



**TALK:
NOT LEADING FOLLOWERS, NOT FOLLOWING LEADERS; THE
CONTEMPORARY EROSION OF THE TRADITIONAL SOCIAL
CONTRACT**

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I have spent much of my professional life preoccupied with questions of leadership and followership, because I have been involved in so many different situations, primarily - group relations conferences, and my assessment work with senior executives - where leadership was an major issue both for the individual and the enterprise. I want to draw on these experiences to try and tease out whether fundamental changes are taking place in the nature of leadership and followership today.

The events that I would like to tell you about range from the micro to the macro, starting with a personal experience of working with a small organisation of career strategists where the leader was temporarily incapacitated. I will then talk about concepts of traditional leadership and followership and the dependency inherent in them. I will link this to post World War II, societal dynamics and introduce the concept of 'failed dependency'.

Thirdly, I want to explore the question of leadership and followership further, at the societal level, by talking about what has happened to our Prime Minister, Tony Blair, over the last 8 months, with particular reference to his leadership leading up to, and following, the war against Iraq.

Finally, I hope to draw some concluding thoughts from these examples about leadership and followership today.

Let me start with a conversation that occurred last February: I work as a corporate psychologist with a partner in a small firm of career strategists - an outplacement firm. Jonathan, previously a successful search consultant, founded the firm and brought in Martin as his partner. The firm is named after them and there are three other male consultants plus half a dozen female researchers and administrative staff. It is a very traditional organisation both in terms of gender relationships and in the way it is led. All the consultants have previously held line management roles in the commercial world and are now applying their skills to help the clients, who are very senior executives, develop their careers



further. My role is to provide a psychological input to ensure a good fit between personality, past experience and future career strategy. The aim is to ensure an optimum outcome for the clients. This involves working with the clients during a day of psychological exploration. At some point I receive a briefing and I want to tell you about what happened on this particular occasion.

A phone call from the office came in as a message. I phoned back. I was put through to Mike, one of the five consultants, who said that things have got rather busy and he would like to brief me on my meeting with a client the following day, rather than at the office face to face. Fine I said. I went to my study to sit and write as we spoke. There was interference at his end – another consultant was speaking to him. This was unusual – normally there is contained privacy. Mike apologised, spoke to his colleague and returned to the phone. Then I could hear his colleague, Jim, say something else. Mike told me that Jim was taking over a client for the boss, Jonathan. Aha. A secretary came in and asked Mike if she could speak to me. Mike told me he would hand me over to her when we've finished the briefing. Fine, I said. She said something else to him. Then he said to me, I'm going to shut my office door. By now, I was beginning to wonder what had happened – there was some feeling of loss of containment. I said to Mike – what's happening, there's some anxiety around by the sound of it – he said, yes, then Oh, she's actually coming in despite the closed door and he turned to talk to the secretary again. OK he said to her, I'll talk to Olya afterwards. He told me he was going to hand me over to her, so that she could make an appointment for me the following month (therefore not apparently urgent) for a client, who was evidently there consulting his diary as we spoke. This client was one that the boss would be responsible for. I was handed back again to Mike. I expect you've heard the news, he said. What, I asked. Jonathan, the boss, is going into hospital tomorrow, Friday, and is having an operation on Saturday. He's going to be off for 6 weeks and we're having to take over all his clients. I asked what was the matter. Jonathan had a blockage in his colon. Apparently, said Mike, it's not that serious, Jonathan has been told that it's probably not 'the big C', but how does one know? Having been in the office only two days ago when all was calm, I was clear that the news of Jonathan's illness had had a massive effect. There were signs of what I call 'failed dependency' and a loss of containment, plus an agitation bordering on panic about being able to cope. This seems linked to the dependency vested in Jonathan who is the successful founding entrepreneur and the brains behind this small firm. This is an interesting example of the traditional social



contract of leadership and followership in action, based on dependency, with authority and security located in the founding partner.

Later things settled down – Jonathan’s work was allocated to the other consultants, but a sense of fragility pervaded the office. A system had previously been put in place for passing work on for others to do, but it had not been adhered to, leaving a level of confusion about transferring assignments. One consultant was angry and anxious about not having been briefed properly and felt that he could not now approach Jonathan to clarify matters. Because of the speed with which events had materialised, Martin was on holiday and no one person was given authority to deputise in his absence. Failed dependency again. There may also have been a fear of how far what was happening to Jonathan would affect everyone’s fantasies about their own health, bearing in mind that none of the consultants were in the first flush of youth. There was a feeling of being overwhelmed emotionally although the boundaries were being better managed than before as the consultants began to recover from the shock.

