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Integrating Leadership Development with Ignatian Spirituality: A Model for Designing a Spiritual Leader Development Practice

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Abstract Prominent scholars note that current approaches to leader development in business are insufficient in at least three ways, and call for approaches that teach leaders to process and reflect, take personal ownership, and develop their capacities for both proficient and morally centered leadership. This paper explores three related research questions: Can we use evidence from management research to build a process-based model of leader self-development? Does the spiritual leadership literature offer implications for integrating moral development into such a model? Can spiritual development processes from a long-standing tradition be integrated, to further bring spiritual and moral development into leader development? Based on the leader and leadership development, spiritual leadership, and Ignatian literatures, one approach to building a spiritual leader development practice is presented. Using this model, business leaders are guided in forming leader development practices based on six categories of interdependent developmental activities: planning with discernment, experiences based on vocation, reflection including spiritual notes, assessment including examining present faults, education including on the lives of moral and effective leaders, and relationships including spiritual direction. This approach is differentiated from other approaches to leader development and to spiritual leadership. The role of the specific spiritual practices used here versus other traditions and the interplay of religion and spirituality in leader development are discussed, along with limitations of this approach and suggestions for further research.

Keywords Spiritual leadership · Leader development · Practices · Discernment · Vocation · Religion at work · Ignatius

> In every human being, there are two wolves constantly fighting. One is fear, and the other is love. [Which] of the wolves [wins the battle?] The one you feed. Always the one you feed. (Native American spiritual metaphor, as represented in Krueger 2014, p. 3)
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> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4: 18a).

Academics and writers call out that the world needs fundamental change in the ways business organizations are led, how they function, and the ends they pursue, away from fear-based, economics-primary, transactional cultures, values, and ends, and toward love-based, prosocial, balanced cultures, values, and ends (e.g., Avolio 2010; Bass and Bass 2008; Dembinski 2011; Fry 2003; Laloux 2014; Metcalf and Benn 2012). Several causal factors for the urgency of this need are invoked, including increasing global interdependence through ease of connection,

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interdependent local and global financial crises, decreasing worker well-being, growth in marginalized secondary labor markets, and profound environmental crisis.

Business organizations, it is argued, require leaders with the highest levels of consciousness and tolerance for complexity in order to be able to envision and enact needed changes (Kegan and Lahey 2010; Laloux 2014; Sanders et al. 2003). Arguably the most powerful institutions currently are business organizations, in their collective influence over work lives and how the world's resources are used (Metcalf and Benn 2012; Schuurman 2004). Can business leaders learn to "feed the right wolf" in order to lead business toward contributing positively to the common good, while continuing the work of fulfilling needs for goods and services that are efficiently produced? This would require moral courage and "higher aims" (Khurana 2007). Thus, as respected leadership scholar Bruce Avolio (2010, p.743) said, "…the Holy Grail of leadership [is] establishing and developing the moral center in leaders…."

In his review of leadership development, Avolio (2010, p. 740) also stated, "No one in their right mind would use a new prescription drug if it were produced using the current processes that masquerade as leadership development programs." Repeatedly noted gaps in business leadership development and business education, including failure to develop self-aware, reflective, moral leaders (Bennis and O'Toole 2005; Khurana 2007) and to get beyond understanding and comprehension to application, reflection, and action (Rubin and Dierdorff 2009), seem to reinforce the notion that current approaches to leader development are, at best, not sufficient.

Much of leader development focuses on competency models, which identify lists of needed qualities, skills, and behaviors. Instead, Avolio (2010, p. 762) argued, the focus should be on "…teaching leaders and followers to process and reflect, as opposed to developing a particular style or behavior…." Competency models may be helpful and many leaders may relate well to them, however they are not sufficient for at least two reasons. There is often a gap between what is expected, as represented by lists of competencies, and leaders' understanding of how to develop the qualities and competencies. And, competency models encourage leaders rely on an external entity to determine how they should develop, yet personal ownership increases readiness and motivation for leader development, thus making it more effective and sustainable (Avolio and Hannah 2009; DeRue and Ashford 2010a; Ryan and Deci 2000).

These concerns about how leaders develop are interrelated. If leaders are encouraged to focus their development on organizationally determined lists of competencies, or even on research-identified lists, it may encourage leaders to rely on others for direction, not take personal responsibility. Since the purpose of these externally defined lists is primarily the best interests of the specific organization that developed them, often the common good, morality, and altruistic-love-directed outcomes are not included. At best, development work that directs leaders' attention away from their core humanity, toward a list of institutionally desired behaviors and norms, leaves to these institutions whether leader development is morally grounded. Directing leader development toward higher aims requires a different approach.

That leader development is embedded in human development and identity is widely acknowledged (Day et al. 2009; Kegan and Lahey 2010; Petriglieri and Petriglieri 2010). Human identity and development occurs in cycles, often in response to triggers, and can evolve to higher stages, toward which people are motivated when they feel personal ownership and autonomy (Kegan and Lahey 2010; Klein et al. 2001; Pratt et al. 2006; Rothausen et al., in press; Ryan and Deci 2000). Similarly, leader development is "triggered by positive and negative moments" (Avolio 2010, p. 757). If triggers are externally derived competencies, development will be directed toward these external criteria. If triggers are internally directed to be based in love, development will be directed toward higher ends; the moral center is, by definition, internal.

Leader self-development is "a process in which leaders take personal responsibility for initiating, sustaining, and evaluating growth in their own leadership capacities and in their conceptual frames about the conduct of leadership" (Boyce et al. 2010, p. 162). This approach makes room for the integration of development built on a foundation of ego-transcendence, love, or God. It also leaves to each leader to discern, in interaction with other organization members, which organizational missions to forward (ends) and how (means).

In order for the moral center to be accessible to the leader in daily business decision-making and interactions with others, I argue that intentional practice is required. Just as a leader develops a practice of physical exercises for the body, which in turn also benefits the mind, heart, and spirit, so a practice of spiritual exercises benefit the spirit, and also the body, mind, and heart of the leader. Therefore, I focus on leader development *practice* in the sense of *a coherent set of activities that is intentionally and regularly enacted by an individual*. One of the powerful functions of practice in this sense is that it can act as a trigger to remind individuals of their goals, ideals, or plans, in a way that is integrated into daily experience.

The purpose of this research is to explore literatures that are likely to shed light on such practice, in order to develop a model that addresses the three imperatives of leader development identified earlier: guiding leaders toward a process of leader self-development that includes reflection

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and integrates development of the moral center. The overarching research question, then, is how we can offer sound, evidence-based models to help business leaders build their own practices of leader development as ongoing processes that include reflection and moral centering. Several more specific research questions are developed below. In exploring these questions, this paper breaks ground as the first paper to explicitly integrate social science and humanities perspectives on specific categories of leader development and spiritual development practices, in order to support business leaders in developing capacities for proficient, moral leadership.[1]

Leader Development as Process, Reflection, and Moral Centering

Although the study of leadership in management science has a nearly century-long history (see reviews including Avolio et al. 2009; Bass and Bass 2008; Gardner et al. 2010; Jackson and Parry 2011), the subfield of leadership development is less than a quarter as old (Avolio et al. 2009; Avolio 2010; Day et al. 2014). Nonetheless, scholars have explored processes commonly employed in leadership development programs, as well as what makes such activities successful (Day 2012; Day et al. 2014; DeRue and Wellman 2009). The first research question explored in this paper is whether this literature can be used as a foundation to build an evidenced-based, process-oriented model to guide intentional, ongoing engagement in leader self-development.

Negative evaluation of the current state of leadership development is, in part, due to the focus on instrumentality over purpose (e.g., Avolio 2010; Bennis and O'Toole 2005; Khurana 2007). The implicit purpose of business leadership may have become making profits short-term for shareholders, rather than a balanced perspective that focuses on longer term higher aims that contribute to the common good (Goodpaster 2011; Khurana 2007). This implicit perspective is adopted not only in practice but in management research, where most often "good" leadership is effective leadership; that is, a good leader is one who influences others toward action, in pursuit of a vision or to have the particular impact the leader wants. Assessment of the worthiness of the vision or impact is left out. As Jackson and Parry (2011, p. 113) put it, "Purpose is so fundamentally tied up with leadership that it is almost invariably subsumed or taken for granted by leadership scholars." Thus, the purposes for business leadership are seldom explicit or examined, nor is the impact of leaders' purpose on followers or the organization. This is despite the growing recognition that the ends to which we lead in business are vital and in dispute.

