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Disclosing the Spirit in Evangelical Leadership Discourse

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Abstract: This article offers a theological reflection on the leadership discourse of four senior evangelical leaders in the Church of England. The justification for a discourse-led approach within the discipline of practical theology is that discourse is itself a socially informed practice. Discourse is constructive for meaning-making and has ongoing constituting effect for practice. Thus, any theological bias found in evangelical discourse is of interest since that discourse has a practice-shaping effect. Using the method of content analysis, I undertake an audit of four leadership texts to find out how often God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are referenced. The content analysis reveals a quantitative disparity. The Person of the Spirit is referenced far less, and any references to Spirit are qualitatively limited. These quantitative results offer evidence to suggest that a full account of the Divine Move that is Spirit, and the leading activity of the Spirit, fails to be disclosed in these texts. I suggest that these findings indicate an imbalance in the discourse which I hope prompts evangelicals to further reflect on, and explore, the place of the Spirit in their theology and practice.

Keywords: evangelical; leadership; discourse; spirit; practice

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1. Introduction

For this Special Issue on 'Disclosing God in Action', I would like to offer a theological reflection on how God in Trinity is disclosed in the field of practice that is evangelical leadership discourse within the Church of England.

If I take as a theological starting point that God is a revealing God who wants to be known and made known in his activity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then I would like to propose that how the Third Person of that Trinity—the One who will guide into every truth (John 16.13)—is revealed theologically in the constituting action that is the discourse of evangelical leadership matters. It also has import for the ongoing practice of leadership by evangelicals, which, because of the significant presence of senior evangelical leaders in the Church of England, will have an impact on the established church too.

In this article, to summarize, I analyze the books of four evangelical Anglican leaders, and using the method of content analysis I investigate how these texts on leadership reveal God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I find that there is a quantitative difference in how often the Spirit is referenced compared to the Father and Son, and a qualitative difference in how the Person of the Spirit is delineated; I find limited articulation and expression in these texts of the Spirit's action in leading leaders. Accordingly, it would seem that there is an imbalance in the way the Spirit is being disclosed by these authors. The reason why I think this is worth highlighting is because, by reason of the linguistic turn in the social sciences, it is now understood that there is a dialectical determining relation between discourse and practice. And so, any imbalance found in the disclosure of the Spirit's move and activity in discourse invites further reflection and investigation into how the Spirit is engaged in evangelical leadership practice.

I propose, therefore, that my exploration of these texts can contribute to the discourse of evangelical leadership by prompting constructive conversation around how senior evangelical leaders might better reveal the leading of the Spirit in their own discourse and then encourage engagement with pneumatology in public ecclesial leadership practice. It also raises a broader discussion about how evangelical leaders talk about being led by the Spirit, about the experiential aspects of a practice of discernment, and how a strengthened practical pneumatology might be developed for leaders.

2. Context

The timing of this article is serendipitous as the subject of ecclesial leadership is once more in the public spotlight, and senior Anglican evangelical leaders are the focus of much attention. It is a critical cultural moment. And therefore, what evangelical leaders say about their leading and leadership, and how they make decisions on our behalf, is significant for evangelicals like me embedded in parishes throughout England.

In addition, focusing on the subject of leadership is timely because the postmodernist cultural remit is requiring something quite different from the church. Ecclesial leadership therefore needs to find a way to lead in this new cultural complexity where experience, embodiment, and the networked self are the currency of connection. In order to speak this new 'language', leaders, I suggest, will need to be comfortable with a language of spiritual intelligence, and of spiritual practicing that is meaningful and shared, and that avoids abstraction. That is, 'spiritual' leadership is not me performing my own 'spiritual exercise', and you performing yours (depending on your personal preference or style), and then us operating functionally, organizationally, and mechanistically as before, such that what we understand to be 'spiritual' is abstracted and left out of our conversation and personal interactions.

Rather, spiritual leadership is about shaping and influencing how we come together in spirit to listen and discern the move of the Holy Spirit in practice in a shared, and what Zahl calls a 'practically recognizable', way. Zahl's use of the term 'practical recognizability' is to 'draw attention to experience of the work of the Spirit in the world, in bodies and in time. . .Thus, if we wish to correct a tendency towards abstraction in theological discussions of the Holy Spirit, an excellent way forward is to begin by focusing on the more concrete, experiential dimensions of the Spirit's work' (Zahl 2020, p. 75). And I am suggesting, in relation to evangelical leadership, that we must begin by paying attention to what we say, write, and teach.

However, how evangelicals relate to the Third Person of the Trinity, doctrinally and in practice, has been the subject of difference and disagreement. 'The bane and bog of most evangelical theology for the last century has been the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Within the evangelical movement it has either bogged down in the sinking quagmire of debate or hovered emptily in the state of banality' (Cross 2007, p. 93). That said, certain trends and patterns have been clear. As Derek Tidball notes, older understandings of the Holy Spirit centered around his role and work in conversion and sanctification, but there was 'not really any interest in his role outside the church' (Tidball 1994, p. 229).

Looking back at older evangelical texts, Tidball notes that in 1890 in the book *Evangelical Theology*, there were four chapters on Christ and two on scripture, but not even one chapter on the Holy Spirit. In other works the activity of the Spirit was subsumed into commentaries on grace. According to Tidball, the Spirit does not become much mentioned until the late 1960s. He makes the point that 'the place of the Holy Spirit in evangelicalism was secure in theory. In practice it was a different matter' (Tidball 1994, p. 229). In the intervening years, there have been various 'waves' of interest, as in 1994 when there was a renewal of interest in, and experience of, the activity of the Spirit. This seems primarily

to have focused on the Spirit's role in empowering believers, the charismata, and the miraculous worked out on a personal level. Now, thirty years on, how is that interest in pneumatology being worked out in the leadership discourse?