Perhaps we could spend a few minutes thinking about leadership and followership from the traditional point of view and the conditions of dependency required under which leaders can lead and followers wish to follow. From this perspective there are at least four important aspects of leadership to consider.

The first is the idea that leadership is a set of individual attributes and behaviours exemplified by the common expression ‘good leaders are born, not made’. Leaders are seen as having the gift of getting people to do things they would not otherwise be likely to do. This implies that they are able to inspire their followers and carry them with them.

‘Inspiring’ followers involves tapping into the emotional underlife of the group. Intuitively, and largely unconsciously, leaders respond to the group’s needs, especially those that allay anxiety and contain dependency: they manifest in large measure what the group wants them to be. Freud (1921) spoke of the leader as the ‘ego-ideal’ of the group.

Attempting empirically to validate the conventional wisdom that leaders are ‘born, not made’ led to numerous research studies from the early 1900s devoted to discovering the psychological characteristics of leaders, but these produced little of significance



(Gouldner, A.W. 1965). Many different variables were identified, measured and subjected to multivariate analysis etc. Initially, dominance – the drive to impose one's own will on others – seemed promising, but failed the significance tests in further, more sophisticated studies.

This should not be surprising because alongside the popular belief in individual attributes, there also arose, somewhat later, the wide recognition of the relevance of situation, of context: Churchill, for example, was ideal as a war-time fight leader but was inappropriate for the post-war period; successful founding entrepreneurs often cease to be effective when the organisation has reached a size at which delegation is essential.

Leadership also implies a relationship with followers, whose followership may be voluntary or involuntary. As Freud hinted, and later psychoanalytic writers notably Bion (1961) demonstrated, in some senses followers create a leader in their own image, or in response to some aspect of themselves.

So there was recognition that it could be a collusive relationship. The leader's potency, might be at least in part invested in him/her by the followers. Followers can withdraw their collusion – as events in Eastern Europe during the 80s – such as Romania under Ceaucescu - dramatically demonstrated: the leader who no longer serves their purpose can be discarded; the balloon can be pricked and deflated. The context can alter. And there was a similar withdrawal of followership earlier this year in Britain when almost a million people marched against Blair's decision to pair with Bush and go to war with Iraq. Although this did not lead to the downfall of the British Prime Minister, it put his leadership at risk and led to many attacks on him, both at the time, and subsequently. These are continuing as I speak.

A third aspect, is the capacity of the leader to keep steadfastly to his or her long term vision whilst containing the anxiety of followers during the implementation phases of that vision. Recently, John Harvey Jones, one of our captains of industry and ex Chairman of a very large British company called ICI, said in relation to leadership: 'Many of the attributes are contradictory. They include creativity and original thinking and, despite evidence to the contrary, integrity and trust in people, particularly your own people. The difficulty is that you also need stickability, and it's difficult to keep a long-term goal and not to be blown away and follow every fashion. I believe the attributes are what they've always been: you've got to set your



own goal, get your people behind you and push like hell to the top, but be ready to alter course when you recognise that something is stopping you from achieving what you want to achieve. (26 Feb 2003, The Times). His view was that the essentials of leadership have not changed over the years.

My own corporate work suggests a fourth aspect, that a critical element of leadership is the capacity to tolerate uncertainty, both one's own and that of followers. The larger and more complex the enterprise and the more responsible the position in it, the greater the time-span of uncertainty and hence the greater the requisite capacity of the leader to live and work with it. (Khaleelee & Woolf, 1996). I believe that this capacity is a function of the individual's emotional development from infancy and his/her emergent pattern of defences. In this sense I would agree that leaders are born rather than made – however there is also room for change and growth (Jaques, 1976) and it is often the case that the context provides a space for growing into a leadership role.

These four elements: first, an innate capacity to lead and to inspire others, deriving from personality characteristics; second, the fit with the context – being in the right place at the right time -; third, having a vision, holding to it and trusting your followers; and fourth, the capacity to contain the anxiety of followers in relation to achieving the vision are, in my view, essential characteristics of the successful traditional leader.

The traditional model is one therefore in which leaders, in expressing their vision, need their followers, in order to stay in role as their leader; and equally, followers need the leader in order to have a future to look forward to if not a set of beliefs to live by. In this model leaders and followers are inextricably intertwined through a dependency relationship.