Higher stages of spiritual development can shift one's perception of the purpose of life and life's work, and these stages comprise the highest levels of human development, beyond stages described in models of personality or even moral development (Avolio 2010; Kegan and Lahey 2010; Laloux 2014). Therefore, spiritual development holds the potential to support and equip business leaders for the moral complexity of the challenges they face in balancing economic profit with higher ends for the common good. In the last decade, management scientists have developed models of spiritual leadership (e.g., Fry 2003). The second research question explored in this paper is whether findings from this literature can be integrated into an evidenced-based, process-oriented model for leader development.

In addition, wisdom about practices for inspiring spiritual and moral development come from theological, philosophical, and religious traditions, some of which have compiled evidence of their effectiveness for spiritual growth over millennia. In order to provide business leaders with knowledge about how to develop not just the shorter-term effectiveness of their influence, but also how to develop so that "where" they are leading themselves and others is morally sound over the long term, these rich traditions are a treasure trove. In this paper, I select one such tradition to explore—the Christian tradition of St. Ignatius of Loyola's spiritual principles and practices. This tradition was selected because Ignatius's focus on human development dovetails with the focus on human development that is a theoretical foundation for research on leader development (Day et al. 2009; Kegan and Lahey 2010). Ignatius has been deemed "a classic master of Christian spirituality," and his tradition has impacted spiritual development for 450 years, into the present day (Gnass 1991, p. 4). The third research question explored in this paper is whether spiritual development practices from the Ignatian tradition fit with and can be integrated into an evidenced-based, process-oriented model for leader development practice.

In sum, in this paper I explore three specific research questions. Is there enough evidence from management research on leader development to build a process-based model of leader self-development? Are there practices in the spiritual leadership literature that could weave into a process-based model, in order to bring spiritual development into leader development? Can spiritual practices from a religious tradition be integrated, in order to further bring spiritual development into leader development? Below, I treat these questions in this order.

After reviewing these literatures, below, in order to address these research questions, I discuss the contributions

[1] I wish to thank an anonymous reviewer, who originally made this claim for the work in this paper.

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of this research, the role of the specific spiritual practices used here versus other traditions, the interplay of religion and spirituality in leader development, and broader implications of religion and spirituality in business, in terms both of leaders and of management. Finally, I discuss limitations of this approach and suggest some areas for further work on spiritual leader development.

Definitions, Terms, and Caveats

Before embarking on these efforts, a caveat and additional definitions are important. In bringing literatures together across disciplines, it is important that I disclose "where I sit" professionally. I am a management professor and a social sciences-trained researcher, and only a (very) amateur theologian. Therefore, although I am comfortable interpreting social science research on leadership and leader development, I have less background with respect to theology and Ignatian spiritual practices. For example, not being a theologian, the finer points of faith and definitions of God are best handled by others. My intention here is to encourage development of leaders with their spirituality as a foundation; in other words in relationship to a "higher power," to love, or to God. Similarly, below I discuss evil and the impetus to commit it. Ignatian scholars and authors often refer to evil as caused by "the enemy," malicious spirits, or Satan. I do not parse out differences among these concepts, rather just as I use love and God interchangeably, I generally refer to the enemy, as this term appears often in the Ignatian literature I reviewed. These issues are discussed further in the section on discernment of spirits, and I also examine religion-spirituality and sacred-secular dualities more extensively in the discussion.

For purposes of this article, the term *spiritual leader development* is used to differentiate the overall approach I use from other approaches to leader development. This approach weaves together intentional leader self-development, process including reflection, and explicit focus on higher purpose through spiritual engagement. Spiritual leader development practices, as advanced here, are anchored in the research and practice literature studies on leader development in management (e.g., Day et al. 2014; Rothausen 2011, 2015), the spiritual leadership literature (e.g., Fernando 2011; Fry 2003; Sanders et al. 2003), and Ignatius's principles and practices for spiritual development (Brackley 2004; Gnass 1991; Silf 1999), for reasons articulated above.

Finally, in many literatures, the term "leadership" is used in at least two primary ways: to designate those in formal *positions of authority*, and to designate individuals who engage in a *process of initiative and influence* as they interact with others in working toward common goals, regardless of formal position. I adopt this second meaning of leadership, wherein individuals are leaders who have the two vital capacities to enact internally originated initiative and to have influence with people working together toward common goals, regardless of formal authority (Jackson and Parry 2011, pp. 14–15). In this sense, those in formal positions of authority may not be leaders, in that they may simply be following the person in formal authority over them. Thus, the focus here is on leadership throughout organizations, at all levels, with or without formal authority, and not on the formal governance of, or authority within, the organization.

Leader Development: Concepts, Activities, and Processes

Management researchers differentiate leader development from leadership development, although both increase capacity for leadership. Leader development is intrapersonal, occurring within the leader. Leadership development is interpersonal, involving the developing leader in relation to others in a specific context (including followers, who may also be leaders in that and other contexts). Leadership development has been conceptualized as encompassing leader development (Day et al. 2014). However, my view is different from this emerging conventional wisdom within leadership and leader development literatures. Along with others, I see leader development as a process of human development that occurs through cycles of experience with leadership, which can be strengthened and accelerated by reflecting on these experiences intentionally and supplementing them with other practices. This view is in line with models of cyclical human development over time. Individuals come to make sense of themselves and their life stories or trajectories as they learn from experiences across life domains in social interaction and relationships, in cycles of attempts to build meaningful and enjoyable lives and coherent identities (e.g., Pratt et al. 2006; Rothausen et al. in press).

Similarly, people develop leader identities, as well as capacities for leadership, through cycles of experiences with leadership in specific contexts, that is, through leadership development (DeRue and Ashford 2010b; Petriglieri and Petriglieri 2010). In this view, leader development anchors and encompasses leadership development. Leader development is the inner work that, when done intentionally, can guide and organize the leader's efforts toward leadership development. In fact, I would argue more strongly that it is this lack of inner, personal discernment in practice—a lack of taking personal ownership for the direction or larger purpose of one's own development—that may be one major cause of the failures of leader

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development noted above. This fits with the view that leaders evolve from transactional to transformational to transcendental leadership, as they develop an increasingly internal locus of control, and through spirituality (Sanders et al. 2003). Without this inner work and grounding, leadership is developed according to the values and ends of external organizations, professions, or societies, rather than deeply spiritual, personally meaningful, and humane values and ends.

No overarching framework for leader development emerges from management research. Some reviews differentiate experience-based and organization-structured programs as the two main types of leader development programs (Day 2012). However, overlapping these two types, specific activity categories can be identified. Some authors suggest categories of activities that are at the core of leader development (e.g., Day 2012; Rothausen 2011, 2015; Snook 2008) including: Planning for development and experiences; Experiences leading; Reflection on experiences; Assessments; Education about leadership; and Relationships (PER–AER). Although it is possible to combine or further parse these six categories, Rothausen (2011, 2015) demonstrated robustness of these categories for building a practice of leader self-development.

The PER–AER categories are interrelated, as illustrated in Fig. 1, which also summarizes the discussion of each element below. It has been estimated that 70 % of development occurs through experiences (Noe 2010; Yost and Plunkett 2009). However, as common observation of leaders may suggest, and as research demonstrates, not everyone learns from experience and in fact may even make meaning from experience that is harmful or wrong (Marquardt et al. 2009; Yeo and Marquardt 2015). Therefore, other activates are needed to convert experience into learning and development. Setting meaningful, personalized intentions and goals within larger development plans builds readiness for developing from experiences, and reflection feeds back into development as well as into readiness for the next experience (Kolb and Kolb 2005; Snook 2008). The primary leader development cycle, then, comprises planning followed by experience followed by reflection (PER), with reflection feeding back into planning, with assessments, education, and relationships (AER) supporting and influencing these cycles, through the challenge, learning, feedback, and support that comes from these activities (Van Velsor et al. 2010).

Most people usually learn more from *experiences* when engaged intentionally, as through goal or intention setting. This element is even more powerful when the experiences are chosen for, or relate to, a personal purpose or mission, thus being more meaningful to the leader (Avolio and Hannah 2009; DeRue and Ashford 2010aa). For most people, they also learn when they intentionally reflect on experiences (Kolb and Kolb 2005; Snook 2008).