This question is a personal one, because I am evangelical, I am ordained as a priest, and I have been a long attendee of the Church of England, but it arises in the context of my research into the wider discourse of leadership in the Church of England for my DPhil at the University of Oxford. The public discourse of leadership in the Church of England has thus been the subject of my attention for a few years.

As an ordained priest in the Church of England, my evangelical priorities have been subservient to, and have operated within, the pre-set discursive boundaries and ideational formations of the leadership discourse of the national church for both good and ill. Now, as a researcher, however, I have been afforded the time and perspective to take a more critical view. It is from this position that I now want to interrogate the evangelical leadership discourse.

Being ordained is an important element to admit in this analysis, but equally important is that I am a woman. And in this, I cannot claim to be neutral but confess a hermeneutic of suspicion around the inbuilt masculinity of leadership discourse. I recognize a personal leaning towards further undoing the hegemonic influences at play around the nature and work of leadership as male, as priestly, and as hierarchical, seeking renewed biblical allegiance to the priesthood of all believers. I am not unaware that this is also problematic theologically for some evangelical leaders.

There is no perfect selection of material that can exhaust a research question, so, aware of this and given the restrictions of space and word count, I have chosen texts by senior evangelicals who have current influence in contemporary leadership discourse. Further, these evangelical leaders represent different voices within the leadership discourse: the academy, the episcopacy, and both formal and more popular leadership training. The texts are by Andrew Watson, Bishop of Guildford; Justyn Terry, Vice Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford; James Lawrence, who pioneered the Growing Leaders course through CPAS; and then Ian Paul, who is of the academy and is a well-known writer of an evangelical blog. These different voices within the leadership discourse are grounded within Anglican evangelicalism and offer a snapshot of that evangelical discourse. And I would like to suggest that, given how many evangelicals now occupy senior leadership positions exerting influence within the church and beyond, this is a matter worth exploring.

Thus, concluding this section, it is from my position as student, leader, ordained, woman, evangelical, and Anglican that I want to try and fuse my evangelical 'horizon' (Gadamer 2013, p. 406) of priorities, assumptions, culture, and evangelical traditions to the theological horizon of these four texts on leadership to discover how God as Trinity is disclosed.

3. The Significance of Discourse

I acknowledge there is a presumption within practical theology to address 'what we do' rather more than 'what we say', but in adopting a discursive approach, I am not alone. So, for example, I found that Andrew Todd uses a discourse-analytic approach as a means of shedding light on how a group comes to share a particular hermeneutic of scripture (Todd 2013, pp. 69–85). By examining the flow of conversation of a Bible study group, he has found that a particular interpretative stance is adopted not because of a set reading strategy or a held theological position, but because of the turns in the conversation that allow for a negotiated and shared response. This work is of interest to me because it shows that the discourse, the shared conversation, operates as a carrier of meaning-making for the group as a whole.

Another example is the work of Marcus Moberg, who also offers an example of a discourse-led approach to a practical theological 'problem'. He has undertaken a large study of the formal leadership discourse of the established Western Protestant church to see how new market- and media-driven ideations within the leadership discourse have led to institutional and organizational change. His argument is that institutional change tends to be discourse-driven (Moberg 2017).

Moberg's work is helpful to me as he is also working at the boundary of theology and the social sciences and is intentionally seeking to offer an interdisciplinary contribution to the discussion around institutional change. He writes that, 'it is important to recognize . . .that actual, practical changes in the organizational structure, communication practices, and modus operandi of social institutions tend to be preceded by changes in discursive practices and changing institutional and organizational imaginaries' (Moberg 2017, p. 153).

As far as I can tell, he is the only other academic to undertake a content analysis of the formal leadership documents of the General Synod of the Church of England. His analysis shows that 'marketization' is already well underway in the English and European institutional church as he finds new ideational formations and discursive frameworks in place within the discourse.

A social theory of discourse and the field of critical discourse analysis was developed by Norman Fairclough (Fairclough 2013). It is 'critical' discourse analysis because it looks for absences, hidden values, and presumptions. I trace my approach to Fairclough in the first instance, though he stands in line with others who pioneered what has come to be called the 'linguistic turn'.

The 'linguistic turn' within the social sciences is the realization that language does not merely reflect reality as much as create and construct it. This realization that 'knowledge comes in linguistic form and cannot be considered apart from language' (Stiver 2001, p. 50) shifts language away from being merely a descriptive vehicle or a neutral information carrier to having wider significance in the construction and maintenance of meaning.

So, Gadamer writes, 'language is something other than a mere sign system denoting the totality of objects. A word is not just a sign' (Gadamer 2013, p. 434). Thus, it is not that knowledge or understanding or ideas are 'subsequently put into words' for transmission, but rather 'the way' that understanding and knowledge of a subject 'comes to' is *within* the process of expression itself. So again, Gadamer writes, 'the way understanding occurs—whether in the case of a text or a dialogue with another person who raises an issue with us—is the coming-into-language of the thing itself' (Gadamer 2013, p. 386). This is important if I am concerned with the disclosing of who God is—his nature and being—within leadership discourse.

Another influential voice is that of Wittgenstein, who argued that the specific, situated, and ongoing meaning of a word for a community is found in its usage; 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language' (Wittgenstein 2009, p. 25). So, meaning both comes 'to' in language (Gadamer 2013, p. 403) and forms or crystallizes in 'this' context, 'this' way, at 'this' particular time (Wittgenstein 2009). Language is thus the vehicle for 'meaning-making' in the widest sense for a social group.