I would now like to move on to look at leadership and followership within current societal dynamics. At the most recent Leicester conference there was some interesting pre-conference discussion about current organisational processes in relation to leadership. It implied that, these days, never mind the complexity of the organisational situation, you are supposed to get in there and sort it out. There was also a strong parallel with the idea that you can go in and sort Iraq out, as though a very simple kind of leadership is required to do so, not the more complex kind of leadership I have described as representing the traditional model.



This gave rise in my mind to these questions: Is there a kind of fundamentalism in the political situation, which affects current social reality and organisational systems? Are we witnessing the emergence of a kind of evangelical political leadership in which the central issue is the leader's beliefs and charisma? Is evangelical leadership what is required today as a counterbalance to the Islamic fundamentalism represented in its extreme form by bin Laden and Al Qaeda?

I believe there is evidence to suggest that this is so, and in my view it relates to two processes: the first is the change in the nature of authority relations stemming from World War II and the second, related process was the growth from the late 1950s and subsequent decline during the 80s and 90s of the dependency culture in the UK. This led first to a state of 'failed dependency' and later to a tendency to withdraw dependency from organisations altogether. The theme I am pursuing traces the process of how the experience of failed dependency whether in the East or the West can lead to the adoption of a Fundamentalist position as a way of finding some meaning in a chaotic world.

Let me talk about this in a bit more detail. Following World War II there has been a major shift in the dependency relationships between individual and institution in the UK. During the post war phase – the 1950s and 1960s – institutions such as employing organisations, trades unions, the National Health Service, the church and the government were regarded as reliable and dependable. The individual felt that they could place trust in these institutions and that, in response, an aspect of their lives would be cared for.

We were told by Harold MacMillan, who was Prime Minister during the 1950s: 'You've never had it so good!' And there was some evidence to support this view. Unlike today, the generation growing up during that time had the benefits of free education and health care, full employment and also, a fairly clear, conservative value system. These factors and the existence of an ideology around the notions of 'good' and 'bad' meant that institutions were effective projective receptacles and important containers for anxiety at every level. Destructive impulses as well as other feelings could be projected into these institutions and be safely contained by them. We had a dependency culture, which provided security and minimised anxiety.



At the same time, the generation that grew up during the 50s and 60s experienced markedly different authority relationships. For many thousands, their fathers had been absent, fighting for their country, during their infancies. These paternal authority figures had therefore been absent at an important time of their development. As young adults, this generation participated in and benefited from a loosening of societal reins. Some became hippies and flower power peaceniks. The advent of the Pill in the 1960s resulted in the liberation of women from the threat of unwanted pregnancy, dramatically altering sexual behaviour until AIDS came along. 'Make love, not war!' was the cry. In the political sphere a related push for a freer life was taking place - remember the liberalisation of the 1960s generally in Europe and particularly in Eastern Europe – think of Dubcek, for example, in Czechoslovakia, invoking an image of a 'Prague spring'.

In my view, these events represent the start of a loss of respect for paternal authority resulting from failed dependency through absence within the institution of the family. Subsequently, this had a dramatic effect on how that generation behaved once they themselves became parents, being less able to mobilise appropriate paternal authority as a containing element in parenting their own children. Some behaved with their children more as siblings than as parental authority figures. They are now the parents and grandparents of the current generation of non-voting 20-35 year old citizens, including those protesting against capitalism and globalisation.

The argument I am pursuing immediately raises the question of what impact maternal authority alone had on this generation. During the war itself, I suspect that mothers were able to mobilise their own internalised paternal authority, but that their capacity to contain anxiety for their children would have been weakened because of the stressful circumstances under which they were surviving. Furthermore, many children were separated from their mothers during the war when they were evacuated to safer areas to avoid the bombing, leaving a number with residual feelings of insecurity. And then, after the war, fathers returned, often making their presence felt with a heavy hand and some, with a damaged capacity for relating to members of their families.

I think that although life for women today is very different from 50 years ago, our internalised, shared experience is of dependency on a mother figure from whom even in today's climate of equal



opportunities, we expect nurture. This complicates the maternal authority relationship in other settings.

Evelyn Cleavelly has pointed out how hard it is for a woman in authority to find the right balance between being experienced as the 'good' mother and the 'bad mother'. Most images of leadership and authority, certainly in the UK, are still male. Consequently both men and women experience some reluctance to being subordinate to a woman in a work situation. And most exceptions are born from resisting the stereotype.

