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The Clapham Sect:

An Investigation into the Effects of a Deep Faith in a Personal God on a Change Effort

By

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University of Richmond
Richmond, Virginia
May, 2000
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An Investigation into the Effects of a Deep Faith in a Personal God on a Change Effort

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, Christians, those who have followed the ways and teachings of Christ, have sought to ameliorate a myriad of inequalities including poverty, poor treatment of people with physical disabilities and slavery. For Christians, these efforts are directly taken from the conduct of Jesus Christ between 30-33 ad. During this time the Gospels (three of which are accepted by scholars as eyewitness accounts) recorded that Christ healed paralytics, fed the needy, and declared that society’s “last shall be first.” The practice of actively applying principles of equality continued, as the first Christian church recorded in Acts shared all of their possessions amongst themselves and with those in destitution. Despite the fact that the Bible describes the goodness of these types of actions, one may certainly wonder whether something more than a simple example and suggestion inspires religious groups like the Salvation Army or persons such as Mother Teresa.

Is there anything about religion that empowers change movements? How have these Christian efforts been able to sustain support and to increase their effect on the injustices around them? The following paper will examine how faith in a personal and active God shapes labor towards social harmony. More specifically, this paper will research one particular group of Christians in history who attempted to change their society. The paper uses the Clapham Sect, also known as the “saints”, led by William Wilberforce, as a case study. They were committed to abolishing slavery in Britain in the late 1700s and were successful after 40 years in achieving their goal. The intent of this research is to determine, through study of the Clapham Sect, the impact of Christian faith on a change effort. Specifically, the case study is designed to explore the effect of faith
on the Sect’s motivation, vision, short-term objectives, and ability to sustain action in pursuit of the abolition of slavery.

This study was undertaken primarily out of an apparent inability of leadership material to answer the question of “Why” in their studies of change efforts. Despite many scholarly materials on how societal alterations occurs and steps to make social action successful, little has been written regarding the internal influences on individuals involved in these efforts and on how these influences make the leader or group successful. This particular case study has been chosen because of its clear portrayal of various leadership theories including catalytic leadership, charismatic leadership and change theory. Moreover, writings about the Clapham Sect clearly evidence that the foundation of their endeavors is their faith. The scholarly purpose of this paper is to build the bridge between the academic exploration done on societal change movements and the research done on leadership within religious organizations. This link will be done though analysis of the role of faith in the slavery abolitionist ventures of the Clapham Sect.

**METHODOLOGY**

This project investigates how and to what degree faith in a personal and active God can be a mainspring for societal transformation. Before explaining the undercurrents of a case study and the justification for choosing the Clapham Sect as a prime example into which to delve, it is first necessary to elucidate the reasoning behind the fundamental question, the driving force of the project—that is this query of belief as a stimulus to change. Upon first glance, readers as to why “faith” has been distinguished from the term “religion” seek an explanation. This differentiation has been constructed in
order to emphasize the dissimilarity between routine, mechanized practices and belief. Faith is an active belief, which cannot be compared with a bland use of the word "religion," as it can be meant to be void of faith or any belief which would propel one to act in a specific manner. Moreover, the use of this term allows for belief, which may lie outside the boundaries of organized religion. In the creation of the driving question, the object of faith has also been carefully chosen because again, one can have "faith" or apparent faith in a God who is entirely removed from earth and its happenstance, but this type of faith is rarely sufficient for inspired action. It seems that for belief to be a prompting force in any person's action, the object of faith must be concerned with what happens on earth and more specifically about individuals. Thus, the pursuit has been constructed to incorporate an active faith where actions on earth make a significant difference to the object of that belief.

In order to effectively examine true motivation and its effect on action, a simple cursory overview and comparison of several social movements will not suffice. In fact, it is essential that one give careful, meticulous examination into one particular example in order to obtain a whole understanding of the people involved, the surrounding context including its influence on the acting person or group and the full result of the effort; an intimate yet objective relationship must be formed between the researcher and the situation. This scrutinizing analysis therefore can only be understood as a case study where "the phenomenon under study is indistinguishable from its context."1

Having established the requisite basis for the use of a case study the question must be posed, "Why use the Clapham Sect?" Is this an optimal choice to study? The Clapham Sect is indeed a good fit for such a study for the following five reasons. First,
by researching not only a single individual who was a primary mover of change but a
group of individuals, one has the ability to observe multiple people in the same context in
order to distinguish between various intentions and influences if indeed the group does
not all have the same reason for their efforts. The second rationalization for the selection
of the Clapham Sect is that besides observation immediately following the abolition of
slavery in England, little in-depth analysis has been undertaken. Thus, it is possible and
likely that no investigation of the Clapham Sect has utilized recent leadership theory or
any leadership theory, as the academic field is relatively new. Case studies can be
explanatory and not just exploratory and descriptive. According to Robert Yin,
explanatory studies like this thesis will show a cause and effect relationship, explaining
which causes produced which effects. In this paper, the causes of the Clapham Sect’s
desire and perseverance to eliminate slavery will be established as variables and the
correlation between their faith and their work will be explained. The originality of this
endeavor further shows its usefulness as a bridge between isolated theories on motivation
or religion and leadership. Thirdly, the material already written on the Clapham Sect
unashamedly points to faith as a factor of significant weight on the quest for abolition.
Furthermore, the historical nature of this case study in that the Clapham Sect’s effort took
place between the late 1700s and the mid 1800s adds to the validity of the findings. As
previously stated, one must study the full environment of the change agents in order to
establish the exact role and weight of belief as an influence, and this entire context
includes the complete result of the change effort. While most actions have effects, which
will continue to evolve, the 150 years since the decree of abolition allows enough time

2 Ibid, 15.
for major changes produced by the Clapham Sect to evidence. The final consideration in this choice of study is that by dissecting and unearthing a change effort, which involves the abolition of slavery, the door is open for successors to resume study and transcend the findings of this project. One possible type of continuation is that of comparison between various countries and/or movements.

Besides the aforementioned valid justification for the use of the Clapham Sect as the subject matter for such a study, the author’s already described inherent interest in the situation can not be ignored. This being stated, the question must be resubmitted, “Must it be a case study?” Again, a resounding “yes” because the nature of the project is necessarily context specific, the motivation and results are only illuminated by the times in which the revolution occurred.

As previously confirmed, the goal of the case study method is to incorporate the context as a tool for the foundation of the intimate look into the inspiration of the Clapham Sect. This seems to beg the question “How is the context utilized?” The primary way in which the time-period and all of its influences will be utilized is as the researcher considers all primary sources, diaries, paraphernalia, etc. in the framework of the circumstances and environment. Moreover, it will test the applied leadership theories, as they have often been discovered/created in isolation of true application and are often ill equipped to face the real life tests, which grant their validity.

The leadership research to be applied to this case study will primarily draw from four sub-fields of the leadership studies. The primary topic will be change theory. Encompassed in this are issues of how an agent initiates a change effort, what factors affect one’s societal change action, and the great hurdles over which the change agent
must leap. The major text for this research will be John Kotter’s *Leading Change*. The second theory assessed and applied to the Clapham Sect will be catalytic leadership, a concept in which an individual or group sees a need and steps forward to address it. This person or group is not, prior to the problem, in the limelight, but as the dilemma must be solved, the individual or group develops the requisite skills to rally support and make an improvement. A third sub-field within leadership scholastics used is that of motivation to follow. A fourth section of theory will be that of the charismatic leader. This will be examined due to the conclusion that William Wilberforce, the known leader of the group, appears to possess and utilize this quality of charisma or “infectiousness.” This paper will discuss in depth the meaning and use of the word as it relates to leadership and to the situation. Finally, materials on the topic of spiritual leadership will be utilized as backdrop for the question - how does a spiritual faith in a personal God affect a massive societal alteration effort. A stretch is made to cite spiritual leadership as a sub-field because work thus far accomplished on the topic is sparse. Despite the apparent lack of research, any existing material must be the basis of analysis.

Finally, with any choice of research certain inevitable drawbacks exist which must be acknowledged. First of all, this study because it incorporates context, will have more variables than data points. Moreover, due to the fact that it is a case study and a real life situation, multiple methods of data collection must be utilized simultaneously which would seem to invite error. Some of these method include primary source research for an intense study of the exact details including journals of the Clapham Sect, published accounts of their speeches in Parliament, and correspondence between the members. Secondary sources will be used to help provide the context of the group and their actions.
Finally, current theory in the field of leadership studies will create a framework in which to understand the group. Provided that each method is carried out accurately and with great care, reliable results should be obtained. Another weakness of the case study is that all leadership theory employed for analysis is relatively new and somewhat untested. While this is a weakness, the application of it to a real context will establish its value. The final weakness of this study is the researcher’s bias. As already stated, the interest in the Clapham Sect comes as a result of a personal interest in faith on the part of the researcher. Ideally, this interest will only foster a greater desire for accurate findings, though the bias must be noted. In conclusion, the methodology of this project will provide a concrete and valid conclusion.

**CHANGE THEORY**

The first theory to be studied in this case is change theory. While the subject matter of change is familiar to most anyone, the endeavor of intricate analysis of the topic has only recently been undertaken. Age old material exists on topics of anthropology, social evolution and organizational fine-tuning but contemporary work includes more intricate issues of motivation for change, type of person likely to desire or resist either major or minor modification, the preservation of change and the “how to” of leading transformations. Due to the existence of such research, the study of the Clapham Sect can only be understood in light of current change theory.

Even within the last decade or so, scholars have shifted focus and thought regarding change. Prior to the late 1980s and 1990s, theorists understood change in a more removed manner than the current research. This is to say that large-scale change
was not seen as able to be created or manipulated by ordinary people. Instead, societal alterations were seen in one of two ways. First of all, change was often initiated and completed by "the great man." Under the Great Man Theory, certain persons of great character, strength or specialized skill would catch sight of a great difficulty or injustice, and would battle the opposition nearly single-handedly in order that good win out. This is the case with a host of historical accounts of civil uprisings and organizational alterations. The second clearly established view of change has been of a more sociological account. In this understanding mammoth shifts are only seen in light of every possible variable; these theories focus on the economic situation, the religious undercurrents and the political dissension around the world in order to find some answer for the rectification of a cultural injustice. An extension of this outlook is the group of theories belonging to the family of research, which establishes chaos or a lack of control to be the cause of an event. Again, this is a laissez faire look at change where instigation or manipulation in any way, by an individual to the fated course of events is seen negatively.

Contemporary research has moved away from this submissive stance on change where alteration is the result of the super-human or the all-encompassing world situation to an understanding that directed visionaries can affect society in radical ways without extraordinary skills but instead, with careful steps and preparation. Researchers Van de Ven and Astley incorporate both the earlier, more removed view of change and the current, more directed theory of change in a diagram. Van de Ven and Astley construct

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four types or categories, of possible explanations of change that vary depending on circumstances (See Figure A).

**Figure A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Earlier, Passive]</th>
<th>[Newer, More Structured]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NATURAL SELECTION VIEW</strong></td>
<td><strong>COLLECTIVE ACTION VIEW</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An evolutionary process of variation selection and retention of structural forms in a population of organizations.</td>
<td>A political and conflictual process of partisan mutual adjustment and coercion circumscribed by collective “working rules” among interested groups with pluralistic bases of power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A single member’s fate is the result of a random probability of being selected at a given time.</td>
<td>Collective action controls, liberates and expands individual action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>STRUCTURAL CONTINGENCY VIEW</strong></th>
<th><strong>STRATEGIC CHOICE VIEW</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An evolutionary process of progressive internal structural differentiation and integration modified by adaptations to internal tensions and external constraints.</td>
<td>An intendedly rational process of choice and action by one or a few elite individuals or leaders who initiate and socially construct their environment and organizations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The new trend of leadership studies, which explores the subject of people controlled change or “strategic choice view” according to Van de Ven and Astley, is clearly shown by John Kotter, the Konosuke Matsuchita Professor of Leadership at the Harvard Business School. Kotter establishes eight steps one may follow to successfully initiate and maintain transformations within an organization or society. These steps are guides or beginning points, which though not entirely and perfectly fit for societal change, do indeed give one a place to launch forth on an understanding current research.