Accordingly, and this is the point, it matters what leaders say, because the saying makes it matter—literally. It is *in the saying* that meaning and subjectivity come and are materialized into practice. Again, Wittgenstein pointed to this when he wrote, '[e]very sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life?—In use it *lives*.' (Wittgenstein 2009, p. 135). And it is such use that forms part of the 'language-game' of a community (Wittgenstein 2009, p. 8). Thus the presence of, and naming of, a subject (or object) in discourse becomes constitutive for the subjectivity of that subject (or object) as the ongoing use of its name instantiates and further establishes that one's subjectivity.

So, therefore, given that language use is understood to have meaning-making and practice-shaping effects, I want to lay out, very briefly, four propositions below that offer the theoretical groundwork and rationale for a discourse-focused approach.

The first proposition is that discourse is itself a mode of historically situated social action (Fairclough 2001, pp. 18, 19), a form of social practice. Fairclough viewed discourse as a form of social practice since it is not external to society; it is a process, and it is socially conditioned. Thus, although practical theologians usually associate actions with practice, in this instance, following Fairclough, I am arguing that discourse is a form of action and thus social practice.

Discourse in social theory is about the structuring of knowledge and ideas, and the structured ways those ideas are socialized and embedded linguistically. It can also refer to the more particular written or spoken expressions of knowledge within a field of knowledge, such as the practice of law. A discursive event within a discourse has a three-dimensional frame: the text itself, whether written or spoken, the production of that text, and its social context (Fairclough 2020, p. 3).

Further, if I accept that discourse is practice, by adopting the approach of T.R. Schatzki, discourse can be conceptualized as chains of texts and language events that interact so as to create a broader 'net' or 'field' of interactivity (Schatzki et al. 2001, p. 11). This approach foregrounds processes and the inter-relations between actors. According to this view, discourse is the wider 'field' of practice created by interacting leaders, texts, and discursive events. Evangelical leaders engage in both evangelical leadership discourse and the leadership discourse of the Church of England. These chains of discourse will interact at different points and times to create the broader field of practice. The four books being considered here will operate as 'links' in those respective chains of discourse.

Secondly, the reason why discourse is so significant is that discourse constructs meaning and then has ongoing organizing regulatory control such that 'discourse is seen as constituting reality for human beings' (Wetherell et al. 2001, p. 392). 'Discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting, and constructing the world in meaning' (Fairclough 2020, p. 64). Language use then is 'constitutive in both conventional, socially reproductive ways, and creative, socially transformative ways' (Fairclough 2013, p. 92).

Thirdly, it is acknowledged that there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and sociality (identities, relations, structures, and systems) such that the determining effect is mutual. In developing discourse analysis, Fairclough was seeking a systematic means to explore this dialectical relationship and the causality and determination between discursive practices, events, and texts, and the wider social and cultural structures and processes (Fairclough 2013, p. 93). Fairclough took a structuralist view which contends that a discourse is intransitive enough to be studied as causal; that is, though it is accepted now that all sociality is in flux, discourse does not change so quickly as to be without effect.

If I am relying on there being a dialectical relation, then I am also relying on there being an ontological difference between discursive (linguistic and semiotic) events and the social events or structures (non-discursive) in which they take place. This acceptance requires a critical realist epistemology (Fairclough 2013, p. 93). It is when one finds ontological separation between different kinds of social practices (discursive and non-discursive) that it becomes possible to question the determination of the one by the other (Wetherell et al. 2001, p. 392).

The fourth proposition is that within the expression of language there seems to be an intrinsic ability to generate change—a change capability. As we have seen, discursive practices contribute to reproducing social identities, relationships, and beliefs, regulating meaning within that sociality, and contributing to the transformation of a societal group or

even wider society (Wetherell et al. 2001, p. 65), all of which depend on a mechanism or potential within the discourse itself that enacts change.

Thus, it is not only that discourse or discursive practices can be manipulated and changed, for example, by rewording or by changing a sign, but that there seems to be *within the expression* of the words or sign itself *an inherent* creative ability. If I use theological language, one might say that there is a 'prophetic' quality to speech that is inbuilt into its expression. So, in the Christian scriptures, speech is portrayed as an act of creation, as for example in Genesis 1.3 and the refrain throughout the creation narrative, 'then God said, "Let . . ."'.

So then, based on these four theoretical propositions, I propose that examining how the one we call God 'comes to' as the subject in evangelical leadership discourse is important and worth examining because the texts and language have a materializing effect, structuring the practices and practice of leading, and determining whether leadership practice sits within the priorities of evangelicalism. Further, it is through and by discourse that evangelicalism itself interacts with the wider field of leadership discourse of the national church, thus itself having an ongoing determining effect.

However, if I am to consider how leadership texts reveal God, I cannot rely on structuralism in its positive register only. I need also to rely on structuralism in its negative register. What I mean is that if 'the meanings of words are derived not from fixed relationships between abstract signs, but from the accumulated dynamic social use of particular forms of language in different contexts' (Maybin 2001, p. 65) then, where there is no accumulated dynamic social use, meaning cannot derive.

Consequently, and importantly, if it is agreed that it is from the *usage* of a word or semiotic vehicle in discourse that meaning is constituted, and carried, and subjectivity is conferred, then logically, the reverse must also be true. Where a word, name, or sign is *not* present in the discourse, then meaning or signification cannot attach to that ideation. There will be a lack of identification and perception, and any potential for that subject or meaning to be structured into practice will drain away. Another way of stating this is that there will be no 'coming to' of subjectivity, no materializing of presence into practice. Within the discourse, that idea, or theme, name, or noun, will not derive meaning, and—if I refer again to Wittgenstein—it cannot live (Wittgenstein 2009, p. 135; Prior 2014, p. 377).