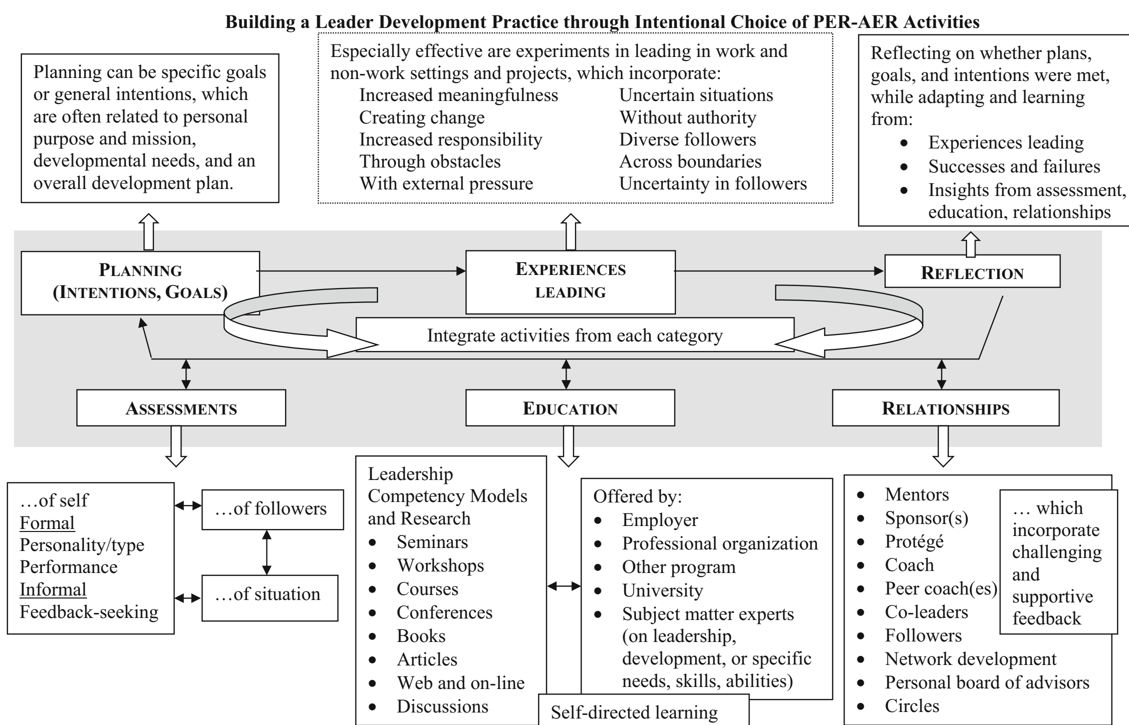

Fig. 1 Building a leader development practice through intentional choice of PER–AER activities

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Development is also supported through education, feedback, and support through assessments and relationships (Boyatzis 1994; Van Velsor et al. 2010). Overall, evidence suggests that more, and more effective, development integrates several of these six categories of leader development activities (DeRue and Wellman 2009; Orvis and Ratwani 2010). The six categories represent distinct foci for leader development work, which together comprise an evidenced-based, pragmatic, interconnected taxonomy for leaders, from which to design a leader development practice consisting of a set of interrelated activities. That is, regularly and intentionally engaging each of the six types of activities comprises one approach to leader development.

Assessment is collecting data about a leader and giving back a summary as feedback; data may be collected from the leader or from others, and may be formal or informal. *Personality-related assessments* are used for understanding different styles; motivations and values; and team, work, and leadership styles. These assessments can highlight how followers differ from the leader, thus contributing to emotional intelligence through self- and social awareness (Boyatzis 1994; Goleman et al. 2002). *Performance assessments*, especially 360-degree assessments, are often used in leader development and can help leaders see how they are performing on key leadership competencies such as persuasion, morality, relationship-building, and listening, from the perspectives of others who work with them across organizational levels (Day et al. 2014; Van Velsor et al. 2010). For self-initiated development, *feedback-seeking* may also be especially important in leadership learning over time (Ashford 1986).

Ongoing *education* is a key part of adult development. Formal instruction, seminars, courses, workshops, and conferences have long been part of leader development. Self-initiated education about leadership can include these, and ongoing programs of reading, writing (e.g., journaling), and talking about leadership, and observing other leaders (Jackson and Parry 2011). Customized learning can be sought for specific developmental or competency-related needs.

Relationships important for leader development include relationships with co-leaders and followers during leadership experiences, as well as explicitly developmental relationships such as in action learning teams and with mentors and coaches, and generally better outcomes are related to having more of these relationships (DeRue and Ashford 2010b; Gardner et al. 2010; Van Velsor et al. 2010). Other types of developmental relationships can include peer mentors and coaches, group mentoring, sponsors, and networks, as well as personal "boards of directors," advisors, or "learning circles" of leaders (Bolen 1999; Boyatzis 1994; Van Velsor et al. 2010; Yost and Plunkett 2009).

Planning can focus leaders' attention on qualities they want to develop, guide intentional selection and customization of experiences, and inform later reflection on successes and failures (Kolb and Kolb 2005; Snook 2008). Planning as used here can be specific or general, through specific goals or general intentions. For example, a goal could be to master a specific body of knowledge about leadership and an intention could be to lead with more compassion for self and others. Both can impact how one enters into and reflects on experiences. The most effective development plans are individualized and learner-controlled (Noe 2010), which is also true for goals—higher commitment to and involvement with a goal relates positively to goal achievement (Klein et al. 2001). Identification with and integration of goals leads to sustainability of the resulting behaviors (Ryan and Deci 2000). Readiness for leader development has been identified as an important, though often overlooked, element of leader development (Avolio and Hannah 2009), and personalized, meaningful goals can increase readiness by tying larger purposes for work life into anticipated leadership experiences, making them more meaningful.

Reflection is a foundation of adult learning and development (Kolb and Kolb 2005; Marquardt et al. 2009). Reflection can occur or be facilitated in a number of ways, including writing and journaling, peer coaching, after-event reviews, forming goals and leader development plans, forming leadership-learning portfolios, preparing for mentor meetings, with action-learning teams, and receiving assessments (Ellis et al. 2006; Marquardt et al. 2009; Scott 2010; Van Velsor et al. 2010; Yost and Plunkett 2009). Reflection facilitates assessing progress on goals and intentions, as well as alignment with identity and well-being, adapted by the learning that is occurring through experiences and other PER–AER elements.

In practice, these activities are often directed by organizations. Many of the activity categories originated from development methods used by organizations (Noe 2010; Rothausen 2011). However, as discussed above, there is emerging interest in leader self-development, in which development responsibility resides with the developing leader (Boyce et al. 2010; Orvis and Ratwani 2010). This leads to higher levels of well-being and readiness to develop (DeRue and Ashford 2010a; Ryan and Deci 2000), and also could encourage explicit consideration of values and uniqueness, creating a space for integration of spirituality into leader development.

In conclusion, with regard to the first research question, there is enough evidence from the management research on leader development to develop an evidenced-based, process-oriented model for leader self-development practice that includes reflection, as called for by Avolio (2010) and others. Rather than repeated efforts to pin down "the" list

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of competencies required for leadership, this model focuses on supporting leaders in a practice that can help them develop as the kinds of leaders they want to be. Above, I develop one such model, the PER–AER model, and other models are likely possible as well. Explication of each of the six PER–AER categories is beyond the scope of this paper, but many examples and variations can be found in the literature cited above in this section (e.g., Van Velsor et al. 2010).

It should be noted that the PER–AER model overlaps conceptually with action learning and experiential learning literatures. PER–AER is similar to engaging a process of experiential learning (Kolb and Kolb 2005; Yeo and Marquardt 2015), for the specific purpose of developing one's capacity for leadership. As listed above under the categories experience, relationships, and reflection, engaging action learning teams may be a key practice for some leaders. Action learning consists of collaboration in a team of diverse individuals, over time, on a particular problem or project, and with intentional planning, communication, and learning processes built in, often with a coach for the team as it works on the problem or project (Marquardt et al. 2009).

A notable gap in much social science literature on leader development, experiential learning, and action learning is that there is little discussion of the morality of leaders, or the purposes toward which they lead. However, spiritual leadership literatures exist, which have been influenced by the humanities. I now turn to the second research question, whether findings from the literature on spiritual leadership, and models related to it, can be woven into a model for a process-based leader development practice, such as PER–AER.