This is further complicated by the fantasy that women are more powerful and dangerous than men. Ancient mythology would support this view and have us know that before god was a 'man' 'he' was a woman. Female goddesses preceded representations of male gods. So probably, even God had a Mum! And this is true of our experience of the family system. Cleavelly goes on to say: 'So a woman given primary authority for a work group, faces within herself and from her staff a dichotomy between the picture held in the mind of the ROLE of leader and the sex linked picture in the mind of woman – internally inherited and socially learned and which, like it or not, forms for the moment, part of the furniture of our inner worlds.' (1993 unpublished notes).

Returning to my historical perspective, during the 70s, together with economic shifts, the dependency culture I was talking about earlier began to break down and one view in the UK is that Margaret Thatcher was elected to power at an unconscious level to bring this dependency culture to an end. Images of her were often of a nanny, whose primary function was to make the citizen take their medicine as though they had been spoilt by having too much given to them on a plate. She herself said 'there is no such thing as society – there are only individuals' and although this was seen as very contentious at the time, in a way she was representing an important shift. What was markedly visible during her reign was an increasing fragmentation in society, represented by a loss of containment. This was particularly so in employing organisations, which no longer offered the security of a job for life and became increasingly instrumental in the way they treated individuals.

This failed dependency has included the churches, which have been seen as out of touch with prevailing values, which I think take two, increasingly differentiated forms. One is alienation and a loss of belief in anything, leading to fragmented individualism. But simultaneously there has been a growth of the evangelical wing of



the Church, emphasising belief in the Bible as written. Recently there has been the threat of schism in the Anglican Church when the new Archbishop, who wished to confirm a homosexual as a bishop, was forced to back down, giving way to the evangelicals, but with greatly undermined authority. I believe here in the Episcopal Church you have experienced a similarly contentious situation.

We are witnessing a parallel phenomenon of a loss of trust in government, evidenced by voter behaviour. The active use of non-voting is a good example of the cynicism and alienation expressed by an increasing proportion of the population.

My argument is that the breakdown of paternal authority relations since World War II has never been repaired, that paternal authority since then has been rejected in the UK, so that there is an increasing questioning of and challenge to authority figures in all walks of life.

Furthermore, the breakdown of the dependency culture during and after Thatcher's tenure in the 1980 and 90's has led to a withdrawal by individuals of their psychological investment in organisations. They have a much more instrumental approach to being an employee and to other facets of institutional life.

Self-employment has grown and is a real alternative to workplace authority relations. Eric Miller (1999) noted that 'at the societal level, the move has been from a reliable dependency culture, through 'failed dependency' associated with rage and alienation, and into a culture of non-dependency, with self-interest as the norm and a widening gap between rich and poor as a consequence.' He went on to say: 'The shifts in the work organisation have been similar.' But, unlike me, he took an optimistic stance and suggested that by the late 90s we were moving into a less selfish and less uncaring society, with a drive in the workplace towards partnership. I think there are big question marks about this.

More recent events seem to confirm that organisations and their leaders are increasingly instrumental towards employees. It was reported in May that: 'The Accident Group, Britain's biggest personal injury claims company, sacked nearly 2,500 staff yesterday, many of them by text message, some by e-mail. Salaries for the past month were also cancelled.... Some workers looted the Accident Group's premises in Manchester, Birmingham



and Liverpool, taking computers and other equipment as compensation for lack of pay and redundancy money.'

This behaviour is an example of the rage inherent in failed dependency. Are we somewhere on a continuum, starting with failed dependency generating rage and helplessness, mobilising feelings of alienation, withdrawal and finally, driving the individual into a state of despair from which a fundamentalist belief system might be perceived as an attractive way of climbing out of the pit of despond and dispossession?

So, coming back to leadership and followership and taking into account personality development, systemic context and the present societal dynamics of withdrawal of dependency, what can we say about our Prime Minister, Tony Blair both as a man and as our present leader? And what kind of leadership does Blair exercise?

First, Blair the man. His formal biography states that Tony Blair was born Anthony Charles Lynton Blair on May 6th 1953 in Edinburgh, Scotland, which means that he is now 50. He went to a Scottish public school and in 1975 graduated from Oxford in Law. Whilst there he sang and played guitar with the band, Ugly Rumours. After graduation he left London and briefly worked in Paris as a bartender and insurance clerk. He later completed his training in a law firm following in his father's and brother's footsteps. There he met Cherie who became his wife, and he became a lawyer specializing in employment and industrial law. During that time he joined the Labour Party and in 1983, won a newly created seat in Parliament representing Sedgefield, a northern coal mining region near his home town of Durham. In 1994, aged 41, he became the Labour Party's youngest leader ever and at the age of 44 he became Prime Minister.

