**Spiritual Leadership** by Tom Bandy

**Possible quotes for marketing the book:**

**Excerpt 1**

The four great threats to life (depression, dread, anger, and abandonment) are addressed by *role models*. These are leaders who have personally experienced, endured, persisted, and overcome the great threats to existence. It is not that they are perfect or that they have ultimately vanquished these threats. Yet they can speak and share experiences of personal struggle and spiritual victory that help and hearten distinct publics who are similarly beset. These *role models* empathize with the lifestyle segments around them and share their struggle. They can not only give tips and tactics and teach principles and ideas but also demonstrate at the risk of their very own lives how to overcome life threats and dare to hope for the future.

**Excerpt 2**

In Christian theology, spiritual leaders are themselves *symbols* and *portals* to infinite hope. They *symbolize* hope that lifestyle segments can overcome the great threats to existence. More than this, they are themselves *portals* through which God can reach through the barriers of existence to bless life segments with hope when their own efforts fail. Spiritual leaders are both *useful* and *used.* They can teach, preach, coach, counsel, facilitate, witness, and mobilize to help lifestyle segments lead effective and meaningful lives. But more than this, they are conduits of grace, as God is revealed through their lives.

Spiritual leaders connect lifestyle segments with the “real presence of Christ.” The eight existential anxieties are addressed by eight experiences of the mystery of incarnation. But it is the spiritual leader who is the catalyst for this grace. Their real calling is to risk their lives to overcome the four great threats to existence with the four great acts of courage that precipitate hope.

**Excerpt 3**

Today, spiritual leadership is *an act of courage.*3 Courage and hope are intrinsically related. Courage is the source of hope. Hope is the outcome of courage. Spiritual leadership is an act of personal courage that precipitates public hope. It is this link between courage and hope that authenticates the spiritual leader and generates a spiritual following. The leader may be ordained or lay, male or female, old or young. The followers may be rich or poor; educated or uneducated; culturally homogeneous or diverse. Yet there is a pattern that can be traced between the kind of courage demonstrated, the kind of hope generated, and the particular public or lifestyle segment that is likely to follow such a leader.

**Excerpt 4**

Every lifestyle segment wrestles with unique existential anxieties, struggles to overcome unique life threats, and seeks unique experiences of incarnation. In a sense, there is not just *one* identity of spiritual leadership but *several* identities of spiritual leadership. This makes it impossible for clergy to be relevant to everyone and urgent that clergy are at least relevant to someone.

This challenges the entire ecclesiastical or denominational system that has developed over the centuries of Christendom. …

It assumes that people are people, much the same everywhere; and clergy can be moved around at will and be effective in any location. …

The explosion of lifestyle diversity today undermines that assumption. Spiritual leaders are relevant to some lifestyle segments and some contexts but are ineffective in others. This is not a matter of training, and no amount of training will make them relevant. This is a matter of identity and identification. Clergy are relevant because they share the existential anxieties of a particular lifestyle segment and have personally experienced Christ in the way that these particular seekers seek God. They have confronted the life threats that dominate a lifestyle segment’s behavior and have demonstrated the courage to overcome that threat. This does not make any one clergyperson better or worse than other, just as it does not make any lifestyle segment better or worse than others. They are just different. And the difference will not be overcome by continuing education alone. It will only change through the complex and often mysterious interface between spirit and culture.

**Meme 1**

If there is anything “sacred” about being clergy, it is that clergy are transparent to the hope that is revealed through their courage; and they are faithful to sustain that hope for a particular public. There are two sides to being clergy. One is functional. The other can perhaps best be described as sacramental.

**Meme 2**

Today men and women enter the ministry thinking it is a career choice. Many have come from careers in other sectors and morphed into ministers, believing that the same skills would be useful to the institutional church. They soon discover that ministry is no longer a career. It is really a calling and a risky one at that. Those who are in it to reflect on theology, choreograph a worship service, play at philanthropy, preserve a tradition, or raise their self-esteem quickly fade. Only those who are in it as a response to the gospel, longing for a deeper relationship with Christ, staking their lives to bless strangers to grace, create a better world and surrender their egos will endure.

**Meme 3**

Just fifty years ago clergy believed that people would know we were Christians by our love. After all, the world was coming together and life was getting better. Today we see the world fragmenting and diversifying, and life is getting harder. Fifty years from now clergy will believe that people will know we are Christians by our hope.

**Excerpt 5**

We all know that exploding diversity requires spiritual leaders to *function* in new ways. Each leader has unique limitations to how much he or she can learn and how far he or she can adapt, but it is possible for a leader to transition to a new *function* of leadership. The *enabler* might learn the skills of a *CEO;* the *discipler* might learn the skills of a *guru*; the *mentor* might become a *pilgrim* and vice versa.

However, the fluidity of lifestyle diversity demands more. It is much harder for spiritual leaders to transition from one *identity* to another *identity.*

This requires a more radical humility. Spiritual leaders surrender themselves to the Spirit, immerse themselves in different cultures, and allow God to reshape and mold their lives and relationships for different purposes. It is much harder to become a completely different person, with a completely different set of behavioral habits. In a sense, it requires the courage *to be courageous*.

A whole new set of existential anxieties dogs your days; different threats to life and well-being frustrate your hopes. And then you experience a different form of incarnation, and greet Jesus the Christ in a whole new way, and are given courage you never had before. Suddenly your heart bursts for lifestyle segments you never really understood.