Thus, to conclude this section, discourse is active in creating, constituting, and determining practice. This action of discourse is often overlooked in practical theology, which is problematic. The discourse itself needs to be addressed if reforms to practice are not to be undermined or subverted by the ongoing reiterative effects of pre-existing ideations and in-built suppositions within the discourse.

4. The Content Analysis

I have chosen content analysis as the means by which I begin to explore the texts. In enacting this, I am following Lindsay Prior, who advocates content analysis as a method of textual analysis, as opposed to being only a means of data collection or a form of research design (Prior 2014, p. 375). She is arguing that this method is often too narrowly construed and that it is a useful research tool that can be integrated in and alongside other research strategies.

One of the benefits of this approach is that it allows for an integration of quantitative and qualitative modes of analysis in a systematic rather than an ad hoc fashion (Prior 2014, p. 377), and Prior goes on to offer examples of the ways in which qualitative analysis can be combined with systematic modes of counting (Prior 2014, p. 361). It is this ability to be used alongside other forms of analysis that means it is particularly useful within a practical theological endeavor. Prior writes, 'it is easily merged with various forms of discourse analysis and can be used as an exploration method or as a means of verification. Above

all, perhaps, it crosses the divide between 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' modes of inquiry in social research and offers a new dimension to the meaning of mixed-methods research' (Prior 2014, p. 377). It was for this reason that I first chose this route into the textual analysis of the wider discourse as part of my DPhil project, from which this article derives.

Prior writes that it is of course important to focus on the use and circulation of documents in practice, but this can be 'overly anthropocentric and subsequently overemphasize the potency of human action in relation to written text' (Prior 2014, p. 376). Thus, 'it is interesting to consider ways in which we might reverse that emphasis and instead study the potency of the text and the manner in which documents can influence organizational activities as well as reflect them' (Prior 2014, p. 376).

My rationale for choosing content analysis as the means to interrogate the texts is therefore that it offers a way to obtain an empirical starting point for answering my research question into how God is named in discourse. Additionally, it secures the originality of the project, as any future development of ideas or re-visioning of leadership discourse that I propose can be checked and held up against the results obtained. (In my DPhil, the content analysis was then incorporated into a wider interdisciplinary co-constructing conversation of 'search–encounter–transformation' drawn from the work of Mark Cartledge, who also advocates the integration of empirical methods (Cartledge 2003).

In content analysis, one assesses the presence or not of a certain word, theme, or concept, the unit of analysis in a qualitative data set. It allows a text to be mapped to discover the frequency of use of that 'unit of analysis'. The value of this method is that obtaining a set of quantitative figures means that any conclusion I make can be measured back against these figures, thus strengthening that conclusion.

The number of references to the unit of analysis reflects the importance, value, or priority being accorded to that subject. If there is a high frequency of that unit within a text, that is evidence of priority, importance, and subjectivity being assigned to it. Conversely, lower frequency will indicate a lack of subjectivity and less priority and importance, and suggests that that unit is less relevant within the document. Accordingly, by counting these references, the documents can be mapped for the relative priority of subject matter.

The unit of analysis is 'what' I am looking for in each of the texts; it is my theological focus. One of the marks of a successful content analysis is to make the unit of analysis easily identifiable enough, while remaining meaningful, such that another person who mines the same document will achieve the same result. This requires a unit of analysis that is clear-cut and unambiguous to achieve a consistent result.

Since I am asking how the discourse makes God the 'subject', that is, whether it gives a full account of who God is, the unit of analysis chosen is the simplest unit possible that denotes God—his name. The name of a person is understood to be the most direct way to refer to a person, and it is an irreducible and compressed way of indicating a relation with that One. The name indicates the presence of that person in the text, whether subject or object; it speaks of 'being'; it implicates identity, knowledge, and relationship and, with respect to God, his nature.

Accordingly, when a Person of the Godhead is named, it operates as an irreducible indicator of the coming into subjectivity of that Person in the text, and as a signifier of the relative subjectivity, that Person is afforded within the leadership discourse. The coming-to of subjectivity of that One named invites potential for relation with that One. There is a creative potential and a prophetic quality inherently contained in calling upon God as Father, or in addressing the Son, or in seeking the Spirit.

The frequency of references in the text was totaled, giving a numerical total for the frequency of references to that person in any one text. In this way, the material was converted into a specific quantitative account, revealing how many times the different

Persons of the Trinity appear in each text. The quantitative results I obtain in this analysis then allow me to make an assessment as to the relative priority given to, and the subjectivity of, the Persons of the Trinity within the texts. I can make a deduction as to how God is disclosed in these leadership texts, and I can begin to assess what this reveals theologically.

I acknowledge that in the scripture reference Matthew 28.19, Jesus tells his followers to baptize 'in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit'. This is the composite Name for the Three-in-One God. However, in the practice of our faith, we routinely refer to one or other of the relations in God, and it is this relative referencing that I am seeking to discover. Accordingly, choosing to identify the persons individually is not a derogation from the One-ness of God but rather a discursive tool allowing for a discrete analysis as to how the Three-ness of God is portrayed.

Analysis was undertaken in several readings. The first reading of the text assessed the subject matter and the overall thrust of the document. Then, the next few readings involved counting the names of the persons of the Trinity. Then, a more detailed lexical analysis was performed on word choices, links, and patterns. The lexical field signifies different priorities and values as the writers 'foreground' some ideas and 'background' others, so the use of verbs, rhetorical tropes, and metaphors, and any other linguistic devices that play a semiotic role, was noted.

I set myself guidelines. I was tempted to include personal pronouns, but in the end, this would have complicated the task, which might have undermined the strength of the results. I decided, therefore, that the reference by name was more conclusive, offering a neat and definable unit to count. In addition, it was decided that though 'Lord' most often referred to Jesus, it could be a reference to the Triune God. It was therefore not counted unless it was obvious from the context that this referred to Jesus.