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First of all, he writes that creating change requires a sense of exigency about the problem being addressed. Kotter cites complacency as a principal factor in resistance to change. Urgency will, according to Kotter disable the complacency which exists in most organizations or societies.⁶ Some of the reasons for this complacency are that crises, if they exist, are not visible, standards of achievement are not high enough and people deny the unpleasant. Possible methods to increase the urgency of a problem are to create a crisis by allowing for loss, and to add to the amount of honest discussion in the news.⁷

The next step in change theory is to form a guiding coalition because one person does not easily enact change. The four necessary resources for a successful change group are position power, expertise, credibility and leadership.⁸ Inviting individuals with position power simply means that enough influential people should be included in the group to effectively establish the change without major setbacks of inaccessibility. Having a group of ten undifferentiated members may result in no change because the coalition must have the appropriate people to break down barriers. More than just the occupations and connections represented, members of the coalition must have specialized knowledge which can place them in a good position to make hard judgments and tough decisions. The group and its integral parts must be well-respected in order for their ideas and strategies for alteration to be given serious weight. Finally, according to Kotter, a coalition must have “proven leadership to be able to drive the change process.”⁹

Arguably the most significant element in social transformation is a vision that includes strategic plans. Vision is “a picture of the future with some implicit and explicit

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⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid, 33.
⁸ Ibid., 57.
⁹ Ibid.
commentary on why people should strive to create that future”.\textsuperscript{10} A vision provides clarity about the route to change organization of the individual efforts involved and finally, the vision should help inspire people towards the transformation. This vision must not only have the qualities of lucidity and stimulation towards action; it must also be communicated with precision and repetition in order to be effective. The use of various platforms is desirable, such as large meeting presentations, newspapers and informal dialogues between persons.\textsuperscript{11}

Kotter recommends just a few other steps in his formula of alterations; these are broad-based undertaking of the project, the formation and recognition of short term gains, a fusion of those gains to produce greater alteration and finally an anchoring of the change into the culture. In conclusion, he simply describes the necessity of having support at all levels (if gradation exist) and small gains must exist as an encouragement to individuals standing on the fence. Possibly the most important step in any transformation is to secure the change before simply allowing the wheels to turn on their own. Any change must have a context, an environment, and a place that fosters it and allows it to flourish. The context of the change must have truly transformed in order for it to encourage and continue to support the alteration. Failed change is often a result of the premature release of the project, which results in its dismissal or its abandonment.\textsuperscript{12}

John Kotter’s analysis of change is not the only manner in which to approach the topic. Beckhard and Pritchard describe the change process in three states.\textsuperscript{13} The first state is the current state of the society with all of its problems and injustices. Another

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, 68.
\textsuperscript{12} Luke, 127.
state is the ideal or the future society, which is the result of the change effort, which will be undertaken. The final state, and the one where the heart of leadership exists, is the transitional state. Unlike Kotter who utilizes a more qualitative approach of determining a vision and pursuing it, Beckhard and Pritchard use a quantitative, nearly algebraic method where a leader has tasks such as "a detailed study of the present conditions, a collection of data on the attitudes of the organization’s [or society’s] members toward the change, and a identification and allocation of dedicated resources, experts, and consultations." An exact method or recipe is given as a tool for determining resistance to the change (See Figure B).

**Figure B**

\[ C = (A + B + D) > X \]

- **C** = change
- **A** = level of dissatisfaction with the status quo
- **B** = desirability of the proposed change or end state
- **D** = practicality of the change (minimal risk and disruption)
- **X** = “cost” of change

According to this diagram, the sum total of the dissatisfaction with the current state, the support for the vision and the workability of the plan must outweigh the price of the change, which is normally determined by estimated monetary commitment and the predicted intensity of the figurative earthquake on the Richter scale of society. It is critical to notice the similarities of Kotter’s explication and the more mathematical description of change. Both point to the need to heighten the desirability of change, or

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14 Ibid, 70.
the sense of urgency and both require a vision that looks both optimistically and realistically at the situation.

**CATALYTIC THEORY: MOTIVATION TO LEAD**

Beyond looking at how effective change occurs, another question is often posed “Who arises to be a leader of such a change project?” Shelly A. Kirkpatrick and Edwin A. Locke have been among those who have attempted to answer this inquiry. They describe these individuals as people who “think a lot about influencing other people, winning an argument, of being the greater authority”.15 Two possible motives are described in Kirkpatrick and Locke’s work, the personalized power motive and the socialized power motive. First of all, the personalized power motive is that the individual is inspired by a desire for power alone. This would mean that the project is only a means to the end of domination over others. The second motive, the socialized power motive is motivated by his/her goals and power is a means to the change or vision.16 These two suggested motives are extremely simplistic.

Those who hold to theories of catalytic leadership do not define leader motivation quite so easily. Under this theory, leaders are fueled by the problems they see, and it is those obstacles that are the motivation for them to begin to lead others towards a solution. This theory has little room for the use and misuse of power at all because within it, “leadership evolves and is shared”17 The person who initiates the change process is not likely to be the person leading it at the finale point. Instead, it is probable that leaders

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16 Ibid
and followers exchange places, entirely motivated out of the recognition of their individual skills and abilities and the strategic plan to transform the situation.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, in this understanding of leadership, room exists for a leader for who power is not at all a motivation or the instigation of his/her efforts. Here a common person can be inspired by the need for change and be motivated enough by a malfeasance to change it with the help of a group.

**MOTIVATION TO FOLLOW**

Even more important than understanding the motivation of a leader, who embarks on the adventure of leading, is comprehending those things, which inspire followers to action. Without getting a grasp on this issue, the relationship between leaders and followers becomes hazy and quite frankly, obscure. According to R. Kanfer, "motivation is anything that provides direction, intensity and persistence to behavior."\textsuperscript{19} Before discussing a theory of inspiration, Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy address an interesting dilemma which occurs when attempting to understand motivation; a quandary which the aforementioned researchers looking at leader motivation failed to address. The inevitable shortcoming cited by Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy in studying these issues is that motivation is not directly observable, instead it must be implicit in the individual's actions. Having stated this, they reference Alderfer's Existence-Relatedness-Growth theory (ERG), which varies only slightly from Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Not unlike Maslow's theory, under the ERG people have existence needs of security and health, relatedness needs which pertain to social desires and growth needs which are nearly

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid
identical to Maslow’s self-actualization. The difference becomes illuminated as people determine how to fill their needs. According to Maslow, people are motivated by their most base level needs first and then are able to use their next highest needs for encouragement towards action. The ERG theory holds that a person may attempt to satisfy multiple needs at the same time and thus, one’s social needs may not be fulfilled, but one may be contented enough to begin the search for personal growth. Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy are careful to note that neither of these theories are able to predict the ways in which an individual’s needs will motivate their action in any specific manner.20 Due to this, more cognitive theories are needed.

An example of such a theory, which might give a more specific prediction about one’s action based on their motivation, is the theory of Equity. This theory has a foundation assumption that people value fairness. It supplies a set of ratios (see Figure C) which balance personal outcomes and personal inputs with group outcomes and group inputs.21

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Figure C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Outcomes</th>
<th>Group Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Inputs</td>
<td>Group Inputs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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20 Ibid
21 Ibid
According to J.S. Adams the “perception of inequity creates a state of tension and an inherent pressure for change.” Thus, a person’s actions can be predicted from this motivation. If an imbalance exists, one has several options, first to alter one’s input or outcomes, second to change one’s perception of oneself, the group, third reconstruct the group context of personal inputs and finally to simply leave the situation. This theory does come closer to predictive statements about the role of motivation in followers, but a final theory might bring one even closer to a true understanding. The Expectancy Theory holds two base conjectures, first that “motivated performance is the result of a conscious choice and [second] that people will do what they believe will provide them the highest (or surest) rewards.” In essence, people act in order to gain valued outcomes. The expectancy theory is the simplest theory in comprehension and might lead to the most predictable actions, if an outcome of an action were always calculable.

For application purposes, Herzberg conducted a series of interviews where he asked individuals to describe what satisfied them about their work. The answers purported were then placed into two categories motivators (those which led to contentment) and hygiene factors (those which led to discontentment). (See Figure D).

**Figure D**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVATORS</th>
<th>HYGIENE FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Working conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The work itself</td>
<td>Co-workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement and growth</td>
<td>Policies/procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job security</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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22 Ibid, 332.
23 Ibid
24 Ibid
Under this theory, a leader may increase the motivators of recognition etc., and expect to see a directly correlated increase in the followers work effort.  

**CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP**

Charisma is the Greek word for “divinely inspired gift.” According to leadership scholar Howell Avolio, charismatic leaders are always viewed by followers as inspiring “extraordinary performances in followers” and “build[ing] their trust, faith, and belief in the leader.” These type of leaders have a compelling personality or style that beckons their followers and urges the followers to attach themselves to the leader’s mission and vision.

Andrew Dubrin, a leadership academian, states that four main conditions exist under which a charismatic leader may be present. Among these is a situation where the beliefs of the followers and leaders are akin. This similarity helps spark a charismatic leader to emerge. Other scholars might criticize DuBrin, as some claim that an inspired leader often helps the followers to have alike opinions or to obtain mutual goals, but not necessarily that they previously had like minds. DuBrin’s second condition calls for an unquestioning acceptance and affection among followers. Other leadership theorists do not all agree with this, as Avolio seems to indicate that charisma is value-neutral until it shades into this type of mind controlling arena. Dubrin also writes that a willingness to obey is essential. Finally, a strong desire to identify with the leader on the part of the

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28 Ibid
followers plays a role in the creation of a charismatic leader. Nadler and Tushman contend DuBrin’s conditions as they also speak of leadership that seeks to “create conditions that motivate desired behavior,” but these conditions are created; they do not simply exist prior to the charismatic leader.

DuBrin, Nadler and Tushman all seem to recognize certain characteristics or personality traits that a charismatic leader has which are simply inherent within the Nadler and Tushman show these traits in their diagram (See Figure E).

**Figure E**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Envisioning</th>
<th>Energizing</th>
<th>Enabling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Articulating a compelling vision</td>
<td>• Demonstrating personal excitement</td>
<td>• expressing personal support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Setting high expectation</td>
<td>• Expressing personal confidence</td>
<td>• empathizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modeling consistent behaviors</td>
<td>• Seeking, finding, and using success</td>
<td>• expressing confidence in people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nadler and Tushman hold that a charismatic leader has three necessary components, including vision, energy and an ability to enable followers. DuBrin’s traits are detailed in a slightly different manner. He stresses some traits that are identical to Nadler and Tushman’s, such as vision (described as an ideal version of the future), an ability to make followers feel capable, or to enable them, and energy or action orientation. However, DuBrin puts equal emphasis on other qualities that Nadler and Tushman overlook or

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29 DuBrin, 55.
30 Ibid
downplay as less critical. These are "masterful communication skills," a "self-promoting personality," "emotional expressiveness," and "unconventional thinking."\textsuperscript{32}

Dubrin's analysis of the charismatic leader is lacking a dialogue about the drawbacks of this type of leadership. Nadler and Tushman address this issue head-on as they hold that charismatic leaders can sometimes have overly-optimistic expectations, and a "disenfranchisement" of lower-levels of leadership.\textsuperscript{33} It appears that if leadership surrounds a leader and not the mission, it is limited by the time and ability of the leader.\textsuperscript{34}

**SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP**

As this paper is designed to be the bridge between scholarly work done on spiritual leadership and examined social action, work already done in the field of spiritual leadership then becomes one of the foundation pieces for analysis. This being stated, little research has been undertaken on this issue. Because this is the case, it seems best to grapple with the general mentality of the great spiritual leaders and determine exactly what principles are being promoted by certain faiths. To narrow the scope of this endeavor, it seems only fitting to look at the Western religion of Christianity for its model of Christianity because the group is decidedly Christian. Although it is important to understand the role of spiritual leadership within eastern religions, that subject matter is beyond the focus of this paper. Additionally, Christianity is a religion where much analysis has been done on the spiritual leader and a breadth of insight exists on the leadership ideals it advocates. Usually taken from the life of Jesus Christ, the messiah figure in the religion, Christianity offers several lessons of leadership. In Batten, Batten

\textsuperscript{32} DuBrin, 59.