Spiritual Leadership

Transformational leadership theory has dominated research in recent decades (Bass, 2008; Gardner et al. 2010; Jackson and Parry 2011). This theory has roots in a concept called 'transforming leadership,' which originally explicitly included moral elements, including the moral development of followers. However, it may have lost much of its moral power as it became 'transformational leadership' and "placed a radically transforming concept in the service of institutional practice…[changing purpose from] radical transformation…to achievement of institutional goals" (Bass and Bass 2008, p. 646). Perhaps in part to fill the resulting space, new theories have emerged and gained more prominence, such as spiritual leadership (Fry 2003), which build on long-standing traditions from the humanities on ethical leadership (Cuilla 2012).

Authors reviewing spirituality and leadership research note that the field is in its infancy, and that there is a lack of consensus overall, and even about the terms spirituality and leadership (Avolio et al. 2009; Dent et al. 2005; Fernando 2011). Arguably the most commonly cited theory of spiritual leadership is Fry's (2003) work, which is representative of that based on the set of universal or common values generally found in the major world religions, as well as in secular research on values and ethics, and which especially highlights the importance of altruistic love (Fernando 2011).

Although the literature on spiritual leadership is in its infancy, there is nonetheless much agreement about the qualities of a spiritual leader, including love, courage, empathy, and trust, among others (Whittington et al. 2005). These qualities are analogous to a competency model for spiritual leadership, and this work is valuable as such. As discussed above, competency models may be necessary but not sufficient to leader development, because there is often a gap between the competencies and what it takes to "get there." There appears to be little discussion in the spiritual leadership literature about practices that support leaders "getting there," that is, in developing as both effective and moral leaders.

Fry (2003) suggests four practices: knowing oneself, respecting and honoring others, trusting, and maintaining a spiritual practice. Other than maintaining a spiritual practice, this list is similar to the lists of spiritual leadership competencies, and also similar to other leadership competency models, such as emotionally intelligent leadership, which suggests leaders develop self-awareness, self-management, other-awareness, and relationships skills (e.g., Goleman et al. 2002). Similarly, Reave (2005) reviews over 150 studies involving spiritual values and practices in leadership, and all but one of the practices she identifies are similar to the competencies common to all models, including for example "demonstrating respect for others' values" and "expressing caring and concern." To this list is added "engaging in reflective practice."

In both these cases (i.e., Fry 2003; Reave 2005), the authors suggest practices, then list engaging or maintaining a practice as one practice. This highlights different ways the word "practice" is used. As stated above, here a *practice* refers to *a coherent set of activities that is intentionally, repeatedly, and periodically enacted by an individual*. With regard to the second research question, the spiritual leadership literature reinforces the need for spiritual and reflective practices, but does not explicate what these might be. I now turn to the third research question, whether practices from a centuries old tradition can be integrated into an evidenced-based, process-oriented model for leader development practice, in this case into the PER–AER model.

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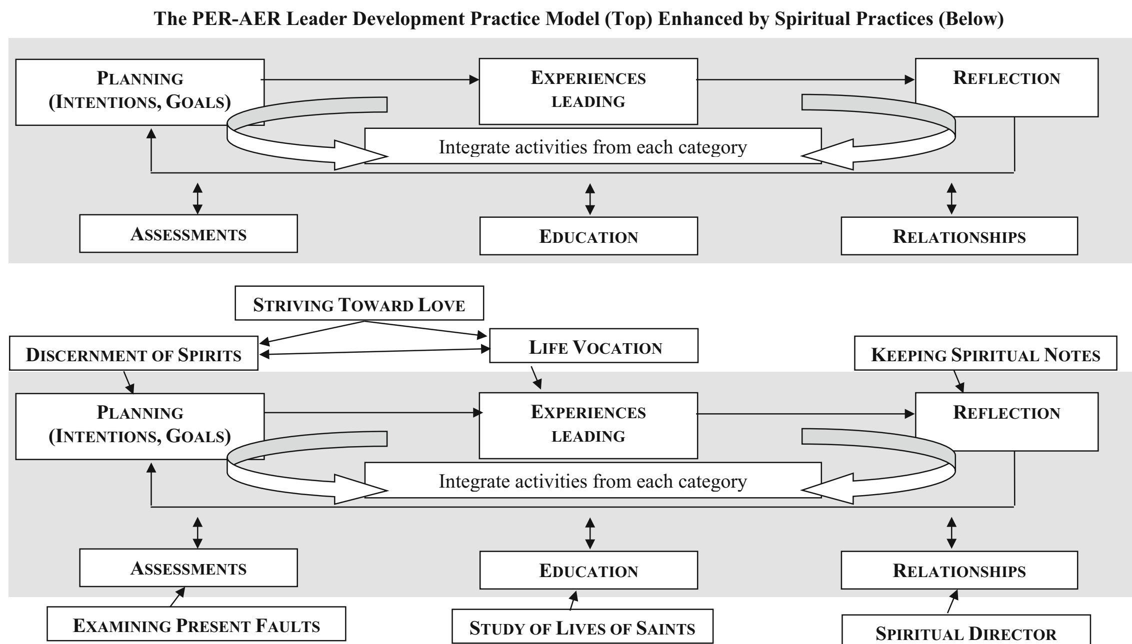

Fig. 2 The PER–AER leader development practice model (*top*) enhanced by spiritual practices (*below*)

The Spirituality of Ignatius

Our current era is often referred to as turbulent (e.g., Brackley 2004; Laloux 2014). St. Ignatius of Loyola (~1491 to 1556) lived in similarly turbulent times. During his lifetime, the Roman Catholic Church was in need of "moral and administrative reforms," Luther was excommunicated, Henry VIII became head of the church in England, and in Spain Ignatius was affected by the early days of the Inquisition (Gnass 1991, p. 10). In this context, Ignatius founded the Jesuit order, which is known in part for its impact on human development through education. He has a rich biography and body of work including five major and thousands of minor works and correspondences. His spirituality has been characterized as being focused on God's plan, redemption, and the spiritual development of human beings (Gnass 1991, p. 9). This focus on development may make his principles and practices especially salient for leader development.

Below, I briefly describe some of the key and ancillary principles and practices from Ignatius's body of work to guide spiritual development, chosen in part for their potential fit with the six PER–AER categories of leader development activities depicted in Fig. 1. These principles were first developed in his work, *The Spiritual Exercises*, but are also integrated throughout in his *Autobiography* and other works. It has been estimated that *The Spiritual Exercises* has had 4,500,000 copies printed over 450 years, and it currently is being reproduced more than ever (Gnass 1991). In addition, credible interpretations are widespread, and I rely on these in my descriptions of the principles and practices below (i.e., Brackley 2004; Gnass 1991; McDermott 2010; McGrath 2011; Schuurman 2004; Silf 1999).

In each section below, I briefly describe the principle or practice as reflected in Ignatius's works or their interpretations. Following each of these descriptions, I discuss how the principle or practice might enhance one of the PER–AER leader development activity categories. A summary appears at the bottom of Fig. 2. This review is necessarily cursory and extractive, whereas Ignatius's story, his practices, and their development is rich, and the potential for more integration into a leader development practice will become apparent. In addition, the depiction in Fig. 2 and the analysis below may leave the reader with the sense that the six practices reviewed are separate, which is not the case. In fact, just as the practices of PER–AER do not stand alone but take their power from their interaction, so too are the Ignatian practices part of an interactive whole. This point is so important I revisit it at the end of this section.

In the following discussion, I use Ignatius's terms "God" and "the enemy," both of whom are believed to speak to human beings through our thoughts and feelings. Some readers may be comfortable with this interpretation, and for others I offer the more secular version discussed in the first section of this paper, and ask the reader to substitute these concepts, and to focus for now on the potential of adding these practices to leader development practices. Religious and secular interpretations are considered in more depth in the discussion.

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Discernment of Spirits

In thinking about what direction to take, especially for large, life-impacting decisions, but also smaller decisions such as which project to prioritize or how to respond to a colleague, Ignatius would have us to notice how we feel spiritually and emotionally as we consider different options. When we are in spiritual decline, the enemy confirms our ego-dominant, fear-based choices. However, if we have chosen to walk a path of spiritual development and have opened ourselves to God, these same ego-gratifying choices will gnaw at us, make us uneasy at a deep level, or prick at our conscience. We may be interested in and stimulated by multiple options for any decision, but some options will leave us later feeling consolation whereas others will leave us feeling desolation. Consolation and desolation are subtle, however, and may not be noticed in the normal course of events; we must be watchful to notice them. This may be especially important for decisions that are challenging or more impactful, because during such times, when "Fear disorders our desires; we grasp for idols which promise security…. We cling to the means of control—money, power, status…." (Brackley 2004, p. 14).