On the other hand, the word God, although theoretically referring to God as Trinity or to a divine (rather than human) being, is often used to refer to the First Person, in contrast to the Son. So, references to God were placed under the Father column unless it was clear the term was Trinitarian, which it very rarely was. I justify this guideline on the basis that where God as Spirit is in view, the authors would particularize the notion of God to make that clear. Where there were multiple names in any one reference, it was counted as only one reference.

5. My Findings

In reaction to the inculcation of leadership strategies from the marketplace, Andrew Watson, Bishop of Guildford, has written *The Fourfold Leadership of Jesus* (Watson 2008). This book focuses on the 'Jesus model' of leadership. The premise is that Jesus never mentions his own leadership, teaches leadership, or creates formal leadership structures because leadership is based on discipleship. Watson then argues that discipleship is about obedience to four commands: come, follow, wait, and go (Watson 2008, pp. 17–19). Watson argues that it is these commands that likewise determine and shape ecclesial leadership.

Basing a book around a model of discipleship brings to the fore the importance of praxis, and so it raises the question 'how' can we lead like Jesus? The imperative for a practical integrating pneumatological perspective is thus arguably raised from the outset. However, Watson frames his work instead around the qualities of charisma, competence, and character, moving quickly to the statement that 'the greatest of these is character' (Watson 2008, p. 17). The chapters therefore focus on the characteristics that are 'like Christ'. It is notable that in this unpicking of the Jesus model, the Son is spoken of alone.

This is borne out by the figures. Overall, the Spirit is mentioned only 38 times in the ten chapters I considered, compared to 157 references to the Father, and 350 references to Jesus (see Table 1). In the four chapters of Part 3 entitled 'Wait for Me', referencing the

promise of Pentecost in Acts 1.4, the Spirit is mentioned just six times. This compares to 74 times to the Father, and 127 times to the Son or Jesus. Even in this section, the activity of Spirit or the leading of the Spirit in the Church is avoided almost completely.

Table 1. Andrew Watson: *The Fourfold Leadership of Jesus*, 2008.

	Father/God/Almighty	Son/Jesus/Christ	Holy Spirit
Part 2: 'Follow Me'; Chapter 5: 'Inspirational leadership'	8	37	0
Chapter 6: 'Character of the pioneer'	16	61	0
Chapter 7: 'Jesus' obedience'	21	35	14
Chapter 8 Walking the way of costly grace	18	26	11
Part 3: 'Wait for Me'; Chapter 9: 'Longterm leadership'	12	51	0
Chapter 10: 'The character of the farmer'	17	33	4
Chapter 11: 'Jesus' trust in the Father'	24	30	0
Chapter 12: 'Embracing the call'	21	13	2
Part 4: 'Go for Me'; Chapter 13: 'Multiplying leadership'	10	29	0
Chapter 14: 'The character of our Lord'	10	35	7
Total from 10 chapters	**157**	**350**	**38**

I also noticed the placement of the word S/spirit within the text. For example, often the two ideations of 'word' and 'spirit' are brought together, with 'spirit' coming second. In pages 81 and 94, this lexical pair is used eight times. By bringing them together in conjunction as a pair, there is an expression of equivalence within the sentence, but lexical priority is given to the 'word', even when the notation specifically capitalizes the S for Spirit, emphasizing the Third Person, for example, 'word and Spirit', or the phrase 'the word and the Spirit of God' (Watson 2008, p. 89). In this section, therefore, the Spirit of God is placed on par with the written scriptures, and is named second. Such linguistic construction is found in common parlance, but its repetition here is arguably indicative of underlying subordinationism at work.

Other references to Spirit in the text tend to be in terms of being Jesus' spirit, in terms of providing sanctifying grace to the Body of Christ, leadership being a gift of the Spirit, or are usually part of a scripture quote. Most often, the Spirit is referenced in connection with the 'gifts' or being a gift. The Spirit is only referenced about a tenth as much as the Son.

The *Growing Leaders* book and course is developed out of the Arrow Leadership Programme, which James Lawrence, an Anglican evangelical minister, introduced into the United Kingdom in 1998 (Lawrence 2004). This course, presented by the Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS), has reached many people across this country, and can be accessed internationally. CPAS is an evangelical charity that was set up to care for Anglican clergy, and in Synod paper GS 1982, CPAS is described as having 'significant experience of delivering leadership development within the Church'.

Like Watson, Lawrence also shapes his model for leadership around the person of Jesus of Nazareth. By way of introduction, Lawrence lays out the theological truths that underpin his conception of Christian leadership. The first is his sense of calling and rootedness in baptism; the second is the atoning work of the cross; the third is the 'resurrection and the coming of the Spirit'; and the fourth is the return of Jesus (Lawrence 2004, p. 16). Lawrence writes, 'Jesus is present with me through his Spirit, bringing about his transformation of my life' (Lawrence 2004, p. 16). Thus, the first reference to the Spirit in this book comes within the third 'theological truth', and within a Christological frame as Jesus' spirit, who is 'transforming me'.

In chapter 1, Lawrence writes about the 'gift' of leadership, and in this context mentions the gifts of the Spirit twice. These gifts are described as a 'tangible expression of the active leadership of the Lord Jesus in a congregation' (Lawrence 2004, p. 27). This kind of sentence expresses a familiar sentiment, but I suggest it exposes underlying theological suppositions that from a systematic theological position are problematic. For example, it is this kind of sentence that means that appropriate differentiation between the Persons begins to be eroded and that there is a subsuming of the role and gifts of Spirit into the ongoing activity of Jesus, or denying the Spirit a leading/guiding/steering role as a perfecting cause alongside that of Father and Son.