\textsuperscript{33} Nadler and Tushman, 110.
and Howard's book *The Leadership Principles of Jesus*, the author cite dozens of qualities after which one may model oneself. These characteristics are broken down into two categories, the dynamics of achievement and the dynamics of motivation.

Under the achievement-oriented pieces of advice are: develop one's best possibilities, develop one's spiritual gifts, examine the source of one's goals, act and change where necessary, reach one's vision by meeting one's goals with excellence, determine the difference between hitting one's targets and taking the easy way out and finally, labor out of love.\(^3^5\) Understandably, one might question how it is that these principles differ from secular leadership. The book responds in two ways. First, each of these lessons are taken directly from the Bible, which is the book of authority for the religion. An example of this is how the goal of developing one's spiritual gifts is taken from Ephesian 3:16-17 and I Timothy 1: 6-7. "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I remind you to fan into the flame the gift of God . . . For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."\(^3^6\)

The second difference from secular leadership instructions that the book illustrates come in the motivational qualities of spiritual leadership. According to Batten, Batten and Howard, "Faith motivates people to expect the best from God and from themselves."\(^3^7\) Additionally, it shows that Christians, because of their belief in a glorious afterlife are instilled with a hope that others do not have and thus, are more likely and are

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\(^3^4\) Ibid, 111.
\(^3^6\) Ibid, 45.
more capable of being optimistic.\textsuperscript{38} The book also shows how the spiritual person is instructed to act in all instances out of love, which in turn makes leadership and change easier.\textsuperscript{39} Additionally, Batten, Batten and Howard illustrate how spiritual principles apply to secular leadership. They write that “Leaders in excellent secular organizations show gratitude” and then illustrate this by a story about organizations such as IBM and Honda. Then, they proceed to explain that because Christians believe that all of mankind is sinful and that it is only by the gift of God that one be saved from eternal damnation, Christians have more to be thankful for and thus have more gratitude to utilize in their efforts as leaders.\textsuperscript{40}

Another aspect of the spiritual leader, according to Christianity is the promotion of wonder. According to Batten, Batten and Howard, “Wonder results in curiosity, enthusiasm, excitement, adventure and discovery.”\textsuperscript{41} The spiritual leader ought to have more wonder than most other people because the spiritual person has faith in an unknown and can see logic where science fails. A Christian is able to trust in a mysterious God and marvel without confusion. It is this quality of wonder that must also but used to encourage participation in a leader’s vision.

Although this list of qualities seems long, they are the defining features of the spiritual leader when compared to a “secular leader” for lack of a better term. Another characteristic of the Christian leader is vulnerability and a spirit of reproachability. Even though this trait is not limited to the spiritual leader, the motivation for the Christian is a Biblical perspective. According to Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and fall short of

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 152.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, 165.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, 178.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, 198.
the glory of God.” It is this thinking, that forces a follower of Christ to humble himself/herself as a leader, before his/her followers. In J. Oswald Sanders’ book, *Spiritual Leadership*, he declares that “Humility is the hallmark of the spiritual leader.”

Finally, a spiritual leader asks for wisdom from God. Although other leaders may throw their hands up in the midst of a crisis, a spiritual leader should know to beseech God for an answer and additionally, to trust Him that the problem is under the control of the sovereign Almighty.

It is this element of faith that a non-spiritual leader is lacking. J. Oswald Sanders also writes about spiritual leaders who seek God’s wisdom. He writes, “Wisdom involves knowing God and the subtleties of the human heart. More than knowledge, it is the right application of knowledge in moral and spiritual matters, in handling dilemmas, in negotiating complex relationships.”

In conclusion, the eastern and western models of the spiritual leader are rather paradoxical, as one is the embodiment of non-action and the other is using faith to motivate and make more effective one’s activity, yet both must be considered when assessing how faith motivates one towards social action.

**SLAVERY**

Having clearly laid out the theoretical perspective on leadership as a background to this case study, one cannot fail to understand the historical context of the abolition movement, as it frames the depth of the change undertaken. During the time of the late 1700s and early 1800s, Britain was the world's leader in slave trade. Begun as early as 1440 by the Portuguese, slave trade had become a factor in the economics of nearly all superpowers, including England. In 1517, Emperor Charles the Fifth granted a patent to

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41 Ibid, 216.
the Portugeuse to bring 4000 Africans to America, beginning the demise of the treatment of the African race.\textsuperscript{44} However, in 1542 Charles the Fifth attempted to stop the progress of African slavery, realizing the horrors of it. In describing this history of the Slave-Trade, Thomas Clarkson, the author of \textit{The History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade}, stated that this attempt to reverse his previous grant showed that he was a friend to both Indians and Africans but more importantly that he had previously been ignorant of his actions and sought to correct it.\textsuperscript{45} In essence, the Emperor did not intend to cause such harm. The Emperor was not the only person to speak against the newly discovered institution. The Dominicans in South America identified the abuses that they witnessed as "utterly repugnant to the principles of the Gospel."\textsuperscript{46} Pope Leo the Xth held that the abolition of slavery was more than just a matter of Christianity, but "that nature herself cried out against a state of slavery."\textsuperscript{47}

Regardless of these efforts to reverse the trend of slavery, countries with economic dominance began to have prosperity dependent upon slave trade. Not only did the profits from slavery become instilled into economies, but slave trade grew rapidly, particularly in the British economy as their transported slaves increased from 25,000 to 50,000 annually between 1700 and 1770. Some argue that nearly 3 million slaves were transported by 1776.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid, 57.
\textsuperscript{44} Clarkson, Thomas. "The History of the Abolition of Slave Trade."
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, 29.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, 30.
The business of slave trade employed 5500 sailors and 160 ships. It yielded £800,000 sterling exports, over 100% of the outlay. Many members of Parliament often even argued that because of its employment and profits, slave trade was "critical to national security." The utilization of slave trade for the training of seamen and as a recruiting ground for the Navy was also labeled as necessary for national security. Described during this time in the Monthly Review, slavery was seen as akin to the pains of childbirth—a necessary hardship to produce prosperity.

Much of the information gathered about slavery was investigated by Thomas Clarkson. At first, Clarkson set to find out the facts surrounding six areas where human nature declared that justice must occur. For these areas, he made tables that were eventually brought before the Privy Council in England. First of all, Clarkson sought the truth as it related to the "productions of Africa and the disposition and manners of the natives." Secondly, it was critical to determine the methods of enlisting slaves and the manner of getting them to the slave ships, "their value, the medium of exchange and other circumstances." Fourthly, it was necessary to detail the exact treatment of slaves during transportation, about which rumors and stories were widely known. Fifthly, the care for and maintenance of slaves upon entrance into the colonies was an area where abuses were expected. Finally, Clarkson sought to gain an understanding of the safety of seaman in the British Navy involved in the industry.

With that in mind, vast quantities of information were gathered but not without a struggle to gain the details of slave trade. Out of Clarkson's 1600 miles of travel, he was

49 Ibid, 2.
51 Ibid
52 Ibid
able to have only 47 conversations where people would speak with him on the matter.\textsuperscript{53} Regardless, he was able to gain enough evidence of the evils of the trade that the Privy Council of England was willing to listen.

Slaves were gathered in a variety of fashions. One method was straight seizure by Liverpoole merchants and seamen. Upon the arrival of a slave ship onto a new area of land, Africans might simply be captured, or kidnapped with some ease. Often this “ease” of capture included being beaten into submission before getting onto the canoes or slave ships.\textsuperscript{54} Upon occasion, British merchants would entice a chieftain to gather a nearby village at night and bring them forth as slaves to sell their own subjects into captivity.\textsuperscript{55} Africans were also obtained through barter or through purchase from professional traders, often of Asian decent. Even among many of African ethnicity, people were seen as commodities and could be sold to British merchants to obtain certain goods.\textsuperscript{56} The most common method of obtaining slaves came through war.\textsuperscript{57} At this time, Africa was a land with many divisions both in governments and laws, and kingdom wars were extremely common. Wars between chiefs resulted in slaves, for the loser could count on the slavery of their people. Records exist of wars between friendly neighbors, which were sparked by slave merchants out of self-interest.\textsuperscript{58}

Travel would take place between Africa and the West Indies. This trip is most often referred to as the "Middle Passage." Conditions inside the boat were wretched. Slaves, like cargo were stacked on shelves with little room to breathe. Often slaves were chained in pairs, allowing little or no movement. Reports have indicated that some would

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid, 180.
\textsuperscript{54} Lean, 2.
\textsuperscript{55} Clarkson, 195.
\textsuperscript{56} Clarkson, 192.
lie weeks in their own filth. Many fell ill. One quarter of the people died during their voyage. Some chose to leap into the sea if the option was presented. Furthermore, it is said that the crew took their pick of the women. Clarkson describes encourages one trying to grasp the situation to "think of 600 persons linked together trying to get rid of each other, crammed into a close vessel, with every object that was nauseous and disgusting, diseased and struggling with all varieties of wretchedness." 59

Near arrival, slaves would be prepared for sale. This process, including concealing wounds and fattening up the sickly was called 'seasoning.' When the weather was suitable, slaves were forced to exercise on deck at the threat of a whip. 60 Advocates of the system will argue that seaman encouraged dancing on board, when the reality of the situation was that slaves were forced to dance as exercise under fear of lashing. 61 After arriving on land, slaves were often paraded through the streets naked as they were auctioned off. Families and kin were split apart. Strong men would sell for as much as £40, but the refuse, which consisted of women, children and injured men were sold as a package, at discount. 62 General records show that for each slave that remained useable throughout the entire process, two or three slaves were killed or deemed useless by the time they reached their destination. 63 In fact, Thomas Clarkson discovered that 12.5% of slaves died on the passage, that 4.5% died in the harbors or of disease and that 1/3 of the total number of imported slaves died during the seasoning process. 64 All in all, for every

57 Ibid, 193.
58 Poullock, 72.
59 Ibid, 196.
60 Lean, 2.
61 Clarkson, 197.
62 Lean, 2.
63 Poullock, 72.
64 Clarkson, 199.
100 slaves, 17 died within 9 weeks, and less than 50 could be considered effective laborers.\textsuperscript{65}

EVANGELICALS DURING THE WAKE OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Details on slavery are not the only background elements that are critical to understand the work of the Clapham Sect, one must also become acquainted with the faith that motivated the group. Although the word "evangelical" today gives rise to certain recognizable images and still-frames in one's mind, during the turn of the 19th century this categorization was utilized to describe a group of people who although they have some connection with the current group of Christians, did not exercise their religion in quite the same manner. Evangelicals during that time held many of the same fundamental views as modern day evangelicals but in no way should be deemed "fundamentalists" or "Bob Jones University" types.

The core beliefs which serve to unify the two related groups are the belief in Jesus Christ as the image of the invisible God, salvation by grace, justification by faith, an assurance of the work of the Holy Spirit, and an eternal perspective.\textsuperscript{66} To simplify this, evangelicals of all times have believed that Jesus Christ is God's son placed on earth to redeem a sinful people from their eternal damnation. Furthermore, evangelicals hold that any person who believes in this plan may have a life after earthly death in heaven. People

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid
who fall into this category hold that the act of Jesus Christ's death on the cross is a gift by the grace of God, that since he died, those who believe will not go to hell. Additionally, evangelicals believe that the Holy Spirit has been given to all people who believe in Jesus Christ as a guide or more accurately as a source of strength and boldness to enable them to share this story with others.

