Foreword

I am pleased and honored to have been invited to advance some thoughts as way of introduction to this book. The interest in spiritualism as a dimension of leadership and as a critical component of facilitating cultural-interface, and ultimately performance and success in human performance environments, is a growing phenomena, and yet it is a relatively recent and little understood influence. Although currently lacking a theoretical basis for behavioral guidance, spiritual leadership is attracting the attention of both scholars and practicing professionals. What is impressive in the presentation within following chapters – through which you will journey – is the effort made by the author to engage a systematic research strategy which uses the interplay between expert reflection, and personal view and experience to advance and inform the reader regarding a new theoretical and pragmatic leadership dimension – that of spirituality.

There has been a relative dearth of spirituality at work studies that have actually been conducted in Asia. Most of the research that has been conducted has tended to be conducted in the United States and, to a lesser extent, in Europe. This book, I believe, is one of the first empirically based studies to examine spiritual leadership within Asian organizations. Moreover the inter-faith nature of the study may serve to generate further interest because those few leadership studies have tended to be studies focused on one faith. By virtue of its cross-cultural focus, I anticipate the book and its notions will resonate with a growing band of cross-culture leadership scholars.

Discussing and advancing the notions in this book is timely because dealing with the implication and integration of spirituality beyond the traditional bounds of religious process and protocols is challenging and necessary in the world of complex global strategies and resulting cross-cultural dynamics. These dynamics present themselves simultaneously, and with regularity, at several levels. At the broadest social, political and economic level, the articulation of response processes to engage and understand this complexity has historically meant focusing on long-standing rules and rituals of statesmanship and/or social process.

These rules, like those of historic approaches to leadership, are grounded in prior generations’ understanding, and comfort with their circumstances. Today we are challenged to examine issues and the state of the world and organizations, and to give pause to consider the wisdom of continuing the status quo.
Modern leadership faces several challenges for which addressing emerging complex issues within old paradigms does not work. At the macro and micro social-economic and organizational functional levels, the need to facilitate parody of input and consideration regardless of political, social, and/or religious groundings is paramount to accomplishment. Today, leadership is challenged to successfully increase the integration of human dimensions into organizational systems and processes. The spiritual leadership notion advanced in this book reaffirms a basic principle that seeking and valuing personal connectivity is important – nay, critical – to goal achievement.

This book presents a story. In part it is the story of a personal journey of discovery over time. The journey begins with a desire to better understand a mystery and personal fascination. The journey ends with the implementation of a structured protocol of inquiry and understanding the implication of the information gained for both theory and practice of spiritual leadership.

This book reveals the observations of the author as he explores spiritual leadership, and is the fabric which the author uses to weave an intriguing tapestry of questions and propositions. Enjoy the journey, and enhance the experience when you put yourself into the story by using the text as a magic mirror of personal insight and reflection.

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