Lawrence frames leadership around function, position, talent, and call (Lawrence 2004, pp. 23–28), and the language he uses reflects the received forms and traditions of leadership within the Anglican church. Leadership is also understood to be a gift of God.

The analysis of ten chapters shows that the Spirit is named 41 times, whereas God is referenced 401 times, and Jesus 276 times (see Table 2 below). There are two places where the references are bunched: pages 95–96, where there are eight references to the role and work of Spirit in the early stages of Jesus' ministry, and page 127, with three references to the work of Spirit in character transformation. It is also noted that the discussion on prayer omits naming the Spirit. There is mention of the transforming work of the Spirit on page 127, and a mention of the convicting work of the Spirit on page 140.

Table 2. James Lawrence: *Growing Leaders*, 2004.

	Father/God/Almighty	**Son/Jesus/Christ**	**Holy Spirit**
Introduction	22	18	2
Chapter 1: 'What is Christian Leadership'	44	38	11
Chapter 2: 'Leadership Challenge'	6	10	1
Chapter 3: 'First Love'	89	95	7
Chapter 4: 'Living in the Red Zone'	Omitted as about stress		
Chapter 5: 'Finding God's Purpose'	140	49	10
Chapter 6: 'Character Dynamics'	26	36	6
Chapter 7: 'Godly Change'	55	25	2
Chapter 10: 'Discernment'	44	5	1
Chapter 12: 'Team Talk'	16	13	1
Total from 10 Chapters	**401**	**276**	**41**

In a similar fashion to Watson above, Lawrence uses the phrase 'the Bible and the Spirit'. It is noticeable that Lawrence repeats this lexical pair three times in one section (Lawrence 2004, pp. 31–32), but unlike Watson, Lawrence capitalizes the word Bible. This use of the proper noun is significant as I think it denotes more than specificity to the Christian scriptures but places them on par with the specific person who is Spirit. The repetition and the consequent reinforcement in the reader's mind of the phrase 'and the Spirit' instantiate the Spirit within discourse as second or as additional to scripture.

Lawrence then writes that 'faithfulness to the Bible and openness to the Spirit of God are like the two spotlights at a theatre' that bring illumination (Lawrence 2004, p. 31). I think this metaphor of 'two spotlights' is worth noting. It reveals an equivalence in the 'giving of light' that begins to be problematic theologically. This might just be a superficial semantic point, but it is this kind of textual example that reveals, literally, the kind of thinking that can settle around the Person of the Spirit and his activity.

In chapter 1, Lawrence sets out what he sees to be the Christian distinctives in leadership. The first is that leadership is 'founded on a relationship with God as Trinity': 'on the grace of Jesus, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit'. In this reference, which is probably derived from the liturgical form known as the Grace, there is a subtle re-structuring from the usual rendering of the Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Son is placed first. There is also interesting use of the term 'God' in place of the more usual 'Father' (Lawrence 2004, p. 30).

Later, Lawrence makes the point that Christian leadership is directed by and dependent on the Holy Spirit 'empowering and equipping'; the Spirit 'takes our strengths and weaknesses and transforms them' (Lawrence 2004, p. 30). This gives activity to the Spirit in the person, but not a wider leading role within the church. There are only two references that connect the Spirit to leading or leadership: on page 31, the Spirit of Jesus within guides and leads, and on page 96, the Spirit leads Jesus. Even chapter 10, which deals with the discernment of vision and leading people into God's purposes, has only one reference to the Spirit, on page 213.

Lawrence does offer a section on spiritual disciplines on page 73, and there are three references to Spirit. Lawrence writes on page 76, 'Change is possible, but only if we abide in Jesus. Spiritual disciplines help us do that'. At the end of the book, there is 'Resource 2', which does offer some practical help in discerning spiritual gifts. But what is noticeable here is that of only three references to the Spirit, two are a quote from another writer, and the third comes in a Bible text. There is no discussion about how one relates to the Spirit, or receives from Him, or is led by him in these areas.

The last sentence in the book, which also repeats the last line of the Introduction, serves to sum up the emphasis that is apparent throughout: 'May we be those who are led more by Jesus, lead more like Jesus, and lead more *to* Jesus' (Lawrence 2004, pp. 18, 249). This sounds grammatically pleasing. It communicates a sense of grounded truth being Christologically focused and because the construction of the sentence as a triple subconsciously resonates with the pattern of Trinity. However, I would want to suggest that the sentence reveals a deep theological weakness around the question left unanswered throughout: *how* might one be led by, or like, or to, Jesus if one does not emphasize the person, presence, and purposes of the Spirit? This is a similar critique to that raised in connection to Andrew Watson above.

From the counting, therefore, it is fair to say that the Spirit is apparent on the face of the text in 41 places, as a gift, in the life of Jesus, and for personal transformation, but otherwise the Holy Spirit is represented in a limited way. The Spirit is only referenced 10% as much as Father and Son—but the issue is more than numerical disparity. The placement of references, the way they are bunched in the text into one topic, or the way the Spirit is placed on a par with the written scriptures, or subsumed into the activity of Christ, raises deeper questions as to how the Spirit is understood theologically.

Justyn Terry, the Vice Principal and Academic Dean of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, wrote *The Five Phases of Leadership: An Overview for Christian Leaders*, in 2021. Working as Terry does, embedded within a college training ordinands, means that he is particularly influential within the discourse of the Church of England, and in shaping future leaders for the church. The leadership ideas assimilated while training at Wycliffe Hall will stay with those to be ordained and be a springboard for their approach to work. This therefore is a significant text representing input at formation for Anglican leaders.