These foundational convictions are the ties which bind the 19th century evangelicals to those who exist today. However, many would argue that the manifestation of these principles in the two groups of Christians are radically different. Current Christians who espouse these same views vary a great deal on how these main beliefs impact their daily living. Many 21st century evangelicals take from these convictions that their focus in life must be only on the eternal. Whether this is evidenced in sermons on the rapture or Y2K as the end of the times literature, many Christians focus on the expected return of Jesus Christ. Some contemporary evangelicals have a more present day focus, which is substantiated by their efforts in the social arena. Thousands of evangelical churches are attempting to better the world around them through opportunities working with the homeless, orphaned children, those who are poverty-stricken or even international disaster relief. It is these evangelicals who can be said to be most closely related to the 19th century Christians.

The word "evangelical" literally means to be imbued with the spirit of the Gospel.67 Those who considered themselves evangelicals more often referred to themselves as having come into "vital religion." This was used to mean that one was returning to the principles of the Reformation and restoring 17th century Puritan-like

practices. Evangelicals felt that they had a more true and pure form of Christianity to offer the world. Their deep-rooted passions appear to be a rebellion against or a reaction to the rational and intellectual view of Christianity which was pervasive in their society. During this time, religion was a social action on Sunday at best and a neglected pastime at worst. It is not exactly certain around what time this group of Christians began being named evangelicals. Some hold that it was a derogatory name or reference to these individuals, but by approximately 1799, this characterization was coming into circulation. Prior to this point, no name was likely necessary as "Evangelicalism did not have a significant hold either on the Church or society." For evangelicals, this vital religion was to affect every aspect of their lives. According to Hannah More an evangelical tract writer, "Religion is not, on the one hand, merely an opinion or a sentiment, so neither is it, on the other, merely an act, or a performance; but it is a disposition, a habit, a temper: it is not a name but a nature: it is a turning the whole mind to God." With this understanding, it is easily stated that during the early 1800s, there was scarcely an area of society which these religious individuals did not affect. Like many present-day evangelicals, their motivation was that of the eternal life which lay ahead of them, but their dealings were in the everyday affairs of society. Hannah More also included in one of her tracts an explanation of this behavior: "Action is the life of virtue, and the world is the theatre of action. Perhaps some of the

68 Ibid, 19.
69 Ibid, 59.
70 Ibid, 17.
71 Ibid, 20.
72 Ibid, 17.
most perfect patterns of human conduct may be found in the most public stations, and among the busiest orders of mankind.\textsuperscript{73}

Famous preachers such as John Wesley and George Whitfield tended to focus on the simple truths of the Gospel, and those who practiced vital religion held that their lives were simply a reflection of the truth of the Gospel story of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{74} According to Ian Bradley, author of \textit{A Call to Seriousness}, "The doctrine of conversion stood at the heart of Evangelical theology. Every Evangelical had personally experienced the 'great change' which occurred when, burdened down by a sense of sin and inadequacy, he had thrown himself at God's mercy and been made regenerate."\textsuperscript{75} This conversion was the crest of the vital religion.

Another way to describe the evangelical engagement in vital religion, which was often used, was the adjective "seriousness." True evangelicals were stated to have given their lives over to seriousness. This term appears to come out of two core beliefs. These were the convictions that all individuals must lead a useful or purposeful life "filled with good works and application to occupy every minute" and that all Christians would "face the awful decision of an all-wise, unerring judge who will require a strict account of every talent, every trust that he has at any time committed to [one's] care- time, health, strength, abilities and possessions are all included."\textsuperscript{76} These beliefs resulted in several practices which were characteristic of the evangelicals.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{73} More, Hannah. "An Estimate of the religion of the fashionable world." 1808.
  \item \textsuperscript{74} Bradley, 16.
  \item \textsuperscript{75} Ibid, 21.
  \item \textsuperscript{76} Ibid, 22-23.
\end{itemize}
The first and most well known was the act of reflection and self-examination. Nearly all evangelicals kept a journal or a charting of their spiritual progress.\textsuperscript{77} Foremost, this meant a long process of soul-searching and deliberation regarding their daily actions. No act or omission of an act was taken lightly. Few can imagine the breadth of self-criticism, which was contained within the pages of their journals. A simple example comes from Henry Thorton's dairy, "First, I lie idly in bed often and even generally longer than I need. 2. I am not steady and punctual enough in reading the Scriptures. 3. In my prayers I am idle. 4. In my secret thoughts and imaginations I am far from having learnt self-denial. 5. I am not self-denying in my business."\textsuperscript{78} William Wilberforce was said to have berated his actions and lack of action as well. Wilberforce kept his "chief besetting sins against which it was especially necessary that [he] should be habitually watching and guarding; the chief Christian graces which [he] wished to cultivate, and the grand truths which [he] desired to bear remembrance;" on small slips of paper to remind him to pray about these things.\textsuperscript{79} In Wilberforce's journals one often finds references to "temptations of the table" and excess wine consumption. One thing is clear however, Wilberforce successfully abstained from the vices which involve women or improper motives.

Another manifestation of the seriousness of the evangelicals is the accountability they attempted to maintain with one another. For Wilberforce, Thomas Milner served as a source of truthful advice regarding his spiritual journey. Early on after Wilberforce's conversion, he and Milner agreed to "exercise the invaluable practice of telling each other

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid 23.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid, 23.
what each party believes to be the other's chief faults and infirmities.  

This accountability was taken a step further when each promised to give to charity a sum of money upon each instance of committing various vices. However, after Wilberforce became the main supply of funds to the charities, this practice was ended.  

Wilberforce also used William Pitt and Bob Smith as examples for daily living.

The third and most well known characteristic of those called to seriousness was the amount of productive social activity in their lives. This group of people lived to energetically engage in the world around them, while still remaining separate from the world in the area of personal morality. It was the prayer of all evangelicals to live a purposeful life; for if they lived in idleness, they would be unable to give an acceptable account of their stewardship to God when the time arrived.  

According to author Ian Bradley "The Evangelical’s greatest dread was that they would waste their talents and neglect their opportunities of doing good. Their constant aim was to exploit their chances to the full and live to a purpose."  

This social productivity resulted in radical change throughout the Victorian Era. Many would argue that in the first part of the 19th century few things in society were untouched by those who believed in vital religion. Hannah More and her sisters established dozens of schools, impacted literacy through their Sunday Schools, and worked with the poor and down trodden—all this while publishing tracts on social reform. At the same time as Hannah was about her work, William Wilberforce and the Clapham Set determined to abolish slavery and undertake a reform of morals in the legislature. Wilberforce was alarmed by the rate at which individuals in

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80 Ibid, 44.  
81 Ibid, 44.  
82 Bradley, 24.  
83 Ibid, 25.
British society were being hung as a penalty for crime. Thus, he concluded that the root of the crimes committed was a spirit of licentiousness. He held that the government must crack down on the smaller, lesser-penalized misdeeds to begin to break this spirit, and in return, the rate of serious crime may drop. This reform of morals was one of the keys to the evangelical impact. According to Bradley, "A group of people so determined to fill every moment of their lives with useful activity and to seize every opportunity which came to them could hardly fail to make some impression on their contemporaries, if only because their behavior contrasted so strongly with the indolence and apathy of the majority."\(^{84}\)

**WILLIAM WILBERFORCE’S SPIRITUAL JOURNEY**

William Wilberforce's journey to the evangelical life was not always smooth. Born into a simple yet prosperous merchant family living in Hull, England William Wilberforce has nothing extraordinary in his background which would lead him to become the great "mover and shaker" of the abolition movement. Many describe William during his childhood years as frail. He was known to be a weak child with a small stature and terrible eyesight.\(^{85}\) Regardless of this, the young Wilberforce was intellectually strong and extremely articulate even as a tender child. Early on in William’s life, his father died leaving him to live with his aunt and uncle.

During his time growing up with his relatives, Wilberforce was presented a great time spent surrounding the evangelicals of the day like George Whitefield and John

\(^{84}\) Ibid, 32.
Thorton. William began to take to this type of religious upbringing until his mother reacted violently against his enthusiasm. Fearing that he was turning “Methodist” she addressed William’s aunt and uncle. William’s relatives responded that “If it be a work of grace, you cannot fail.”

Eventually Wilberforce left the home of his relatives to return to Hull. At the time of his move, he began to be swept up into the life of the city including balls, lengthy social meals and evenings with drinks. Reflecting on his past upbringing, William remarked that has he stayed with his aunt and uncle he “probably [would] have become a bigoted and despised ‘Methodist’.” Extremely popular and talented at this point, his social preoccupation kept him from a successful academic career in college.

Near the age of 21, William came into a substantial amount of money left to him by his Uncle Wimbledon. This financial success confirmed in him his desire to run for a seat in Parliament. After £8000s spent in buying votes, Wilberforce was elected (paying electors was a common practice in this day).

In 1784, Wilberforce took his mother and sister to the Franco-Italian Riviera to aid Sally with her failing health. On this, his second trip to Europe, Isaac Milner accompanied him by his request. Unbeknownst to Wilberforce, Evangelical themes were pulsating within Milner. Garth Lean, author of God’s Politician notes that Wilberforce would never have invited an evangelical on purpose as he had lay away all hints of religion since his time growing up under Uncle Wimbledon. Apparently, William had been bitterly criticizing “Methodists,” and Milner responded gravely that Christianity is a

86 Ibid.
87 Ibid, 12.
88 Ibid, 14.
more serious subject than William took it to be. Additionally on this journey, Wilberforce had been considering reading Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress of Religion In the Soul* and asked Milner for his opinion on the book. Isaac Milner responded very positively and requested that they read it together on the journey to France. As the result of reading this book, Wilberforce wanted to read the Scriptures, and thus, Milner lead him through Holy Writ in Greek. William’s first sign of conversion came when he assented in an intellectual way to the truth of the Scriptures. After this, doubts were expressed and questions answered, at which point “intellectual assent developed into deeper inner conviction.” 90 Wilberforce wrote the following about his turn to evangelicalism “As soon as I reflected seriously on these subjects, the deep guilt and black ingratitude of my past life forced itself upon me in the strongest colours, and I condemned myself for having wasted my precious time, and opportunities, and talents.” 91 He further wrote of how he “neglected the unspeakable mercies of [his] God and Savior.” 92 Soon after his turning point, he read books that would further enhance his understanding of the Gospel, such as Pascal’s *Thoughts* and Butler’s *Analogy*. 93

All the while, Wilberforce pondered the idea of paying John Newton, the vicar of St. Mary Woolnoth a visit (famous to this day for his hymn-writing – e.g. “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” and “Amazing Grace” just to name a few). To do this, would be to come into relationship with a famous “Methodist.” Methodists were hated by Parliament and thought to be insane. Finally, on December 4th, Wilberforce sent a

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90 Ibid, 35.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
letter to Newton but not without the request that Newton “let no man living know of it.”"\textsuperscript{94} On December 7\textsuperscript{th}, William left Newton’s house with a piece of mind unlike he had felt since his gaiety prior to his conversion.