Although our language may have changed, the concept of forces moving us toward love-based contributions to the common good or toward pursuit of fear-based self-interest are known to us. As a clergy member preaching on Jesus's exorcism of evil spirits reflected

> …demons or unclean spirits look an awful lot like things we describe medically today [such as] depression, addiction, anxiety…. But even without a clinical diagnosis we can feel as if there are thoughts bothering us that come from outside…negative voices in our heads telling us [we can't], causing us to fear…. in a very real sense these can feel like outsiders, even if we don't call them unclean spirits (Crippen 2015).

Ignatius cautions not to make choices based on what these voices tell us. Rather, to order our desires with goodness, we should "listen" as the Godly or good directions reveal themselves by leaving an aftertaste of consolation. This requires that we not let fears that come up dominate our decision processes, rather we wait for options that bring feelings of rightness, peace, and energy. A disordered desire may be equally as engaging, exciting, or interesting to us, but leaves a different aftertaste, of desolation, emptiness, or a lack of deep, peaceful, sustainable energy.

Consolation is not pleasure, and desolation not pain. Similarly, the opposite is an easy dualistic cognitive trap, thinking that true consolation necessarily involves pain; it may, but it is just as likely to involve pleasure. Consolation releases calm energy, whereas desolation may temporarily energize, but not sustainably. To walk the spiritually mature path, then, leaders must "resist desolation and reject the ideas that spring from it, and they must embrace consolation and follow its lead" (Brackley 2004, p. 48). Failing this, our decision-making amounts to causing ourselves later spiritual distress, creating "the difficulties we encounter in life due to the essential ways in which we fail to understand ourselves, making decisions that run counter to who we are and setting forth in the most self-sabotaging directions" (Calmus 2004, p. xiii). We can learn to choose the option that leaves deep and abiding peace and joy, and which "releases new energies, widens our vision, and directs us beyond ourselves" (Brackley 2004, p. 48).

Discernment of spirits can be used to enhance the formation of leadership plans, goals, and intentions in leader development, as depicted in Fig. 2, thus adding a spiritual and moral consideration to the planning element of PER–AER. As currently practiced, goal formation often takes into account the ego-needs and desires of the leader, the stated needs of the organization, and the strengths and skills of the leader. Goals may be to achieve a promotion or to win new business. There is nothing wrong with either of those goals, but as ends they are spiritually empty. The practice of discernment of spirits would help the leader to discern whether the promotion or the new business was in service of their higher ends (which is the subject of the next section and inseparable from discernment) through feelings of consolation or desolation. Similarly, discernment of spirits could help a leader to choose from the qualities an organization wants her or him to develop. Qualities desired by organizations may be more agentic or self-focused than communal or other-focused (Eagly and Chin 2010). Watching for consolation or desolation as one contemplates developing particular skills or qualities, or uses these skills or qualities with others in the organization, could help the leader decide on a course that is in line with the common good, and that is spiritually fulfilling and meaningful.

Ultimate Ends, Accompanying Means, Motivations, and Vocation

Humans need something worth living for beyond self. Well-being literatures show that individuals strive to build meaningful lives through use of their gifts or resources (means) for a self-transcendent purpose or ends (e.g., Russo et al. 2010; Rothausen et al., in press; Ryan and Deci 2000). Means and ends can be fulfilling or enjoyable, or both, to bring full well-being. The motivations for choosing or discerning one's means and ends also matter (Cuilla 2012). Models of human development show that ego-

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centered, hedonic motivations, means, and ends do not generally result in abiding peace and joy, whereas transcendent, eudaimonic motivations, means, and ends can (Michaelson et al. 2014).

For Ignatius, the ultimate end for all human beings is the greater glory of God. Ignatius guides us in determining the ultimate purpose in our lives, and interpreters of Ignatius have used the concept of vocation or calling to frame this for each individual, though this meaning of vocation is more associated with Christian reformers such as Luther (Dik and Duffy 2012; Schuurman 2004). This sense of vocation is very different from contemporary uses of the word, which has become synonymous in popular usage with "career" or "technical" pursuits (e.g., vocational school, vocational counseling).

As used by Luther, and also integrated into other denominations including Roman Catholicism, vocation has religious meaning, integrates multiple spheres of life including and transcending paid work or employment, and has theological roots in the doctrines of providence and incarnation (Schuurman 2004). It is also related to meaningful work, in that vocation is what we are created for or called to do with our life; it is each person's specific path and specific purpose, and in so being, is tightly tied to identity (Dik and Duffy 2012; Michaelson et al. 2014). The discernment of vocation may come through "…extraordinary ways, but for the vast majority…callings are discerned quietly, when the heart of faith joins opportunities and gifts with the needs of others…" and the world (Schuurman 2004, pp. 3–4).

This conceptualization of vocation, calling, or purpose can be used to guide leaders in pursuing or turning down opportunities for leadership experiences, as depicted in Fig. 2, thus adding a spiritual and moral consideration to the experiences element of PER–AER. Perhaps in response to recognition of the relative emptiness of achieving promotions in pursuit of an ego-centric notion of career, there has recently been renewed interest in calling and vocation in psychology and career literatures, and in emerging management literatures on meaning in work organizations (e.g., Budd 2011; Dik and Duffy 2012; Russo et al. 2010). Vocation may be, in part, determined by one's gifts, whether seen as given by God or as strengths, but is also in large part a determination of the ultimate purpose of one's whole life. Making vocation an integral part of decisions about which development and leadership experiences to pursue has the potential to develop leaders toward self-transcendent, more meaningful, higher purposes.

Keeping Spiritual Notes

As Ignatius began his own path to his vocation through discernment, he made notes of what he was observing in himself spiritually. As he thought about his life to date and what he was planning to do next, he kept notes of what gave him consolation and what led to desolation, which helped him discern patterns that then informed his future choices. He kept these in a notebook that he carried with him for decades, occasionally recopying them (Gnass 1991). This is a spiritual form of journaling that provides a personalized reminder of a leader's spiritual goals and intentions and a tool for assessing whether actions have matched them.

Keeping spiritual notes is a practice that can enhance reflection in leader development, as depicted in Fig. 2, thus adding a spiritual and moral consideration to the reflection element of PER–AER. Journaling is one practice that is recommended in leader development literatures for reflection, as reviewed above. However, there the journaling is general, about learnings from leadership experiences and other leader development activities. Adding spiritual notes brings a transcendent element to this practice. Life is busy and leaders overloaded, and as such it is easy to let external events or demands from employing organizations or professions dictate one's direction. A spiritual notebook or journal can be an anchor to remind the leader of her or his vocation and higher purpose. Revisiting, rereading, or even rewriting these notes on a regular basis could center the leader in the spiritual aspects of her or his leadership.

Studying the Lives of Moral and Spiritual Business Leaders

We can draw courage, inspiration, and connectedness from studying the lives of leaders who inspire us by their intentionality, effectiveness, and morality. Ignatius would have us contemplate the life of Christ and the saints. Even those who may not believe in the creeds of the Christian churches about Jesus as God may find him an inspirational figure, as may those who do not share a social identity with Jesus, or who may view the church with suspicion, as in the case of one student of Ignatian spirituality (Calmus 2004, p. xvii), who says:

> …I wondered what on earth a feminist like me was doing contemplating joining an institution [so] male-dominated and plagued with error and contradiction … [but] … wasn't it equally reasonable for me to join …[and promote] my conviction that male domination is archaic and un-Christian, wrong for a thousand reasons, and must go?

Here, Brackley's (2004, p. 76) reflection on contemplating the life of Christ may be helpful:

> Not everyone finds it easy to accept Christ as model. He was a Jew who lived two thousand years ago. He

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> was male. Today, however, Christ is no longer confined to such categories.

We cannot consider the risen Christ as exclusively male, as Jesus of Nazareth obviously was.

> [Jesus]… being male does not make him the measure of humanity….nor does his being the son of God mean that masculinity best represents divinity….the second person of the Trinity came to be called "son" because Jesus was male, not the other way around.

Ignatius began his own spiritual development journey by studying two books, perhaps surprisingly not scripture, but a life of Jesus and a book on the lives of the saints.

