesus challenges each of us in how we see and deal with those around us here in our community, in our state, in our nation and in our world to be transformative influencers based on the concepts in these verses - - -

Blessed are the poor in spirit’: for their’s is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for their’s is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

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Let your light so shine before all, that they may see your good works, and glorify your God which is heaven.