It was at this point in his life that Wilberforce began to be engulfed in constant internal conflict. According to John Poullock, a biographer on Wilberforce, “[William Wilberforce] bears the stamp of a classic Christian tradition. Again and again the rebirth of a soul in confrontation with Christ has involved pangs of spirit.”\textsuperscript{95} Poullock also references Augustine and Luther as men who engaged in this struggle. One of Wilberforce’s greatest controversies encompassed the role of a Christian in public life. Up until this point, he had enjoyed the close friendship and confidence of William Pitt, Parliament Member and soon to be Prime Minister. However, as Wilberforce began to embrace Christianity and the way of the evangelicals, his relationship with Pitt and his relation to public life seemed that it must inevitably change.\textsuperscript{96} Much to his surprise, some of Wilberforce’s greatest encouragement came from Pitt. His long time friend and companion told him “the Lord has raised you up for the good of his church and for the good of the nation” and beseeched him to stay in public life.\textsuperscript{97} Newton added to this encouragement as he thought that staying in the public gave Wilberforce a necessary balance in life.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid, 39.
\textsuperscript{95} Garth, 36.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid, 38.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid, 40.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
WILBERFORCE EMBARKS ON ABOLITION

Despite uninformed thought, William Wilberforce was not the "inventor" of the abolitionist cause, he simply chose to carry it and became the figurehead for the cause. Researchers differ a great deal on who it was that originally brought the evils of the slave trade to the attention of William Wilberforce. According to Garth Lean, author of the book God's Politician, David Hartley, Marquess of Rockingham might have been the first.99 Meanwhile Thomas Clarkson, a known researcher and writer of evidence to slave trade enjoyed taking all of the credit for Wilberforce's involvement in the movement. Furthermore, Clarkson thought that he had also presented the notion to Pitt before anyone else.100 According to Poullock, a researcher on the abolition movement, "Clarkson tended to regard himself as the prime mover in any undertaking."101

In reality, one person or event cannot be viewed as the moment of awakening for Wilberforce. Instead, William's life had a series of events, which resulted in his active fight for abolition. If there were such an event or a person which inspired Wilberforce it would have to be either the upbringing of his aunt and uncle whereby he was taught to follow the Holy Spirit, or it was Isaac Milner's careful study of religious texts and his patient execution of the truth of Holy Writ. For without Wilberforce's faith, he unabashedly admits that he would have done nothing of worth during his time as a Member of Parliament. He states "The first years I was in Parliament, I did nothing—nothing that is to any purpose."102 According to Wilberforce, "My own distinction was

101 ibid
102 Lean, 42.
my darling object.”103 It was his faith in God, which made him long for a life of purpose.
This search for significant social utility was met first with the realization that he must
improve the moral tone of British leadership.104

The elimination of the system of slavery was the second great cause he chose to
champion after his pursuit of moral reform, and it was not his own brainstorming which
brought about his involvement but the commitment of several individuals to the cause. In
November 1759, Captain Sir Charles Middleton, Comptroller of the Navy and
commander of the HMS Arundel recaptured a British slave ship from the French and
investigated the ship with the help of his surgeon, James Ramsey.105 Much to their
horror, they discovered plagues and abuses they had never imagined. After this
occurrence, a group was assembled who would be committed to the abrogation of
slavery. Included in this group were the Middletons, both the captain and his painter
wife, Hannah More, and James Ramsay. The group grew as the years progressed.106

It was from this group that Wilberforce’s name emerged as a possible spearhead
for the task. Lady Middleton insisted that even if public opinion gives a resounding
response to the atrocities of slavery, no great alteration could be made without effort in
the Parliamentary, and thus, her husband created a list of possible sponsors. Following
this 1786 autumn meeting, a letter was sent to Wilberforce requesting his assistance. He
responded that although “[he] felt unequalt to the task, he could not possibly decline.”107
Some argue this was the beginning but again, it can not be stated enough that this

103 Ibid
104 Ibid, 45.
105 Ibid, 46.
106 Ibid
107 Ibid
meeting of the minds was only one of a great variety of situations which sparked Wilberforce’s involvement.

Subsequent to this meeting, Thomas Clarkson visited Wilberforce several times to begin to aid in a tentative parliamentary investigation. Additionally, on March 13, 1787 a dinner was held in the home of Bennet Langston at which time Wilberforce affirmed his commitment and intention to act on behalf of the slaves. He pledged to “loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke.”108 While this dinner and the extraordinary effort on Clarkson’s part was extremely valuable, Pitt’s request to take up the cause is the one Wilberforce remembers as being most influential. In late spring of that year, Wilberforce, William Grenville (eventual successor to the Prime Ministry) and Pitt conversed under an oak tree. At this time, Pitt simply asked “Wilberforce, why don’t you give a motion on the subject of the Slave Trade? You have already taken great pains to collect evidence, and are therefore fully entitled to the credit which doing so will ensure you.”109 It was around this point, when Wilberforce was only 28 years of age that he determined to give his life this purpose, stated in the following quote made on October 28th, 1787: “God Almighty has set before me two great objects; the suppression of slave trade and the reformation of morals.”110

THE ABOLITION MOVEMENT

In May of 1787, a committee was formed to address the action, which was to be taken after the concerns of slavery were brought forth. Included among the group were

Thomas Clarkson, who had now written several essays on the cause and who had searched fifty vessels for evidence of abuses within the system, and Grenville Sharp who was nominated as chairman. Wilberforce did not rush into membership or agreement with this group until they had proven their intentions and the likelihood of their success was previewed. He did not want to be identified with a group that was disliked or discredited for various reasons, fearing that his efforts might be ineffective.

Wilberforce’s actions against slavery began only after a meeting in 1787 with the Quaker Abolition Committee. This group helped him determine how the horrors of slavery should be brought before Parliament. Emerging from this meeting were a few major themes or issues of concern. First, the group determined that Parliament must understand the full depth of the wrongs, which have been done to the entire African continent, not simply to the individuals involved. This included not only the impact of the slave trade on Africa but also the tragic result of not attempting to civilize the people and cultivate the land there. A second harm was obviously in the slave trade itself and abuses which took place within the system. The final theme determined that Parliament must realize the innate moral evil of slavery itself. The abolitionists not only sought to end the practice of slave trade, but to make reparations to Africa.

After this meeting and many lengthy conversations with Pitt and Grenville, Wilberforce looked optimistically at the prospects of abolishing the slave trade itself. However, he was careful at this point not to press towards immediate emancipation, as that was likely far too extreme and might result in political suicide. Thus, the

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110 Ibid, 58.
111 Ibid, 69
112 (49).
abolitionists, composed primarily of evangelicals began to press for a stop of slaves entering into the system. This would in turn rectify some of the horrors of the slaves on plantations, as the limited supply would force more humane treatment of current labor by planters. Towards the turn of 1788, Wilberforce gave notice that he would soon introduce a motion in this light. 114

As it turns out, Wilberforce may have been a bit overconfident in the success of this motion, as it was met with broad and strong opposition. In fact, the opposition did not even concern themselves with any of what the abolitionists knew to be the truth. In fact, some argued, according to author Lean, “It was the happiest day of an African’s life when he was shipped away from the barbarities of his homeland.” 115 Opponents of the measure sought to ignore all arguments of humanity and struck a completely legal argument. Citing English Common Law, they argued that slaves are by law simply chattel, which are at the discretion of the captain, and that it is permissible to throw as many overboard as deemed fit. 116 In fact, as the Earl of Abingdon stated that according to many, himself included “Humanity is a private feeling and not a public principle to act upon.” 117 Some chose to deny any abuses on the slave ships.

In the midst of this crisis, Wilberforce became ill. Wilberforce required two full-time attendants and two doctors and was not slated to reach the year’s end. A retrospective analysis concluded that Wilberforce suffered acute ulcerated colitis. 118 As he was recovering from this illness in the Bath on April 7th, Pitt represented the motion against slave trade. Many cite Pitt’s first speech and this beginning resolution as luke-

113 Ibid
114 Ibid
115 Ibid, 51.
116 Ibid
warm or diluted at best, but all must recognize this point as a crucial jumping-block from which abolitionists sprung.

In May 1789, Wilberforce spoke in an ad-lib format for multiple hours. It was at this point that a strong internal support of the cause was realized, as it was clear that many saw the institution as unjust. However, this opinion was not without the tempered concern surrounding the economic necessity of the trade. Having had the Privy Council’s investigation as fact, Wilberforce beseeched the entire Parliament to come to terms with the guilt which hangs about their heads. At the same time, he made it clear that much of the abuse that is known to take place is a result of an inability to see slaves as human. It was from this fact that he argued the economic merits of respecting the personhood of slaves—simply that a healthy slave would result in greater harvests. Furthermore, he proposed a notion of promoting Negro-procreation as a means of building the labor force. Wilberforce did not fail to impart Clarkson’s discoveries that, “More sailors die in one year in the Slave Trade, than die in two years in all the other trades put together.” In summation, Wilberforce asserted that Britain’s situation had changed with respect to slavery because Parliament dare not attempt to plead ignorance when the facts have been laid to bear.

It was at this May meeting that Wilberforce reminded the Parliament of the 12 propositions he had laid on the table on March 19, during his 3 hour speech: (1) 38,000 slaves were imported on British vessels annually; (2) slaves were acquired as prisoners of war, as free persons sold for debt, as punishment for crimes committed and as domestic

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117 Ibid
118 Ibid, 52.
119 Ibid, 54.
120 Ibid
slaves sold for profit to the master; (3) British merchants provoke wars which aggravate
the crime situation and hinder advancing civilization in Africa; (4) Africa has several
valuable articles of commerce which can be substituted into British economy; (5) the
trade is destructive to British seamen; (6) transportation had abuses which were unable to
be corrected; (7) 4.5% of all slaves died to disease; (8) within three years of arrival onto
new land, nearly the total number of imported slaves are dead; (9) slaves have no
substantial increase by birth due to disease and mismatched gender proportions; (10) in
Jamaica the annual excess of deaths above births is 7/8s%; (11) in Barbados, the annual
excess of deaths above births is 5 on every hundred and (12) no considerable or
permanent inconvenience would result from discontinuing the further importation of
African slaves.\textsuperscript{121}

From this exhortation, many debates ensued. As Wilberforce had addressed the
economic concerns to an adequate degree, a new tactic must be created. Thus, Lord
Maitland fought to delay the abolition effort by suggesting that the Privy Council's
investigation must be presented at the Bar to the House itself and could not simply be
taken as fact. It was then negotiated that a select committee would hear the evidence for
and against slavery. After the evidence in support of the trade was heard, abolition
adversaries like Aldermen Newnham, Sawbridge and Watson sought to close the hearing
without allowing the other side to be presented. Wilberforce fought to let his case be
made known. Wilberforce and his contemporary, Thomas Babington, poured over the
1400 pages of evidence that existed and spent approximately ten hours a day seeking to
gain knowledge and strategy on the matter.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{121} Clarkson, 208-211.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid, 57.
During the pause in Parliament review of the documents due to elections, it became clear that the abolitionist message was being heard throughout the land. Pamphlets written mostly by Hannah More were being circulated, and the truth was being made evident. It was on April 18, 1791, that Wilberforce continued to request abolition from the House. At this point, his efforts were supported by Pitt, Burke, and even Fox who had joined a bit later in the rally to rectify the position of the slave. Claims continued to be brought up before the House, absurd attempts to justify that which any moral conscience could see was wrong. Some argued that the space in which a slave was carried was actually more roomy than the “cubic air space of a British soldier in a regulation tent.” Some proposed that these slaves were all being punished for the sin or crime of adultery, although most recognized this to be a ridiculous statement about Britain’s imposition of purity. After this debate, a few key votes altered; Stanley Derby and Dudley Ryder had been persuaded. Despite the appearance of substantial gain for the abolitionists, the motion failed to pass by a vote of 88 to 163. Some of the major setbacks for this cause was the fear that if abolished, the Slave Trade industry would be usurped by the French, thus improving its economic status and the feeling that although Britain may be moving in the abolitionist direction, immediate action was unnecessary. Regardless, it was at this defeat that Wilberforce committed to raising the issue every year until it passed.