The informal story of Blair's history is actually much more interesting. One biography suggests that Blair in his oft-repeated affirmations of family values, has told of his good fortune in coming from a 'very closely knit family' and remains tied to a father who is a case study of an outsider seeking to become an insider.

Briefly, Blair's father was the illegitimate son of the daughter of a wealthy landowner, rejected by her and put out for long term fostering, brought up in near poverty and forced to leave school at 14 to find work. He took the name of his foster parents. Until 1994 Tony Blair had no idea of the origins of his Christian names – 'Charles Lynton'. His father's natural father was called Charles



Parsons and was a music hall performer who operated under the name Jimmy Lynton.

Blair's father became an active communist and later, after joining the army and rising from being a private to becoming a major, he made a transition to conservatism and became a leading Tory in the northeast. After the war he became an academic lawyer. At 42 this self-made man suffered a severe stroke, just at the point where he would have been making a transition from 'outsider' to 'insider' by entering the Commons. This event shattered the stability of the family. (It is interesting to note that when Tony Blair reached this age he had just become leader of the Labour party.)

His biographer suggests that Tony Blair internalised his father's experience of not belonging. Following his father's stroke, which was an important formative event for him, Blair also came to the view that life was very hard 'My father's illness impressed on me from an early age that life was going to be a struggle, that there were a lot of losers'. (Abse, p.113). Not long after, his youngest sister got Still's disease, a form of infantile rheumatoid arthritis and spent two years in hospital.

What about Tony Blair's mother? Hazel Blair came from a conservative Protestant farming community bordering Ulster. She was described by Tony Blair as 'the cement' that kept the family together' (Abse, p.94). Hazel Blair, having helped her husband recover from his stroke under rather straightened circumstances, died aged 52 from thyroid cancer when Tony Blair was 22 and had just graduated from Oxford. His brother, Bill Blair, said ' The death of his mother affected him every bit as much as his father's stroke. I think people have tended to underestimate the role my mother played in forming Tony's view of life. The effect of our father's stroke on Tony has often been analysed... (but) I believe it was a combination of things that gave him the drive to succeed.'

Thus Blair had quite a traumatic family background with considerable uncertainty, depression and grief. He had to grow up very quickly. Failed dependency and a sense of not belonging appear to have been features of his experience and one might speculate on how far such experiences have unconsciously drawn him to a more evangelical way of operating as a politician.

University for Blair was dominated by religion and rock. According to one biographer (Abse p.97 op.cit) the key relationship for Blair during the undergraduate phase of his life was a man called Peter



Thomson, a 36 year old ordained priest, a mature student whom Blair found 'spellbinding'. Under his influence, Blair turned to religion and was formally confirmed as a member of the Protestant Church. With his help and introduction to the thinking of various philosophers, Blair felt that by 1994 he was able to integrate the philosophical theory of Christianity with left of centre politics.

Now for Blair, the leader. Blair's leadership was strongly challenged when in February 750,000 people in London marched in protest against the impending Iraqi war. The Archbishops of the Protestant and Catholic churches protested to him that his arguments could not be made on moral grounds and warned him of dire consequences. There was a real sense of a leader who had not brought his followers with him. He was certainly not exercising leadership in the traditional way, indeed Blair was at risk of losing his job.

An inability to take his followers with him was clearly observable on February 26th 2003, when a mass mutiny by more than 120 Labour MPs over war with Iraq left Blair facing a perilous moment in his premiership. The rebels were among 199 MPs – almost a third of the Commons – who voted against early military action to disarm President Saddam Hussein. It was the biggest revolt against any governing party in parliamentary history and it served notice on Blair that he would have to win a second UN resolution to avoid his future being called into question

By mid-March Blair had strengthened his authority as a national leader despite another big rebellion by Labour MPs. It was acknowledged by the Home Secretary the following month after the war (The Times, Saturday April 26th) that he would have resigned with Tony Blair had many more Labour MPs joined the revolt against war in Iraq in the crucial Commons vote on March 18th.