Studying the life of Christ or the lives of the saints can be used to enhance education in leader development, as depicted in Fig. 2, thus adding a spiritual and moral consideration to the education element of PER–AER. In our times, we have books in the vein of *The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus* (Manz 2011), and there is academic study of the leadership styles of saints, such as the Apostle Paul (Whittington et al. 2005). Biographies and autobiographies of effective leaders are bestsellers, but this practice encourages developing leaders to be intentional about choosing which business leaders to study, taking care to study lives of leaders who were not only successful in worldly terms, but who were effective and also moral in their intentions, means, and ends. In this spirit, we might study the "saint-like" or those who embody elements of a saint even if not (yet) canonized, if those people's lives inspire us to consolation-based decisions and vocation. From their lives, we can learn and be inspired by how they faced obstacles and both succumbed to and then overcame temptations along their paths.

> Abraham and Sara, Moses, Deborah, the prophets, Mary and the apostles all heard God call them. They said "Yes" to an uncontrollable future, and God made history through them. So did Sojourner Truth, Dorothy Day, Simone Weil, John XXIII, and countless workaday heroes—housewives and bus drivers—closer to our time. The story continues till today (Brackley 2004, pp. 65–66).

One of five primary ways to learn about leadership is to read about it (Jackson and Parry 2011). A common assignment in leadership courses is to select a leader biography to study and analyze. Purposefully choosing leaders who intentionally and positively impact the common good can support spiritual leader development. In addition, for minorities in business, it may help to study those with whom they share a social identity, such as an ethical, effective woman or leader of color who contributed to the common good, in order to take inspiration from others who also had to work harder, or be better at their jobs, to even be seen as potential or actual leaders in business (Avery 2011; Eagly and Chin 2010).

Examining Present Faults

Ignatius invites us to work through our present faults and examine them as shadows cast on the present by past sin (Brackley 2004, p. 39). Doing so may stir up feelings of remorse and shame, but only when those feelings are fully felt, and their causes acknowledged, can we move toward understanding, forgiveness, and growth. Errors that are justified or hidden cannot be healed. When faults are examined as part of a larger and ongoing process of examining our whole lives in order to understand when we have been selfish, and to understand that we were nonetheless loved during these times and blessed, this can create gratitude and a will to help others, and to seek forgiveness in order to move past present limitations.

Examining present faults is an ongoing practice, and as such would enhance the processing of assessment feedback in leader development, as depicted in Fig. 2, thus adding a spiritual and moral consideration to the assessment element of PER–AER. The leader development activity of assessment often points out weaknesses and blind spots, as well as strengths. Performance assessment, especially 360-degree feedback, can help us see how we are viewed by others above, below, and lateral to us in an organization. Having coached many individuals through processing their 360-degree assessment data, and having gone through such assessment myself, I know that the results can be surprising and different from leaders' self-assessments, which indicates the presence of a false image of the self that the leader is not actually living out in their interactions with others. One problem with this feedback as it is often delivered, however, is that it is segmented and periodic, and not treated as an ongoing part of work life, or as part of a larger story of a human being as a member of humankind on a common journey of development. If the leader were engaging this practice frequently, work-related assessments would simply be one part of this larger process.

Understanding identified weaknesses as human failings for which to seek forgiveness can change the tone of processing such feedback. Fitting weaknesses identified in assessment into a larger story of humans in relationship to love or to God, whether labeled as sin or not, has the potential to make the feedback more powerfully meaningful, and to create the circumstances that encourage a leader to work on the identified faults. Assessment feedback could also be used as a catalyst for deeper spiritual reflection in the Ignatian tradition. To supplement the processing of assessment data, leaders can reflect more broadly, using identification of faults or weakness by others as a trigger for questions such as:

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> What idolatries hold me back? …How am I fulfilling work responsibilities? Do I dominate or manipulate others? Have I harmed others? Do I show concern for the poor and others in need? Do I share what I have, or do I hoard? Do I speak up for the truth in defense of the weak? (Brackley 2004, p. 40).

Guided Contemplation, Retreats, and Spiritual Direction

The Spiritual Exercises is the most reproduced of Ignatius's works. In this specific work, Ignatius outlines a series of contemplations, including elements outlined above and others, and weaves them into a general plan for a retreat of four "weeks" that can be customized to the retreatant (the weeks may or may not be undertaken in seven days each). This requires an intention to develop spiritually, and regularly making time for it. Similarly, the notion of a core leader development practice comprising cycles of planning-experiences-reflection (PER) supplemented by assessments, education, and relationships (-AER) asks leaders to revisit leader development in an intentional, periodic, and ongoing way, and to regularly make time for it.

One benefit of directed retreats, whether self-directed or with a spiritual director, is that they can create the circumstances in which one enters a contemplative state, away from external demands and urgencies, freeing up the mind, heart, body, and spirit to access multiple sources of wisdom. These retreats can bring a leader into this state, as one woman's intensive reading about Ignatian spiritual principles did for her, as she found herself "…just naturally falling into the kind of meditation that Ignatius…[was] recommending…, [Even] while my rational mind continued to function, some deeper intelligence in there was beginning to awaken and engage" (Calmus 2004, p. xv). This state allows us to access multiple forms of knowing and truth.

> Empirical science requires dispassionate observation and something like pure reason. That is not enough for understanding life. …understanding it requires moral empathy. We need to enter [any situation in life] and allow it to enter us. That is the way we come to know another person, a foreign country, and new neighborhood, or place of work. Sitting with reality, allowing it to work on us, working through the feelings and the thoughts it stirs is what we mean by contemplation. (Brackley 2004, p. 22).

Retreats and contemplative sessions with a spiritual director can be used to enhance relationships for leader development, as depicted in Fig. 2, thus adding a spiritual and moral consideration to the relationship element of PER–AER. Periodic retreats—shorter retreats more often or longer but less often—can be rejuvenating, and have the added benefit of serving as a trigger or reminder to take time for spiritual leader development through contemplation in order to examine feelings of consolation or desolation, while reflecting on the past period and the period to come, and on emerging vocation; to review spiritual notes, read about inspiring leaders and saints; and to reflect on present faults in relationship to the past and future.

Ignatian PER–AER: One Model for Designing a Spiritual Leader Development Practice

In conclusion, with regard to the third research question, it appears that there is enough evidence from the long tradition of Ignatian spirituality, which fits with processes that work to develop leaders from the management literature on leader development, in order to integrate spirituality into a process-and-reflection-based model, such as PER–AER. The top of Fig. 2 summarizes the full PER–AER model identified from management research on leader development practices shown in Fig. 1, and below that, the "Ignatian PER–AER" model. The intention for this model is for leaders to learn about it, and then design an intentional leader development practice using all six activity categories, each enhanced by Ignatian practice in a customized way that best suits them in their leadership relationships and contexts.

As mentioned earlier, the depiction in Figs. 1 and 2 and the descriptions above of the categories of practices run the risk of leaving the reader with the sense that the twelve categories of practices reviewed (the six PER–AER categories and the six Ignatian practices) are separate, when in fact the power in this model is in their interaction. However, it should not be assumed that simply doing these practices guarantees growth toward higher stages of development. For Ignatius, the spiritual practices are a way of life, one that comes from an awakening or conversion experience, and not a separated set of activities in which to occasionally engage. Thus, the motivation for engaging the practices matters, in that the motivation must be to order our desires with those of God or with love.[2] This is highlighted above in the section on discernment of spirits, in that discernment depends on whether we are in spiritual decline or have chosen to walk an intentional path toward higher purpose. An important question for future research and writing is whether an awakening must come before engaging the practices, or can arise out of experiments with engaging the practices.

The primary spiritual practices in the Ignatian tradition are discernment of spirits in the service of understanding one's

[2] I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for highlighting the importance of making this vital point.

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vocation to the greater glory of God (as indicated by the arrows linking them to each other and this motivation, in Fig. 2). The other practices—keeping spiritual notes, examining present faults, studying the lives of saints, and spiritual direction retreats—are ancillary to these primary practices, and in the service of the larger purpose of bringing one's life into alignment with God's will, the common good, or love.[3]

Thus, in the language of Ignatian scholars, Ignatius's spiritual practices call us to continually discern direction in conversation with God, including in our work lives. The practices work best for us, and for God in the world, when we are aware of our context and of ourselves; in this case, knowing and engaging intentionally in the leader development activity categories identified as effective by empirical research evidence may be part of "doing the homework" that God calls for from business leaders (McDermott 2010). However, building a leader development practice *only* on these activities, as organizationally or self- directed, without a grounding in human spirituality, is likely to lead to leadership based in fear rather than in love.