This governmental loss was only a logistical impediment because the people of England were being brought on board the ship of freedom. Within a few months of the

123 Ibid, 50./
124 Ibid, 59.
125 Ibid
failed motion, 513 signatures supported the end of the slave trade with only 4 that opposed it. These supporters of abolition were known by the Parliament, but according to researcher Garth Lean, they “only had a marginal effect.”126

After his 1791 defeat, Wilberforce immediately faced a crisis. In St. Dominique, a slave up-rising had taken place, which reflected poorly on efforts to encourage humane treatment of slaves. Due to the negative attention this brought, Wilberforce was strongly encouraged to withhold his motion for the year (1792), hoping the momentum would shift back into his direction. Resolute to effect change, he declined. It was at this point that Henry Dundas inserted the word gradual into Wilberforce’s motion. Changing the entire argument for urgency, the House easily agreed to the need for “gradual” abolition, which was suggested to be completed by 1800. Wilberforce was sorely disappointed even though the moderate position of gradual abolition passed with a 230-85 margin.127

In 1793, Wilberforce’s Parliamentary efforts were interrupted by the French Revolution. Although it was at first unclear how this might affect abolitionists, Wilberforce’s reintroduction of the gradual abolition bill was again defeated in both the House and the Lords.128 First of all, the war distracted British government from working on moral reforms, due to the immediacy and urgency of the war. Secondly, it was because of the war, Britain saw St. Dominique’s slave uprising and began to think that freedom of slaves would result in chaos. Forced to revamp pre-existing strategy, Wilberforce introduced a new motion, the Foreign Slave Bill, which would prohibit British ships from bringing slave cargo into foreign territories. This passed in both 1793 and 1794. In 1796, the year when gradual abolition was supposed to be brought to

126 Ibid, 59.
127 Ibid, 60.
action, a motion encouraging full abolition was not blocked at the first reading as it had been in the past. On March 15, it was assumed that this motion would finally pass due to a list of supporters. However, this night was also the opening of an Italian opera called *The Two Hunchbacks*. The opposition had schemed to use the opera as a diversion for many critical votes. Thus, 15 supporters who were intending to vote for the motion failed to weigh in on the matter because the opposition supplied them with tickets to the new opera.\(^{129}\) Even with this major setback, the motion was only lost by 4 votes, a dramatic change of hearts since the beginning of the pursuit in 1787. In 1797, the vote was 74 to 82. Little improved in 1798 when the result was an 83-87 vote to kill the motion. The year 1799 showed a substantial decline in the abolitionist movement because King George III had vocalized his opposition to abolition; the House failed to pass the motion by a 54-84 vote. Many of the next years held similar results, complicated by the French Revolution.\(^{130}\) In 1800 Wilberforce carried the House of Commons by a margin of 75 votes. Unfortunately, the House of Lords did not follow suit. Many like the Clerk of the Commons encouraged him to give up the cause, but he remarked that he would not because he expected its speedy passage.\(^{131}\)

In 1806, Wilberforce’s efforts were interrupted by the death of his dear friend Pitt. Not only was he struck with great grief and anxiety, he was disappointed to have lost a supporter of full abolition. Interestingly enough, Pitt’s death appears to have actually

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\(^{128}\) Ibid, 63.  
\(^{129}\) Ibid, 64.  
\(^{130}\) Ibid, 65.  
\(^{131}\) Ibid
hastened the abolition of slavery. Succeede by Lord Grenville, the new administration was nearly all in support of Wilberforce’s endeavors.\textsuperscript{132}

Although it may seem that Pitt was not instrumental in bringing about the desires of Wilberforce, he had taken pivotal steps towards the goal. Just prior to Pitt’s death, he had forbidden the slave trade to bring new slaves into Dutch Guinea. This had not been seen as an abolition effort, but rather as a reaction to the war, because it was thought that though the colony had been taken over by Britain, it would be returned to Holland immediately following stability. It was this action by Pitt in September of 1806 which inspired James Stephen with the idea that Wilberforce should add a rider to the renewal of the Foreign Slave Bill.\textsuperscript{133} Due to the fact that the original measure was an Order in Council, its renewal was to be done by the administration and they supported abolition.

This new bill forbade the carrying of any new slaves on British vessels to any other nation. Additionally, these ships could not seek reparations or maintenance in ports owned by England. On January 2, 1807, a resolution was read whereby all matters of slave trade would be outlawed. Debate ensued, but it was nevertheless the case that 283 people had finally committed to restoring the name of the Crown and to ending unnecessary importation of slaves.\textsuperscript{134}

\textbf{SUPPORT FROM CLAPHAM}

William Wilberforce did not act alone in his abolition efforts. Begun as a simple group of friends, the Clapham Sect became one of the most influential groups of evangelicals known in Britain. Named for a village just south of Westminster, Clapham

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid
grew to be a home for reformers and comrades. The group was sparked by a friendship between Wilberforce, Eliot and Henry Thornton.\textsuperscript{135} In 1792 when the fight against slavery began, these men set up to live together in a house bought by Henry after the death of his father. The title the "Clapham Sect" was not coined until many years after the deaths of most in the group. During their lifetimes, the group was known as "the saints," which was not usually spoken about in a favorable light.

This house eventually grew to 34 bedrooms and two new separate houses contained within the gardens (Broomfield Lodge and Grant Glenelg). During its time as the center of this group, Hannah More named it "Noah's Ark" for it contained all sorts of beasts.\textsuperscript{136} The core of the saints included the aforementioned Thortons, Zachary Macaulay and his wife Selina Miles, James Stephen, Charles Middleton, William Smith, John Shore, John Venn, Charles Grant, Bickersteth and Chief Justice Mansfield. Among their guests and extended friendships were Hannah More, Dean Milner, Babington, Charles Simeon, and Gisborne.

More important than the names of this group are their respective occupations, whether in Government or otherwise. Hannah More was a writer of pamphlets and plays. The saints had several Members of Parliament: William Smith, Wilberforce, and James Stephen. Also useful to the influence the saints had was James Stephen's occupation as a Chancery lawyer.\textsuperscript{137} John Venn was a preacher and also the son of a great minister. Zachary Macaulay was Governor of Sierra Leone, and John Shore was Governor General

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid, 66.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid, 69.
\textsuperscript{135} Lean, 101.
\textsuperscript{136} Poulouck, 117.
\textsuperscript{137} Bradley, 51.
of India. The informal, yet well-defined organization also included three bankers, Henry Thorton, and Samuel and Abel Smith. Sir Charles Middleton became the First Lord Barham and was a naval officer. Charles Grant had been an East India Merchant. It has been stated that, "No Prime Minister had such a cabinet as Wilberforce could summon to his assistance."

The group was not simply contained in the Battersea Rise area of Britain but stretched beyond these confines. It had two main goals: a personal growth of seriousness and a more "concentrated influence on affairs." Regarding their first goal of commitment to the Christian life, the group of friends sharpened each other towards this end. Many journal entries from the group recorded their frank and earnest criticism of each other. This group, many of whom were highly respected officials, could be kept humble and sincere in their efforts because of the respect they showed towards one another and the willingness they had to listen and to critique. The saints took their friendship as seriously as they did their societal reforms, and because of that, they did not fail to attempt to perfect each other's character.

Their second goal, of a more concentrated influence was carried out through their community. Within Clapham, house doors were always open. These friends wandered about freely within the community and dined together often. In some sense, there existed an ongoing committee to discuss pressing matters, but "committee" meetings could take place in the gardens, or even as they vacationed together. Wilberforce often described

138 Ibid, 103.
139 Bradley, 51.
140 Ibid
141 Lean, 104.
142 Ibid, 102.
143 Ibid, 105.
144 Ibid
his home as a hotel as it often hosted Prime Minister William Pitt and his friends, among others. Additionally, Wilberforce’s “white negros” or the Slave Committee also met in his home once a week.\textsuperscript{145} According to researcher John Poullock, “They operated like a meeting which never adjourned.”\textsuperscript{146} It was because of this constant contact and discourse over issues that the Parliament members within the group could make decisions according to one test, “Is it morally right?”\textsuperscript{147} Although some saints were Whigs and some Tories, they voted on moral issues as a block.

Historians describe this group as containing phenomenal researchers whose work was combed over by legal experts, who brought it to one of the greatest orators in the land to have it proclaimed, all the while the whole production was kept afloat by brilliant campaigners and bankers. The projects undertaken by this group were not limited to slave trade abolition or reformation of manners; they founded the colony of Sierra Leone to have an accommodation for freed slaves, the founded both the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Church Missionary Society, fought to shorten the working hours of children working in the mills, and to humanize the prison system.\textsuperscript{148} One historian writes, “Stephen supplied the original mind, fired by passion for the redress of African and West Indian wrongs; Thornton supplied the cool head, decisiveness and patience; Wilberforce, his political skill, Cabinet contacts, and irrepressible spark of his personality which smoothed awkward corners, reconciled differences, and eased tensions by laughter.”\textsuperscript{149}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Lean, 56.
\item Poullock, 8.
\item Ibid, 110.
\item Ibid, 111.
\item Poullock, 177.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Lest one should think Clapham was simply a group of influential men, the community consisted of family life. Their influence was spread through the marriages and upbring of their children. Four notable marriages occurred among the Clapham group: Wilberforce’s sister Sally married James Stephen, Babington’s sister married Gisborne, Macalay married a pupil of Hannah More’s, and Charles Eliot wed John Venn’s sister. Wilberforce wed Barbara Anne Spooner. Thus, the influence was only heightened as the Clapham created a second generation not unlike the first, although much less influential. A little known fact is that Florence Nightingale is a descendent of the group; her grandfather was William Smith. Additionally, one of the children of the group ended up becoming the Anglican bishop who discipled Queen Victoria. Also included in the fold of children and families were young African boys, sons of Sierra Leone chiefs with whom Zachary Macaulay had come into contact, and in this way, Clapham began to trailblaze racial equality. According to John Venn who was raised in Clapham, “[the saints’] lives spoke far more plainly and convincingly than any words. We saw their patience, cheerfulness, generosity, wisdom and activity daily before us, and we knew and felt that all this was only the natural expression of hearts given to the service of God.” Some of the children of Clapham, James Stephen’s son James Fitzjames, Thomas Macaulay and Samuel Wilberforce were noted for their serious study and activity during their undergraduate years and for their successful careers later; and the praise is often given to their fathers for the example set before them. Charles

150 Ibid, 183.
151 Eldridge, John. Performance 3/30/00.
152 Ibid
154 Bradley, 191.
Grant's son is given credit for stopping British support for Hindu temples and shrines.¹⁵⁵ Yet it is critical to note that many saw the Clapham village as a place for fun as much as it was for meetings and serious activity. Poullock deems Battersea Rise as a "place for delightful waste of time as much as for the industry, conclaves and mutual self-criticism."¹⁵⁶

**ANALYSIS**

Having adequately established the role of the Clapham Sect and the specific role of William Wilberforce in the abolition of slavery, it essential to return to the purpose of this entire exposition. This paper is more than a simple description of the work done by a motivated group; it is an investigation into how this particular group of people were motivated by their faith to be powerful instruments of change.

As has already been included into the discourse of this work, contemporary leadership theory describes change as being the result of directed visionaries that can affect society in radical ways without extraordinary skills but instead, with careful steps and preparation. Clearly the Saints are a model of this thinking. With this is mind, the definition may easily be broken down and shows Clapham to fit the archetype.

This group of evangelical abolitionists were no doubt "directed." Throughout the course of their efforts, these radicals carefully sought to determine the path their movement would follow. The beginning of this is clearly illustrated in the dinner group, which met at the home of the Middletons.¹⁵⁷ During what appears to most closely resemble an introductory brainstorming session, this group established that slavery must

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¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 83.
¹⁵⁶ Poullock, 118.
¹⁵⁷ Lean, 45.
be fought in both the minds of the people and in the formalized policies of the British government. It is for this reason that they began to produce names, who would be candidates for one who would make the abolition of the Slave Trade his platform. It was at this point that these individuals chose William Wilberforce to spearhead the campaign.\textsuperscript{158} They plotted a preliminary direction and began to follow it.

According to contemporary change theory, individuals attempting to make societal alterations must be not only “directed” but must be “visionaries” as well; otherwise, anyone with a targeted plan of action would have a recipe for success, which cannot fail. Indeed, those desiring mass change must have a vision for the future. According to John Kotter, expert and academian in the field of leading change, vision is “a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future.”\textsuperscript{159} Wilberforce not only desired to see a world without abuses of human labor and inequalities, he envisioned it and compelled others that one day it would be so. Wilberforce was once quoted to say, “As to our probability of success, I entertain no doubt of it.”\textsuperscript{160} Never was the word “if” in Wilberforce’s vocabulary—only the question “when.” According to Kotter, if Clapham had not had a vision, its efforts would have been futile. He writes “Without an appropriate vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve into a list of confusing, incompatible and time­consuming projects that go in the wrong direction or nowhere at all.”\textsuperscript{161}

Implicit in the description of change by “visionaries” is the understanding that great change requires more than one person. According to an expert on change agents,
“An individual alone, no matter how competent or charismatic, never has all the assets needed to overcome tradition and inertia except in very small organizations.”