At the same time (March 18th, The Times), a political commentator said: 'Although Blair's position will be secure in the event of a quick and relatively painless war, the Left will continue to plot against him much more aggressively than in the past. He will also have to accept that his position has been permanently weakened by the widespread view among the British public, especially women, that he has recklessly put British lives in danger and gone 'a bit mad' (Ominously, this is a phrase people started to use about Margaret Thatcher in her last year in power.)



On April 1st, 2003, there was a letter to The Times, following another article suggesting that Blair was behaving a bit pottily, similar to Thatcher in her final year and headed The 'madness' of Tony Blair: 'Sir, There is clear observational evidence from the Prime Minister's most recent performances which, in my view can be substantially linked to a delusional state. Tony Blair looks tired, mentally exhausted, totally fixated (obsessed) on this one main objective, but lacking clear thinking and objectivity in his judgements and decision-making capabilities. What is more worrying, in terms of his leadership, is the lack of any perspicacity from those closest to him. Leadership requires others to follow, but not without question. Gordon Brown (*Chancellor*) may be best placed to restore a level of sanity, but any move on his part would inevitably be interpreted as a leadership challenge. But perhaps this is what we now need.' (letter from Mr Andrew Veitch Walker, in the Western Isles)

By April 20th the following was being said about Blair: 'He has fought a war against the wishes of his party and the opposition of the public. He has confronted rebels and brushed aside critics. He has emerged victorious from military action, although the longer-term consequences of invading Iraq remain uncertain. What does not destroy me makes me stronger, argued Friedrich Nietzsche, the philosopher. After gambling his premiership on Iraq, Blair is now, say some supporters, better placed for bold action on the home front than ever before.'

By this time Blair was looking more relaxed. He acknowledged that he had viewed the war against Iraq as a resigning issue. He said that he believed so strongly that what he was doing was right, he was prepared to go it alone. As a committed Christian, Blair has often been mocked in the newspapers for his somewhat evangelical oratory. I think he has been exhibiting a fundamentalist form of leadership in which followership is secondary to belief and belief is based on clear values of 'good' and 'bad'.

Making the world comprehensible by passionate views, which encourage the kind of splitting that we associate with the paranoid schizoid mental state may be experienced as quite desirable in a world undergoing chaotic and rapid change. Without suggesting that what we are experiencing is akin to a Sharia interpretation of the Koran (*Sharia being the methods and laws that govern implementing the Koran, one where the Imams interpret how particular actions, such as prayers, which are not laid down specifically in the Koran, are to be carried out*), I think a similar



trend can be seen in the churches in the UK and the US of reversion to a more literal interpretation of the Bible. And it may be no coincidence that Clinton and Bush also grew up within the Evangelical Church.

Certainly, Tony Blair is the most Christian of socialists and under his leadership there has been a tremendous growth in the Christian affiliate organisations of the Labour Party. It is not unusual for party leaders to claim that their Christianity informs or is the source of their political commitment. But Blair seeks to take it further by linking his politics with the notion of resurrection and rebirth as though he is exercising a kind of fundamentalist religious leadership.

Bearing in mind that, from a psychodynamic perspective, what you think you are doing at one level may be very different from what you are doing at another, I would suggest that Blair's leadership has two rather different facets, the one to do with personal ambition and the other with societal meaning. So, at a personal level I think Blair may be demonstrating a particular leadership style in order to make his mark as a statesman who will be remembered historically in the same light as Winston Churchill. This has to do with his ambition and has no doubt largely been satisfied by being the longest serving prime minister and by being granted the Congressional medal during his lifetime.

However at a macro – societal - level my hypothesis is that he represents a change in the nature of leadership. When he came to power, it was on a wave of optimism and investment in his relative youth, idealism and energy. There was a hope that socialist values would produce important change in society. People were prepared at best to follow his vision and capacity to take them with him and, at worst, to give him the benefit of the doubt for a while. His vision seemed to represent important values and ideals.

Eight years later this followership has fallen away because Blair has shown that although he has vision, he is unable to implement it. He can only articulate his own beliefs, which take him more and more out on a limb. The growing gap between Blair the leader and we, who should be following him, has led to a loss of trust and increased alienation in our society.

Unconsciously, partly as a response to this failed dependency in society and partly as a reaction to the growth of fundamentalism in Islam, we are witnessing the rise of evangelical Christian



leadership, evidenced by a shift in the way Blair has exercised his role. With this type of leadership, if you are proved right, your followers are either relatively quiescent, confining themselves to sniping from the sidelines or alternatively, they will follow you with unquestioning fervour. If you are proved wrong, however, you are crucified. So far, Blair has just about survived.

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