One evidenced-based, process-oriented model for spiritual leader development practice then, which I label Ignatian PER–AER, is to intentionally and regularly engage six leader development practices, enhanced as follows: apply the spiritual practice of discernment of spirits to the leader development activity of periodically creating and revisiting plans, goals, and intentions; apply the spiritual development practice of explicitly considering ends, means, motivations, and vocation to the leader development activity of deciding which leadership experiences to pursue or turn down; apply the spiritual practice of keeping spiritual notes to the leader development activity of reflection; apply the spiritual practice of studying the lives of saints or the life of Christ, or of business leaders who morally contributed to the common good, to the leader development activity of ongoing education; apply the spiritual development practice of examining present faults to the leader development activity of assessment; and apply the spiritual practice of guided contemplations and retreats with a spiritual director to the leader development activity of intentionally nurturing developmental relationships.

Discussion

The overarching contribution of this paper is to present a new approach to leader development. This paper breaks ground as the first to explicitly integrate social science and humanities perspectives on specific categories of leader development and spiritual development practices, in order to support business leaders in developing the capacities for proficient, moral leadership.[4] In addition, the paper makes a number of specific contributions to the literatures on leadership and leader development, ethics, and spirituality at work.

Specific Contributions to Research

First, within the leadership literatures in management, this model illustrates that a process-oriented model for a leader-directed development practice that includes reflection, as called for by Avolio (2010) and others, can be built based on existing evidence. Second, the paper illustrates how a long-standing, rich, religiously based tradition can dovetail with a model based on social science to highlight spiritual and moral development. Possibilities exist for the model's secularization and for similar efforts integrating practices from other religious traditions.

Third, this paper contributes to the business ethics literature on the means through which business leaders can integrate their spiritual or religious lives into their work lives. As Pope John Paul II stated, "…there cannot be two parallel lives….on the one hand, the so-called 'spiritual' life, with its values and demands; and on the other hand, the so-called 'secular' life, that is, life in a family, at work…." (Pontifical Council, 2004). Humanities have contributed to the literature on leadership by arguing for consideration of leaders doing the right thing (means), for the right purpose (ends), for the right reason (motivation) (Cuilla 2012). This paper contributes one "how" for this work. To date, much of the writing on the purposes of business has been concerned with the organizational or governance level, and not so much with the human beings who must carry out needed organizational changes at all levels.

Fourth, the paper provides an example of spiritual language and practices fitting with secular professions. Christian thinkers and others interested how religious or spiritual life can inform work life should be interested in the significant role business organizations play in shaping leader—and therefore human—development for many Christians in their work organizations, in order to better understand and appreciate how to best influence practices in business toward the common good. Genuine interest and appreciation may be more productive than fear-based feeling from the church, which exists toward business and business leaders, as the excerpt below from Reave (2005, p. 655) illustrates.

[3] I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this important point.

[4] I wish to thank an anonymous reviewer, who originally made this claim for the work in this paper.

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> What does spirituality have to do with leadership effectiveness? For many years, these fields have been worlds apart…. [In an article titled, "How the Church has Failed Business"], Nash (2001) describes "the culture of mutual stereotyping" that she discovered in over 100 interviews with clergy and business leaders…. Nash found that clergy expressed a vague but deep hostility toward capitalism and the modern corporation, characterized by suspicion of selfishness and greed…. For their part, business leaders felt that clergy were out of touch and unrealistic.

A fifth contribution is the specific Ignatian PER–AER model developed here, which integrates two specific sets of activities—a particular categorization of leader development activities drawn from the management literature, and this particular Christian spirituality. This process model is offered as a resource for business leaders, from which to design a personalized leader development practice with their spirituality as its foundation.

Many questions remain for exploration. One of the most important for leadership scholarship may be explicit exploration of the role of purpose, mission, and vocation in business leadership. In addition, the approach outlined in this paper touches on a number of longer standing debates in the spirituality and work literature, including defining religion and spirituality and their interrelationship (Fernando 2011). These issues are important, and therefore I discuss them below in order to encourage future research in these important areas.

Perspectives on Future Work: The Purposes of Leadership and Leader Development

In much management research, the purposes of business leadership are not explicitly named or examined, nor is the impact of leaders' purpose or vocation on followers or the organization. Yet there is growing recognition and increasing discussion about how vital to the common good are the ends to which we lead business organizations. Significant "leader identity work" occurs in business schools and leadership development programs in organizations (Lord and Hall 2005; Petriglieri and Petriglieri 2010). If the purpose of such identity work is not ego-transcendent—that is, grounded in what Ignatian scholars might term in one's identity as a child of God, and what other traditions might describe as awareness of one's connection to a larger universe or to love—the resulting development is unlikely to be spiritually or morally centered.

If purpose is not explicitly studied and discussed in research and in practice, often the assumption defaults to economic ends, and business leaders and students risk forming identities shaped by worldly, fear- or ego-based concerns, such as their own self-interest or the interests of employing organizations, rating and ranking organizations, and Wall Street (Bennis and O'Toole 2005; Khurana 2007). This theme—the centrality of purposes or ends—is echoed and further developed in the section below commonalities. Spiritual leadership provides one opportunity to frame a discussion about purpose in the leadership literature more explicitly, which could be informed by extensive work in business ethics on the purpose of business (e.g., Dembinski 2011; Goodpaster 2011; Metcalf and Benn 2012). What happens when business leaders and business organizations see their ultimate end purpose to be facilitating the common good rather than growing profit for one element of society?

Perspectives on Future Work: Commonalities Approaches

One approach used in the broader field of workplace spirituality, from which much of the spiritual leadership literature grew, is to focus on commonalities between religions, whether noting or ignoring their differences (e.g., Fry 2003; Kriger and Sang 2005). This practice reflects a popular culture trend of identifying as "spiritual not religious" (Daniel 2013) and focusing on commonalities across traditions (Moses 1989). This again raises questions such as "spirituality to what end?" Ignatius was clear that the "end" should be the greater glory of God, which some conceive as the common good.

An assertion in some work on spiritual leadership is that "spirituality is necessary for religion but religion is not necessary for spirituality" (Fry 2003, p. 706). Practices originating in spiritual traditions have been extracted to improve health and organization performance (e.g., Buddhism; Hyland et al., in press). However, there is little research on whether practices such as ritual and prayer, meditation, or contemplation can be used effectively to develop spiritual competencies or qualities—whether altruistic love or focused, compassionate, and present attention—when separated from the higher motivations for engaging the practices.

Spirituality and religion, I argue, have a more complex and subtle interrelationship that bears further exploration in the spiritual leadership literature. It has been argued, for example, that "spirituality depends for collective discipline and knowledge on the stewardship of religion" (Bass, 2008, p. 214). Religious traditions support spiritual development, and promote ethical living and contribution to the common good, toward the glory of God as the highest end. Religions are concerned with four interrelated elements:

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interconnections between God, humanity, and nature; the immanence of the past and future in the present; issues of community, including alleviating suffering; and rejection of materialism (Bass 2008; Fernando 2011; McGrath 2011).

The implicit assumption in some spiritual leadership writing that business organizations can or should step into these roles bears explicit examination. For example, Fry (2003, p. 711, emphasis mine) states that "spiritual leadership taps into the fundamental needs of both leader and follower for spiritual survival *so they become* more organizationally committed and productive." If the ultimate end is organizational commitment and productivity, the ultimate purposes of these organizations become vital to consider explicitly. Reviews of transformational, servant, ethical, and values-based leadership show that the failure to address the issues that arise when ends are morphed from social change for the common good, to achievement of institutional goals, is a recipe for at best watering down once-powerful concepts (e.g., Bass and Bass 2008; Jackson and Parry 2011). The watering down of spiritual concepts as they are adopted for economic ends suggests a need for future research linking spiritual leadership more tightly with normative literatures, such as the field of business ethics (and this linkage could strengthen many business and business ethics literatures; see Michaelson et al. 2014).

Perspectives on Future Work: Religion and Business Leadership

In part, the focus on commonalities may be due to the failings of religious organizations and the attendant societal backlash. In America, understanding the separation of church and state to mean separation of church from other institutions may also contribute to the attractiveness and the value of a commonalities approach. In addition, however, this phenomenon may also be due to partial understandings of the meaning of religion. Many uses of the word imply only part of the whole meaning of religion to the exclusion of other meanings. Some of the measures of "religiousness" used in research also lack some of these meanings.

In the popular sense, the word religion may have come to mean unquestioning belief in, and obedience to, religious dogmas, and to the organizations that purport to be the keepers of these dogmas. However, the word religion contains other meanings, which it retains to some extent, including practices of ritual observances, rites of devotion to high ideals, and practices of reverence and respect for what is sacred. Integral to these practices is often an explicit call to the immanence of the past and future in the present through participation in liturgies and other ancient rituals, which anticipates future peoples participating, grounding us in stewardship.

