



## MONDAY MANNA

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### LEADERSHIP BY INCARNATION

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In an earlier "Monday Manna" we discussed the concept of "Reproduction" as a key element of effective leadership. This is the first of a four-part series, expanding on this concept. The question is this: How does one accomplish this, since people do not merely follow worthy causes; they follow worthy leaders.

Part of the answer, I believe, can be found in the "principle of incarnation." Consider this perspective from Roger Mathis of the highly successful Best Western motel chain: "If you don't know where you are going, it doesn't make any difference how you get there. If you don't have a plan, it doesn't matter what you do. If you don't have an objective, who cares if you ever reach it? If you don't lead, then who will?"

One day, as I sat on the floor of a forest, I watched a colony of ants trying to move a small piece of bread that had fallen off my sandwich. They began with two, but soon there were eight or ten ants all attacking this tasty possibility. As I observed, the thought came to me, "What could I as a human being do to help these tiny creatures?"

The answer was simple, but also whimsical. I could become an ant so I could offer help to my fellow ants. Ants reproduce ants. We see this truth throughout nature: Bananas produce bananas. . Sour grapes produce sour grapes. Good produces good. Humans can only produce humans

In the same way, Leaders produce leaders. George B. Weber of the International Red Cross has said, "The future organization will not allow us to find our successors, or our successors to find theirs, through judgmental, ring-side seat choices. We have no more important task than to 'grow people.' Growing people is something that every manager, from the CEO to line-supervisors, should do and on which he or she should be evaluated."

This is hardly a new concept, however. In the New Testament of the Bible, the apostle Paul makes the following statement: "*There are a lot of people around who can't wait to tell you what you've done wrong, and there aren't many fathers willing to take the time and effort to help you grow up.... I'm not asking you to do anything that I'm not already doing myself*" (1 Corinthians 4:15, *The Message*).

The U.S. Army teaches its young combat lieutenants to give the toughest of all commands: "Follow me!" When you think about it, that is a tremendous responsibility – having people follow you, because they trust you and believe your example is worthy of being followed!

John 1:14 declares that Jesus provided the ultimate example of incarnational leadership. It says that He was "*made flesh*" – became a man – and made his dwelling or "pitched His tent" among us. Later in 2 Corinthians 5:21, it says of Jesus, "*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*" In other words, "He became what I am so that I might become what He is."

When you think of leadership, try to also start thinking in terms of incarnation – the idea of being a real-life example of what you are trying to accomplish. If your *actions* create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more – you are a leader.

*Taken and adapted from Take Two On Monday Morning, written weekly and published by Robert D. and Rick Foster. Permission to reproduce with proper credit is freely given and encouraged. For questions or comments, write: 29555 Goose Creek Rd, Sedalia, CO 80135, U.S.A., or fax (303) 647-2315.*

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## Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. What is your first response to this “principle of incarnation” in effective leadership?
2. Can you think of a good example of incarnational leadership that you have observed personally, someone you know, have worked for, or who perhaps has even mentored you? Describe this person.
3. Why are the words, “Follow me,” such a bold statement? As you look around your workplace, your city, even your nation, do you see many leaders that you think are worth following? Why do you think this is?
4. It has been said that the best leaders are those who will not ask people to do anything that they are unwilling to do themselves. In that respect, how would you evaluate the life of Jesus Christ?

*NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to consider some other passages that relate to idea of leadership by incarnation, look at:*

Moses, in Exodus, chapters 3 and 4

Jonathan, in 1 Samuel 19:1-7; 20:1-42

Philip, in Acts 8:26-39

Barnabas, in Acts 9:26-30; 11:19-26; 13:1-3