This is a great improvement upon the often-utilized, Great Man Theory. Though it was not necessarily given the title until the 1960s, most of history, news and folklore showed the use of this theory. Change, as described, was not often a result of a group of people, but instead of a super-hero. According to history, George Washington himself won the Revolutionary War, Neil Armstrong landed on the moon, and Martin Luther King Jr. brought about civil rights for the African American people. Clearly, winning a war, reaching the moon and instituting equal opportunities for all can not be action taken only by one individual. Yet, because many people have in the past, subconsciously subscribed to the Great Man Theory, much of history has been written in the manner. However, current theory is far more practical as it shows that large-scale change requires a variety of people, associations and alliances. The British abolitionists were no exception to this mindset.

The group effort is shown right from the very beginning as individuals concerned about the injustice assembled together. Whereas they could have gone about their individual methods of bringing England to terms with this problem, they linked arms to increase the effects of their work. Thomas Clarkson, who is notably one of the few who worked fairly independently, acknowledged that his findings were of no use without the mouthpiece of a Parliament member or the literary skills of a pamphleteer, such as Hannah More. The Middletons, both Charles and his wife were concerned about the

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162 Ibid, 6.
abuses of slaves which the captain saw on his voyage, but immediately sought to find a like-minded group of people who would work with them to bring about change. Even Wilberforce, who became the main activist on the issue, never failed to consult his group. According to Coupland, “It was, indeed, a unique phenomenon—this brotherhood of Christian politicians. There has never been anything like it since in British public life.”

Another aspect of present-day theory is that the group does not need extraordinary skills. Whether or not Clapham had exceptional abilities is debatable. Little doubt exists that this group was the elite of British society. They clearly had occupations with great prestige and an accompanying salary. Additionally, many of them were from affluent backgrounds with inheritance that could have supplied them for life—this was certainly the case with William Wilberforce, who came into great wealth at the age of 21. Clearly the Thorton brothers were in a similar position as they, at a very young age purchased the original land and house which facilitated the close habitation of the group. Moreover, the group’s three Members of Parliament came into government during a time when monetary bribes were the customary way to receive the necessary electoral votes.

Wilberforce was elected into Parliament as a result of £8000 but did not use this method during his campaign for re-election; however, it is likely that overcoming the common pay-off methods may have been expensive in other ways. Although the group was elite in the social status and economic sense, it was not necessarily the case that these members had “extraordinary skills.” It is most certainly the case that they utilized the strengths of each member in the most complete sense. Clearly each member’s occupation was an asset as has already been described. The writers in the group set their

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164 Lean, 112.
165 Ibid, 14.
pieces to the abolition drum, the bankers worked on the fiscal impact of the cause, and the MPs sought to lobby Parliament for their purpose. The most explicit example of utilizing the strengths of their members was in the personhood of William Wilberforce. Although most recall his charming personality, friendly demeanor and superior oratory skills, Wilberforce had some great deficiencies that were simply diminished or placed in the background because of his strengths and the strengths of the group. Wilberforce did not have a comely appearance. He was often described as frail and petite.\textsuperscript{166} Additionally, he was known to be a bit hot tempered, but this energy was directed towards immorality and thus, was put to good use.

The final element of contemporary social movement theory is that change takes place due to careful steps and preparation undertaken by the group of visionaries. Several steps taken by the group can be shown to be key progressions in the effort. First, it cannot be overlooked just how critical the choice of William Wilberforce was to the movement. By selecting him to carry the torch, they chose a man who was (a) looking for a cause, (b) agreed passionately with the cause, (c) possessed great oratory skills, and (d) held the necessary alliances to breakdown potential barriers. A second key step was to look at the injustice in several pieces (Slave Trade, harm to slaves during travel, abuse by plantation owners, and necessary retribution to Africa) and to address it in a piecemeal manner, which best suited those in decision-making positions.\textsuperscript{167} By advocating the abolition of the Slave Trade before forcing total abolition of all slaves, the group cornered Parliament into stating their true concerns about the issue. By this careful planning, Parliament was able to deal with the situation in an incremental approach,

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid, 10.
\textsuperscript{167} Clarkson, 192.
which would make decisions appear to have less consequences. According to scholar Jeffery Luke, people are better able to make favorable decisions when the consequences appear light, particularly if they are in a political situation where many eyes will watch a vote and will hold an official accountable.\textsuperscript{168} Although the list of preparation could continue for pages, it is sufficient to say that the evangelical abolitionists satisfied the scholastic thinking on affecting change.

Another more specific change theory, the “Strategic Choice View” also shows that the Clapham Sect fit the mold of those who are successful in their change endeavors. The “Strategic Choice View” states that change is “an intendedly rational process of choice and action by one or a few elite individuals or leaders who initiate and socially construct their environment and organizations.”\textsuperscript{169} Looking at this theory of change, Clapham certainly fits the bill of elite, as has been previously discussed. Unlike the other more general description of current thinking on change, this theory emphasizes the need to “socially construct [one’s or a group’s] environment and organization.” When looking at the group, their community at Clapham and the intimate friendships they shared is in essence, a created environment for a directed purpose. The system of honest personal critique, of pushing others towards the appropriate Christian path and of communal living increased the effectiveness of the effort. Few people who attempt radical change have the network of support, which existed within the walls of the Clapham community. Few can be in constant conversation about an issue or a serious of events.

Beyond simply fulfilling the definition of successful change given by the Strategic Choice View, Clapham can even be shown to have followed John Kotter’s eight

\textsuperscript{168} Van de Ven, Andrew and Marshall Scott Poole, 40.
steps of effective change, even though the exact phraseology of the process did not exist until over a century later. Kotter first recommends that a change agent or a group of visionaries create a sense of urgency among these otherwise complacent stakeholders. To do this, Kotter suggests that one must set up a forum or utilize a pre-established forum whereby honest discussion of the problem can occur. For Clapham, Parliament was the body of people who could actually affect change and thus, its Privy Council was the desired forum. At this hearing, abolitionists were able to make known the accurate facts of the trade and the abuses that occurred. Thomas Clarkson's research showed that for every 100 slaves taken from Africa, only 50 would result in worthwhile laborers because of the poor treatment of the slaves. Jeffery Luke adds to Kotter's step. "To Communicate an issue as an urgent need, groups often frame data to evoke concern and drive people out of their comfort zones."

Kotter's second step is to form a guiding coalition which includes position power, expertise, credibility and leadership. Luke gives a series of questions that help one determine how to create this group: Who is affected by the issue? Who has an interest in or has expressed an opinion about the issue? Who is in a position to exert influence—positively or negatively—on the issue? and Who ought to care? For Clapham this process was considerably more natural as friends and family came together for the cause. Having the common foundation of evangelicalism, they easily rallied around the slavery cause.

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170 Kotter, 33.
171 Clarkson, 192.
173 Kotter, 57.
174 Ibid, 69
Kotter’s third step is to have a vision, which although its importance cannot be emphasized enough, has already been discussed et nauseum. 

While Clapham’s process clearly fits Kotter’s eight step process, it also fits Beckhard and Pritchard’s more quantitative analysis of effective change. The following chart has been provided as a simple reminder of their theory.

\[ C = (A + B + D) > X \]

\begin{align*}
C &= \text{change} \\
A &= \text{level of dissatisfaction with the status quo} \\
B &= \text{desirability of the proposed change or end state} \\
D &= \text{practicality of the change (minimal risk and disruption)} \\
X &= \text{“cost” of change}
\end{align*}

Clapham attempted to create change by increasing the level of dissatisfaction with the status quo of a slavery economy. They did this by bringing to light the travesties of the trade. Additionally, as the years went by, the abolitionist argument began to increase in practicality as the group was able to illustrate that limited affects abolition of the trade would have on Britain. They also increased the desirability of the change by working to change the hearts and minds of every day British people through pamphlets on the issue, through Sunday School teaching and through reforming morals in the society as a whole.

Clearly, analysis has established the recipe of effective change according to contemporary theorists and exactly how the Saints carefully followed the prescription, while actually predating the recommendations. Interestingly enough, William Wilberforce, the leader of the group also seems to embody some the characteristics theorists like Shelly Kirkpatrick and Edwin Locke state are likely to produce a leader and even more of the qualities Jeffery Luke describes will motivate a person to spearhead a project. According to Kirkpatrick and Locke individuals who lead tend to “think a lot
about influencing people, winning an argument and of being the greater authority."\textsuperscript{175} After Wilberforce’s conversation to vital religion, he actually sought to influence others. Not knowing how or on what issue, Wilberforce sought a purpose for his life and a way to positively affect British society.\textsuperscript{176} More than just the desire to influence lives, Wilberforce loved the challenge of debate and the thrill of victory. It was simply his demeanor, which according to Kirkpatrick and Locke is the countenance of a leader.

These motivation researchers also describe two main reasons one rises to lead a cause; the first is entitled personalized power and the second, socialized power. One can clearly see that Wilberforce’s conversion to Christianity changed is motivation to work in Parliament from the former to the latter, so that by the time he made great strides in the way of abolition, he evidenced only socialized power. According to Wilberforce himself, prior to his conversion “My own distinction was my darling object.”\textsuperscript{177} Afterward, he chose to work unceasingly towards abolition because “God Almighty [had] set before [him] two great objects; the suppression of slave trade and the reformation of morals.”\textsuperscript{178} Additionally, William Wilberforce underwent a serious struggle after conversion as to whether he ought to remain in public life now that he had vital religion. It seems that if one was motivated for oneself, this question would not even enter one’s mind. The most clear confirmation that Wilberforce was motivated by the benefit for all of British society is shown in his willingness to continue pressing for abolition even upon fear of death. Wilberforce’s life was threatened twice by West Indian sea captains. Wilberforce’s response to one particular threat was “I can’t say I apprehend much, as I really believe

\textsuperscript{175} Kirkpatrick and Locke, 53.
\textsuperscript{176} Lean, 45.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid, 42.
\textsuperscript{178} Stoughton, 69.
that if [one] were to commit any act of violence it would be beneficial rather than injurious to the cause.179 A friend of his wrote to him, “I shall expect to read of you being carbonadoed by West Indian planters, barbecued by African merchants and eaten by Guinea captains, but do not be daunted, for—I will write your epitaph!”180

According to Jeffery Luke, expert on catalytic leadership, leaders emerge because they are compelled by the problem they see. Although Wilberforce’s view of slavery was given to him by a group of concerned individuals, for those people, slavery was the catalyst to provoke their role or leadership within the movement. Direct observation of the travesties was the inspiration for Captain Sir Charles Middleton’s role in the movement. Another one who was motivated by the issue itself was Charles Grant who had been an East India Merchant. Luke holds that leaders and followers should exchange roles often as is beneficial according to the groups individual skills and abilities.

Although Kirkpatrick and Locke would likely point to socialized power as the motive for Wilberforce and Luke would attribute motivational credit to the atrocities of the slavery society, for this group, their faith was their motivation. It is this realization after fully understanding the situation and the group of individuals involved, that their motivation can not be placed solely within the confines of current leadership theory, because the concept of faith as a motivator is not yet developed. Yet, the example of Clapham shows clear evidence that belief in God was their inspiration.

Sir Reginald Coupland attested to their faith as the core of their actions. Scholar Roger Anstey describes Coupland’s thinking, “The Coupland school was absolutely right in stressing that behind the political activity of the religiously minded

179 Lean, 60.
men who constituted the core of abolitionist lobby was a theology of a profoundly
dynamic kind and one which . . . had a profound significance both on the development of
a theology of anti-slavery and for the future social reform."\textsuperscript{181} Coupland was not the
only person to comment on the motivation of the group. John Stoughton stated, "Nothing
is plainer than that from first to last faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, which proclaims
liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, was the
mainspring of the philanthropic movement. No considerations were so effectual as those
which appealed to the Christian consciences of Englishmen."\textsuperscript{182} The most well-known
testimony that Clapham was motivated by their beliefs came in the form of a letter from
John Wesley which must be quoted in its entirety to grasp a full understanding of his
outside opinion on the matter: "February 24, 1791. My dear sir—Unless the Divine
Power has raised you up to be an Athanasius contra mundum I see not how you can go
through with your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villainy which is the
scandal of religion, of England and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for
this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but if God is
with you, who can be against you? Are all of them stronger than God? Oh, be not weary
in well-doing. Go on, in the name of God and in the power of His might, till even
American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it . . . That
he who has guided you from your youth up, may continue to strengthen you in this and in
all things, is the prayer. Your affectionate servant, John Wesley."\textsuperscript{183,184} It was not
simply that Newton saw Wilberforce’s work as being that for God, but Wilberforce

\textsuperscript{181} Lean, 70.
\textsuperscript{182} Stoughton, 79.
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid, 58.
\textsuperscript{184} Stoughton, 73.
admits this himself. In the first year after his conversion, he told Newton, “I had prayed to God, I hope with some sincerity, not to lead me into disputing for my own exaltation, but for His glory.”