Understood another way, religion encompasses traditions and received wisdom on the one hand, and, on the other, also encompasses reason and personal experience with spirituality, love, or God (Brackley 2004; McGrath 2011). The latter may lead one to reject elements of the former, or the organizations that purport to be keepers of traditions, while retaining from the traditions some practices, rituals, buildings, art, and other ways of taking time for reverence and gratitude in community. More subtly, religion may be understood to include members' direct experiences of spirituality circling back to inform the traditions themselves. Arguing that spirituality can or should exist without religion may be throwing the proverbial baby out with the bathwater, in that traditional practices may have irreplaceable value, and losing them in favor of an intellectual treatment of common core values involves some losses.

Losses may include active engagement with liturgies, ceremonies and services, music, prayer, ritual movements and positioning of the body, art, architecture, and nature or creation, all of which can aid leaders' integrated human development, and provide inspiration for the work of leadership. Although commonalities approaches often explicitly state that to be fully spiritual one must engage and unify the body, mind, heart, and spirit, they tend to be primarily intellectual, leaving out how to integrate body, heart, and spirit. Traditional spiritual practices can bring these elements in. Yet we know little about the impact of these practices on leaders in organizations, and further research is warranted.

In addition to these losses, another issue with a commonality approach is that meaningful differences may be glossed over, invalidating important parts of human identity, which if retained could enrich spiritual leader development. Part of identity is differentiation, and because religious identity is a vital element of self for many people, integrating such a powerful source of identity is likely to be more personal for business leaders than is a relatively generic call to core human values. This meaningfulness may contribute to a leader's readiness for, and perseverance in, the hard work and courage it takes to develop into an effective, moral business leader. Research on whether, and under what conditions, these types of practices translate into more ethical leadership is badly needed. In addition, future work examining spiritual practices from Jesuit and other religious orders, some of which may focus on the links between leader vocations and specific organizational missions, such health care or education, or that focus on organizational governance as do the Benedictines, would be

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helpful.[5] Such research would not only allow this general approach to appeal to a greater diversity of leaders, but would allow those who study leadership to compare and contrast the practices and their effects.

Implications for Practice

Grounding development in a leader's wisdom tradition may be more meaningful and spiritually centering for an individual who was raised in, or freely chose, that tradition, as compared to motives such as self- and organizational- gain, and even than ideals such as altruistic love or service to others, absent this context. The specific richness and meaningfulness to members of a tradition is a reason I chose one specific, Christian tradition to focus on here. In that sense, this work has implications for business and organization managers and leaders, but perhaps especially for Christian leaders, and leaders for whom St. Ignatius of Loyola or Ignatian spirituality is meaningful. Within Christianity, other models of spiritual practices exist, including guidance from those claiming a particular denominational or an ecumenical perspective, although many acknowledge Ignatius, as well as Luther's notion of vocation, as inspirations. Other religions also contain contemplative and spiritual practices that can be used to develop different sets of practices to integrate into the PER–AER (or a different set of) leader development activities.

Regardless of specific tradition, one of the primary implications of this approach to spiritual leader development is to highlight the importance of a leader-directed practice of engaging in regular, interacting activities. Through such practice, we are triggered to regularly decide which wolf to feed—whether to develop in response primarily to external, fear-based triggers, or use intentional practices which trigger leadership with love-based spirituality as a foundation. I do not offer implications of spiritual leader development for management-in-general, because I agree with Jackson and Parry (2011, p. 121) who conclude about spiritual leadership that, "It is important…to distinguish the notion of the spirituality of leaders from leadership using spirituality as a technique with which to wield more power over followers," and I also add, with which to influence followers toward means or ends incongruent with their own spiritual or religious purposes and practices.

However, as discussed above, there may be benefit in exploring commonalities. The work on spiritual leadership has done an admirable job of identifying common, higher values and making them visible for discussion within the management literature. Additionally, as stated above, there may be an opportunity to blend this discussion with discussions about the purposes of business and whether current forms of business meet higher purposes (Metcalf and Benn 2012). Models that encourage businesses to operate from principles common to religions, and in alignment with research on ethical and moral leadership, are valuable. Such models offer qualities of love, empathy, compassion, vulnerability and humility, authenticity and genuineness, trust, loyalty, initiative, courage, and service (Avolio 2010; Fry 2003; Whittington et al. 2005).

This does not preclude, however, creating room for pluralism within organizations so that individuals can live out daily practices, grounding them within their own traditions in relationship to these commonalities. Some organizations have enacted policies allowing these types of practices, without fear of reprisal, within the law (e.g., provision of mediation or prayer rooms). Studying these policies and their impact is an area for further development. The subtle and complex work involved in building organizational cultures and systems that can hold the paradox inherent in both retaining religious wisdom traditions and evoking and engaging commonalities is beyond the scope of this paper, but is another key area in which further research is needed. I join other authors (reviewed in Bass 2008) in cautioning leaders against promoting a single spiritual framework, but this does not mean that individual organizational leaders cannot gain strength from one, in order to continue to develop as effective and moral business leaders, who may lead their organizations using these common, humane values.

Limitations

This paper was guided by a number of research choices that impacted its outcome, including use of two relatively new fields of study—leader development and spiritual leadership—together with one particular long-standing spiritual tradition. Other choices for exploring the same questions may result in different models. This is an endeavor I encourage.

Ignatian spiritualists will surely find that I have barely scratched the surface of *The Spiritual Exercises* here. Further, Ignatius was embedded in the context of the rich history of Roman Catholicism, which splintered from Eastern Christianity, and has continued to evolve, and Protestant denominations have splintered and become their own related but separate rich traditions. Christianity in turn grew from Judaism, with which it shares some tradition and core ideas, along with Islam, which also grew from these roots. One's context for encountering Ignatian ideas, including these and other traditions, will result in different flavors and accompaniments for the practices, which are beyond the scope of this article to develop.

[5] I wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for this point.

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Social science-oriented management scholars will undoubtedly argue that practices culled from Ignatius have little value for the study of leader development, because they do not come from the scientific method comprising systematic observation, hypothesis formulation, measurement, experimentation, and testing, and theory development and modification based on empirical findings. However, other academic disciplines can enrich science. Theologians rely on primary sources including scripture, tradition, reason, and religious experience (McGrath 2011, p. 120), some of which I have attempted here to blend with findings from social science.

Conclusion

Leadership scholars have repeatedly called for the virtue of spiritual love to be integrated into business life, to be brought into business by business leaders (e.g., Fry 2003; Whittington et al. 2005). At the same time, leadership scholars criticize business and business school leader development as not developing self-aware, morally centered leaders (e.g., Bennis and O'Toole 2005; Khurana 2007; Rubin and Dierdorff 2009). Along with others (e.g., Avolio 2010), I argue that it is time to move the focus from an ever-elusive search for "the" list of competencies and qualities leaders should develop, to how business leaders can be supported in developing their own unique gifts and capacities to forward proficient and morally centered leadership.

I further argue that an interdisciplinary approach, explicitly combining evidence from social sciences research and humanities, is more likely to bear fruit for these purposes than one that relies only on empirical evidence, which by definition explores "what is," or only on spirituality with its focus on "what should be." The overarching conclusion of this paper is that there is enough research- and tradition-based evidence to design spiritual leader development approaches using this type of interdisciplinary method, which I term *spiritual leader development*.

Society needs business leaders with the courage to walk the difficult path of integrating the economic imperatives of commerce while influencing society away from fear and toward love, away from the culture of scarcity amid abundance, and toward a culture of the stewardship and sharing of abundance. This is counter-culture, and therefore will require the courage of moral centering. Leader development occurs as part of, and in the context of, ongoing adult development (Day et al. 2014; Kegan and Lahey 2010). Some evidence suggests that of all the elements of being human, spirituality and spiritual practices contribute most to the ability to reach the highest stages of adult development, which allow for more complex worldviews and higher moral reasoning (Avolio 2010; LaLoux 2014; Sanders et al. 2003).

Therefore, spiritual development may be vital for business leaders, who often profoundly impact the lives of thousands of others, and the environment, through their decisions. If leader development is "triggered by positive and negative moments" (Avolio 2010, p. 757), then using leader development practices intentionally, enhanced by spiritual practices, amounts to feeding the right wolf, thus invoking moments that trigger spiritually based decision-making, impacting leader well-being, and inspiring leaders to act to positively impact the common good.

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