Notably, in this content analysis, this is the first time I have found a chapter where the numbers of references to the Spirit exceed references to Jesus (Terry 2021, pp. 7–27). In this first section, there are 52 references to Father and God, 17 to Jesus Christ and 32 to the Spirit. However, what is noticeable here is that this section is about building trust and

character formation, and the necessity to grow the fruit of the Spirit. Thus, although the figures indicate a fuller pneumatological perspective, the context for these references is in fact limited and individualized rather than being about a shared or collective practical pneumatological leadership view.

Thereafter, the numbers fall back into the pattern we have seen emerging throughout this content analysis: in phase 2, the numbers are 15, 11, and then 7. In phase 3, the numbers are 32, 12, and 2. In the conclusion, the numbers are 11 to God and Father, 1 to Jesus Christ, and 3 to the Holy Spirit (see Table 3).

Table 3. Justyn Terry: *The Five Phases of Leadership*, 2021.

	Father/God/Almighty	Son/Jesus/Christ	Holy Spirit
'Phase 1: Establish Trust'	52	17	32
'Phase 2: Cultivate Leaders'	15	11	7
'Phase 3: Discern Vision'	32	12	2
'Conclusion'	11	1	3
Total	**110**	**41**	**44**

Phase 3 is about discerning vision. In this chapter of 16 pages, it is particularly noticeable, given that discernment is a gift of the Spirit, that the Spirit is only mentioned twice.

This means that though there is encouragement to discern prayerfully one's vision and core values, there are no practical pneumatological guidelines offered or practical tips as to how the gift of discernment is made apparent or is materialized within the life of the church.

The rest of the book stays within the pattern of the other books considered here. The five phases of leadership are to 'establish trust', 'cultivate leaders', 'discern vision', 'implement plans', and 'transition out', all of which can be applied to both ecclesial and secular contexts.

The last book I consider is from the Grove Leadership Series. Obviously, the Grove books are much smaller texts, but nonetheless, they are widely perceived as offering sound evangelical opinion and they are respected within wider ecclesial discourse. In *Evangelical Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities*, 2016, Ian Paul makes the point that '[a] nagging criticism of evangelicals is that they do not take spirituality seriously' (Paul 2016, p. 13). Paul therefore makes sure he does, and in this book, it is noticeable how many references there are to 'spirituality', even with a section on 'Evangelical Spirituality', which is unique in these texts. Yet despite this, direct reference to the Spirit is low. So, for example, in chapter 1, there are eight references to spirit or spirituality but no references to the Person of the Spirit from whom Christian spirituality or a life of Christian virtue derives. This is a similar critique to that leveled at Lawrence. It is a theological sleight of hand to argue for deepening spirituality when the person of Spirit is occluded. The Spirit is referred to four times in total. See Table 4 below.

Paul points out that different descriptions of 'evangelicalism' often relate to preferences in worship, but that these ought not to become 'theologies of identity': 'the danger is that these different descriptions become tribal loyalties, and the preferences within them derive from a tradition, or personality, or a temperament, rather than being rooted in respectful reflection together on Scripture' (Paul 2016, p. 12). This is a helpful point to make, and it seems to allude to the notion that a focus on Spirit and pneumatology has very often been viewed as being equivalent to having a 'worship' preference.

There is reference to 'listening to what the bible says'. Yet as with the other books considered here, the practical pneumatological guidelines needed for listening, or for

handling the Bible, are left vague. I am left wondering what an evangelical understanding of inspiration is.

Table 4. Ian Paul: *Evangelical Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities*, 2016.

	Father/God/Almighty Son/Jesus/Christ		Holy Spirit
Chapter 1: 'Being a Leader'	9	7	0
Chapter 2: 'Being Evangelical'	8	3	2
Chapter 3: 'Being Missional'	10	3	1
Chapter 4: 'Being Biblical'	4	0	0
Chapter 5: 'Being Engaged'	1	1	1
Total	**32**	**14**	**4**

6. Analysis

In content analysis, where high frequency of references to a subject correlates with high priority of that subject within a text, these figures suggest that a much higher priority is given to the Father and the Son by these writers. For whatever reason, the Person of the Holy Spirit fails to be disclosed in these texts to the same degree as the Father and the Son, and thus these texts reveal a disparity in the subjectivity that is afforded the Spirit. This is of course not to suggest that the Spirit is not active, but that these leaders, by not disclosing the activity of Spirit in full in their texts, fail to make His presence 'live' as subject for the readers—as per Wittgenstein.

It may be true that each individual writer had reasons for writing as he did, and of course the lack of referencing is not evidence of pneumatological minimalism in the writer's own life. Indeed, I am sure all four leaders would personally espouse a fully Trinitarian understanding of God, but overall, it is fair to conclude that these texts, which operate within the evangelical and broader ecclesial leadership discourse, offer only a partial or weak account of the Spirit in leadership.

Some may counter that such 'hiddenness' of Spirit is acceptable given the hiddenness or apophatic quality afforded the Spirit by the gospel writers (Stackhouse 2002, pp. 168–69) and, some might even argue, by Jesus himself. But I am not so sure the Spirit was 'hidden'. Rather, within an ecclesiology where Logos Christology is dominant, we interpret the gospel accounts in a particular way. Sight is lost of the incarnational presence of the Spirit in the life of Jesus who was conceived, baptized, empowered, strengthened, worked miracles, and was raised from the dead by the Spirit. There is no Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah except by the Spirit: Jesus was the Anointed One.

So then, the limited and low frequency of referencing to the Spirit found in these texts invites further reflection as to whether it can be theologically meaningful, or even practically meaningful, to write about following a Jesus model of leadership without foregrounding the Spirit as well. And because of the dialectical link between discourse and practice, by finding there to be an imbalance in the referencing and naming of God by way of content analysis, further questions and lines of inquiry are now raised as to how evangelical leadership practices disclose God.