When asked what enabled the group to sustain the vision of abolition for 25 years, scholar and actor John Eldridge gave three reasons: (1) Wilberforce’s cheerfulness—that he was not easily discouraged; (2) the friendships, Clapham was several individuals walking towards a goal linked arm in arm and (3) their faith. Eldridge was confident that Wilberforce knew God and that he communed with God. It was out of this personal, experiential relationship with God, that Wilberforce was motivated towards action. Eldridge was careful to say that the group was not on a moral crusade, nor was it in search of political ambition, just that it was out to rectify injustice in the name of the author of justice. According to Poullock, “Wilberforce’s whole life was animated by a deeply held, personal faith in Jesus Christ.”

Knowing that faith played the critical role of inspiration and staying power in the project and utilizing this to introduce faith as a motivator to the academic world of leadership theory, it is critical to ask the question, “Does it matter what they had faith in?” or “Is faith in God the necessary component?” It appears that faith in God is the required motivational element and more specifically, that a belief in a personal and active God effected the Clapham Sect’s efforts. Relying on the factual analysis of evangelicals at this time and of those who engaged in “vital religion,” a key ingredient in their faith was the concept of accountability. From the actions of man, so came the consequences from God; this applied in both the positive aspects of life and the negative. Wilberforce warned the Parliament not to provoke the wrath of Heaven by failing to acknowledge

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185 Ibid, 114.  
186 Eldridge, John. Performance, 3/30/00.
their guilt in slavery.\textsuperscript{188} This reaction from God was not always seen as altering major events but it was understood that God will allow His will to take place even if he has to shake people into action. Wilberforce explains, “I do not mean, that we must expect to see the avenging hand of Providence laid bare in hurricanes and earthquakes; but there is an established order in God’s government, a sure connection between vice and misery, which, through the operation of natural causes, works out His will and vindicates His moral government.” \textsuperscript{189}

Additionally, faith in a personal God gave them the belief that God was endorsing or even stated more strongly that God was aiding their efforts. At the end of his work, Wilberforce stated, “We Were mercifully favored by Providence.”\textsuperscript{190} Just prior to the success of the Abolition Bill passed in July 1833, Wilberforce stated “The object is bright before us, the light of Heaven beams on it.”\textsuperscript{191}

Belief in a God who commands action and forbids other action was pivotal. At one point, Wilberforce was asked his opinion about granting compensation to slave owners who might suffer loss after abolition. His response, like most of his action was based directly on God’s principles. He said, “I say, and say honestly and fearlessly, that the same Being who commands us to love mercy, says also, do justice; and therefore I have no objection to grant the colonists the relief that may be due them for any real injuries which they may ultimately prove themselves to have sustained.”\textsuperscript{192} This strong belief in principles enabled Wilberforce to resist having his cause be defined by his time

\textsuperscript{187} Poullock, 6.
\textsuperscript{188} Stoughton, 74.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid
\textsuperscript{190} Stoughton, 85.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid, 81.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid
period and the morality of the day. The Clapham Sect followed God’s absolutes and from that, they were able to see that although slavery was the status quo or the norm of their nation and culture, that it was not just.

Accountability to a personal God and the Providential endorsement of their missions was also a motivation for those who might more rightly be considered followers in the movement. According to R. Kanfer, “Motivation is anything that provides direction, intensity and persistence to behavior.” Clearly, their faith was the key element in their indefatigability over the 46 total years they worked towards abolition. When asked to slow down or stop abolition efforts, Wilberforce stated “when the actual commission of guilt is in question, a man who fears God is not at liberty to stop pushing.” Again, in this area of follower inspiration and in theory about inner drive, which sustains projects, faith is a missing and not yet developed element.

The authors of “Understanding and Influencing Follower Motivation Hughes, Ginnett and Curphey note that motivation is nearly impossible to know for certain as it is not directly observable. With the Clapham Sect and particularly with William Wilberforce, motivation is nearly observable. Due to the fact the much correspondence still exists that took place between them and the ability to read personal journals, one who is interested to understand their motivation needs not look far. It was the prayer the Saints to spend all moments in their lives in purposeful activity and this lead them to their victory over slavery. In addition, they sought to utilize all talents and exploit their opportunities for good. Evangelicals in this day had a clear picture of the Judge and His

193 Poullock, 7.
194 Hughes, 39.
196 Hughes, 32.
standards for punishment and reward. Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy’s Expectancy Theory states that “motivated performance is the result of a conscious choice and that people will do what they believe will provide them the highest (or surest) rewards.” Clearly the eternal approval was more valued than reputation and personal gain. The group was not well-liked for their efforts until most of them were near death or already deceased. Additionally, the group impoverished itself with its many ventures in Sierra Leone, its Missionary Societies and its Sunday Schools.

Wilberforce’s motivation caused him to be charismatic about the slavery movement. According to Howell Avolio, charisma causes one to bring forth extraordinary skills in followers and to compel followers to attach themselves to the mission of the group. One example of this extraordinary skill brought forth for a purpose is found in Josiah Wedgewood, of the now-famous china. Wilberforce convinced Josiah to use his craftsmanship for the good of the cause and thus, Wedgewood made a coin or a medallion which had on it the picture of an African slave kneeling in shackles asking the question, “Am I not a Man and a brother?”

Sir James Mackintosh described Wilberforce in the following way: “If I were called upon to describe Wilberforce in one word, I should say that he was the most ‘amusable’ man I ever met in my life. Instead of having to thin of what subjects will interest him it is perfectly impossible to hit one that does not. I never saw anyone who touched life at so many points and this is the more remarkable in a man who is supposed to live absorbed in the contemplation of a future state. When he was in the house of Commons, he seemed to have the freshest mind of

197 Ibid, 332.
199 Ibid
any man there. There was all the charm of youth about him."\textsuperscript{200} Prime Minister Pitt stated that he had "the greatest natural eloquence of all the men I even knew."\textsuperscript{201} Often Wilberforce was described as a man about town, one who engaged in merry dialogue with all he met. This magnetic personality enabled him to forge strategic alliances that benefited the eradication of slavery. Wilberforce told the Speaker of the House Addington that he wanted to "promote the cordial and vigorous and systematical exertions of all, . . . softening prejudices, healing divisions and striving to substitute a rational and an honest zeal for fundamentals, in place of a hot party spirit."\textsuperscript{202} Wilberforce had the vision, energy and the ability to enable that Nadler and Tushman say is requisite for a charismatic leader. He was constantly expressing tempered optimism, articulating a picture of change, and making consistent personal investments, be it time or monetary, in the slavery cause. Certainly, Wilberforce's charisma is a "divinely inspired gift" as is its definition.\textsuperscript{203}

As a leader, Wilberforce was not only a charismatic man, but his life and leadership style also exhibited the characteristics of the model Christian leader. As is pointed out by Batten, Batten and Howard, authors of \textit{The Leadership Principles of Jesus} Wilberforce modeled himself after the leadership of Jesus Christ. Wilberforce examined the source of his motivation and labored out of love. As a leader and as a Christian, Wilberforce was in a perpetual state of self-examination. Immediately following his conversion, he attacked his motives for holding public office. After being encouraged that his position as a Member of Parliament was God's place to use his gifts, Wilberforce

\textsuperscript{200} Poullock, 9.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid, 12.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid, 9.
\textsuperscript{203} Dubrin, 54.
then engaged in more continuous struggle to sanctify his life and cleanse it from the evils he had known, such as wasting time and energy. This inter-turmoil was also supplemented with critique from his close companions in the Clapham community.

Not only did Wilberforce show his spiritual leadership in his self-examination but also in the fact that he worked motivated by his love for others. An example of his kindness was when he and a friend set up a lifetime annuity for a widow friend of theirs.\textsuperscript{204} John Stoughton states, “He was not a person who confined charity to public societies, or even religious objects. He helped individuals struggling with difficulties.”\textsuperscript{205}

**CONCLUSION**

Though this project has sought to bridge a gap between existing theory in spiritual leadership and theory on change efforts, it is only a beginning. From the Clapham Sect, it has been discovered that faith in a personal God is no doubt a possible motivation for societal change as it was for their massive undertaking in slavery eradication. Current motivation theory has been shown to be lacking in this. Much work remains in the field of inspiration analysis area and must be brought to the awareness that spiritual motivation is a missing element. This project, having shown that a case of this significance exists where faith was the predominant feature in their desire to abolish slavery, now opens the door to more in-depth study as to the specific features of faith that compose the inspiration. I have shown that faith in a personal and active God creates an accountability element, which can drive action. Knowing that God is concerned with how one spends one’s time would likely serve as motivation.

\textsuperscript{204} Poullock, 9.
This study may also serve as the legwork for further studies on social change or religious change efforts. One possible follow-up project would be to compare the process of abolition in Britain with the manifestation of the same goal in America. It is known that Wilberforce was attentive to the work of the Quakers, particularly of John Woolman and Anthony Benezet. Additionally, correspondence exists between Wilberforce and John Jay. He also had a relationship with John Quincy Adams.\(^{206}\) In a forum about the group's work and particularly about the person of William Wilberforce, the question was asked, "Had America seen people motivated by faith working towards abolition, could the Civil War have been avoided?" This appears to be a very valid question worth pursuit.

This study of Clapham Sect also leaves room for another to examine the role of intense personal relationships in group efforts towards social change. Clapham's intimate and intense relationships as well as its close living quarters adds an often unaddressed element into change. The formation of the Clapham community seems to invite one to study the role of this intimacy in leadership. Clapham appears to have been modeled after the church in Acts. Although no explicit Biblical reference is given as to the cause of this style of living, individuals so engaged in Biblical study likely desired the relationships and effectiveness it saw in the Acts church. As in Acts, these men and women gave of their possessions "to anyone as he had need."\(^{207}\) Additionally, "they devoted themselves to teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking the bread and to prayer."\(^{208}\) Clapham was not always a place of business but a place to engage in serious

\(^{205}\) Stoughton, 102.
\(^{206}\) Eldridge, 3/30/00.
\(^{207}\) Acts 2: 45.
\(^{208}\) Acts 2: 42.
Christian living. Their joint vacations and community-type meals are evidence of their true love for one another and their commitment to their goal of deepening relationships with God. Clearly, this situation is a variable in their effectiveness, a variable which has not yet been studied in depth. Almost too radical for this modern global society, tightly committed relationships may hold the key to effective change. An additional study may also be undertaken to focus on Wilberforce’s efforts towards the reformation of morals as this endeavor has been but barely mentioned due to the scope and focus of the project at hand.

According to John Poullock, “Wilberforce arguably led the single most effective stand against evil and injustice in all of history.”\(^{209}\) If indeed this is true, or even close to true, this one paper can not suffice as a fair study on him. Ian Bradley also writes that people as motivated as the Clapham Sect can not fail to effect radical change. Evidently, that is the case with this group of committed Christians and friends, for Britain’s whole Victorian era is defined by the morality that this group labored so hard to encourage. Poullock writes, “Armed with a vital faith, accompanied by a band of committed and gifted colleagues, and inspired by a burning vision to fight evil, Wilberforce decisively . . . transformed his times.”\(^{210}\) The a question remains, “What moral evil exists in the new millennium that inspired by one’s faith in a personal God must be fought with the same diligence and commitment of Clapham?”

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\(^{209}\) Poullock, 4.

\(^{210}\) Ibid, 10.