My main qualitative observation from my reading of the texts is that practical engagement with the Holy Spirit—practical spiritual know-how—is left out of the treatment of leadership. I find an absence of practical advice about spiritual intelligence. There is a lack of spiritual 'handiness' realized in the leadership models being offered. So a chapter on prayer, for example, omits how to listen and intuit God, and the relation with Spirit is left abstracted. The question 'what does the Spirit leading look like or feel like or sound like?'

is left unanswered. Sensitivity to how one is led by Him, or how one practices spiritual leadership, or how the gift of discerning, for example, actually operates within a group in practice fail to be articulated, leaving such concepts abstracted within the discourse.

So for example, I think it is worth noting that, in the four books examined, I found no reference to the 'word' of God being discussed as the 'sword of the Spirit' (Ephesians 6.17, Hebrews 4.12), which ought to be of significance for evangelicals. This scripture text would seem to place the use of the words of scripture within the hands of the Spirit—suggesting pneumatological priority and an implied practice to the way the scriptures are to be interpreted and used. Instead, there is a common theme of equivalence between the Spirit and the scriptures. So, for example, Watson writes, '[p]ure dependence on the scriptures is not enough. Pure dependence on the Spirit of God is not enough. For we are fallible creatures and even a wholehearted commitment to be blown by the wind of the Spirit can all too easily drift into a growing acceptance of the spirit of the age' (Watson 2008, p. 84).

Watson is making a salient and wise point. But I think it reveals a nervousness about fully depending on the Person of Spirit who is God—in practice. It also implies that full dependence on the Spirit and depending on the scriptures are differentiable or separable activities, as though there was a legitimate either–or. Yet when rightly placed, dependence on the Spirit will incorporate dependence on scripture, which is itself both 'God-breathed' and the 'sword of the Spirit'.

This nervousness is also apparent when, later, Watson talks about his personal experience as leader of an evangelical charismatic church. In connection to being led by the prompting of the Spirit, he uses the words 'danger' and 'dangerously subjective' (Watson 2008, p. 95). Watson is therefore reticent in linking the Spirit's leadership into the actual practices of public leadership. Watson, however, is not alone, because it is difficult to find any references to how the leading of the Spirit might be grounded or materialized or recognized in the practicing of public ecclesial leadership in the other books too. There is no reference to public or corporate pneumatological practice that I can see.

Instead, I submit that these writers tend to fold the leading action of the Third Person of the Trinity into the operation of the Son, which, although is on one level theologically true, does not say all that is needed doctrinally about the Spirit. So, for example, the leading eschatological activity of the Spirit as a perfecting cause is subtly subverted because of this Christological priority. Active verbs fail to be assigned to the Person of Spirit and to the activity of Spirit, which suggests that a full account of the Spirit as Leader is therefore not made. The Spirit does not come to the fore as subject. The folding-in of the Spirit into the Son means that the Spirit is undefined.

In contrast, there is more willingness to engage with the topic of spirituality and spiritual practices, as with Lawrence and Paul, or in connection to the Spirit being a gift or in relation to the fruit of the Spirit, as with Terry. Lawrence does engage with spiritual disciplines and gifts, but his statement in relation to spiritual disciplines (quoted above) completely misses the point that it is the infilling and indwelling Spirit who enables us to transform, stick with new habits, etc. Just trying to follow Jesus harder will not work, and it might have been here, for example, that explanation as to how to engage with the Spirit in practice would have helped. Likewise, in relation to the discussion about gifts—there is no meaningful articulation as to how one relates to or feels or follows the Spirit in the exercise of such gifts.

As already mentioned, it is because of the known constructive and constituting link between discourse and practice that leads me to suggest that this leaning away from, and backgrounding of, Spirit in discourse is problematic for evangelical leadership. Discourse and practice are so closely and dialectically intertwined, having a meaning-making effect, that any theological bias away from the activity of the Spirit in evangelical leadership dis-

course raises questions as to how leadership practices incorporate the presence and leading of the Spirit in practice. Practices will be determined and shaped, and ongoingly constituted, by a leadership discourse that is Christologically strong yet pneumatologically ambivalent.

Thus, the question this sample content analysis raises for the purposes of this Special Issue is whether the trend that I have found in these four texts actually points towards a wider reality within evangelical leadership discourse. And, then, does this point to there being a weakly realized pneumatology in evangelical leadership practices in the Church of England more generally? If the Spirit is being backgrounded in discourse, then this suggests that there is a need for evangelicals to explore the practically recognizable dimensions of the Spirit's leading so that evangelical leaders can give 'a plausible account of the affective and experiential dimensions of the work of the Spirit' (Zahl 2020, p. 234) who is leading them and their churches. These figures therefore invite further analysis and a fuller working out as to what a theology of leadership would look like were emphasis to be given to both Son and Spirit—in practice.

7. Conclusions

To conclude, I have found a numerical disparity in the way the Spirit is named as compared to the Father and the Son in the four texts considered, which leads, arguably, to an incomplete representation of the activity and leading action of the Spirit of God. This suggests to me that there may be a disjunct between the Christological model on which leadership is being based and an expression of the concomitant pneumatology needed to practice it. Pneumatology is mainly framed as personal and private.

I would also like to propose that the constructing significance of discourse for ecclesial practice and practices has been overlooked in practical theology, and so I am asking the question, and wanting to raise for others to consider with me, whether a weak portrayal of the Holy Spirit in public evangelical leadership discourse might be unhelpfully affecting and shaping leadership practice. If there is a pneumatological deficit lying hidden in plain sight within leadership discourse, then can we begin to have the co-constructing conversation that starts to address this in order that future leadership decision making can be practically, and recognizably, Spirit-led?

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