Secretaries of State: The Rice-Clinton Comparison, Moral Leadership is a Factor

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Abstract

Leadership attributes and guiding moral principles were compared and contrasted throughout this paper based on the actions demonstrated by former Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice and current Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton. While each of these women possess different qualities that make them stand out as moral transformational and authentic leaders, each of them display a strong Christ-centered desire to lead that is displayed through their actions, as will be demonstrated throughout this paper.
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History has produced some interesting leaders for us to study. In the more recent years more and more of our political leaders have been female than in the past. While contemplating two prominent leaders of our time to compare and contrast, the fact that the children of the current generation have never known a “Secretary of State” whom has not been female came to mind. Since my son was born seven years ago, the United States of America’s Office of the Secretary of State has been held exclusively by women. While Madeleine Albright, one woman “in pursuit of the American Dream” may have been the first female to hold this office, Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton have broken even more barriers and have made momentous marks in this country’s history. What makes these two women remarkable? This paper will compare and contrast the personal attributes and characteristics of each of the women in an effort to answer the question, what sets them apart and makes them the President’s go-to woman in a world of such volatile foreign policy.

Condoleezza Rice

Rice is a soft-spoken African American female from “1950’s segregated Alabama” (Dallek, 2012). Although her early years took place in an era where Jim Crow Laws restrained her rights, her parents instilled in her a passion to dream big and that anything and everything she wished to accomplish was within reach (Harris, 2012). As Condoleezza’s parents inspired her to dream big they also taught her that leading a Christ centered life was also key. Her father, an ordained minister, raised her to have strong
values and principles and to lead with those values close at heart, and that’s what she has always done making her one of the great moral leaders in America (Blunt, 2003).

While we are most familiar with foreign ministry issues where Condoleezza Rice is concerned her actions as shaping American foreign policy have been strongly influenced by her early life experience, which “have become a cornerstone in Rice’s political convictions about the importance of human dignity and individual liberty for all people” (Blunt, 2003 p. 43). One of the many traits that make Rice so strong in her faith and convictions is her understanding of suffering and prayer. “Among the many gifts Condoleezza Rice’s dad gave her was his own example of persevering in sorrow while clinging to the God he loved, ‘even in his sickbed, he was still the spiritual leader’” (Blunt, 2003, p. 44). Following the September 11 attacks, because of her strength in faith and her moral convictions, Ms. Rice was able to be a leader in the fight against terror. At the National Prayer Breakfast in February following the attacks, Rice stated, “terror and tragedy have made us more aware of our vulnerabilities and morality . . . We’re living through a time of testing and consequence, and pray that our wisdom and will are equal to the work before us” (Blunt, 2003, p. 45). Rice’s faith and fortitude in this moment demonstrated sound moral leadership that was vital.

According to many (Blunt, 2003; Harris 2012; Dallek, 2012), Rice’s history with both Bush administrations, not only provides evidence of her strength in faith but also her strong belief in empowering people. During the first Bush administration Rice was instrumental in supporting the combining of nations, between East and West Germany, on their own terms helping them to fulfill their own destiny (Dallek, 2012). She pulled Stanford University out of debt as Provost within a two-year timeframe and although she
was often looked at as “cold and uninclusive” she proved to be business oriented while at the same time a person who cared for others (Dallek, 2012). Her time at Stanford truly helped to shape her ability to deal with criticism well and prepared her for the upcoming work she would have within the second Bush administration, which will never be dismissed as a minor feat. The accumulation of skill and leadership ability formed throughout Rice’s academic and political life heavily determined the amount of trust the president put in her ability to advise decisions of national interest, making her his go-to person.

**Hillary Clinton**

Hillary Rodham Clinton has been portrayed in many ways; in Byron York’s *Getting to Know Her*, she is described as “an intelligent woman endowed with energy, enthusiasm, humor, tempestuousness, inner strength, [and] spontaneity in private” (York, 2007, p. 20). It’s a well-known fact that Hillary Rodham Clinton has not been dealt a simple hand when it comes to marriage, media, and the spotlight but it has also become obvious that she handles the pressure well.

According to the National First Ladies’ Library (2012) early on Hillary Rodham came from the home of devout Methodist parents. She entered in to the world of politics as a young conservative Republican from Illinois, inspired and drawn to politics after hearing a speech given by Reverend Martin Luther King, and followed her calling by campaigning for Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater in 1964 (National First Ladies’ Library). While attending college Rodham had numerous jobs including babysitting, working in an Alaskan canning factory, working for the Children’s defense fund, just to name a few. Her start in politics eventually led to her working for
Democratic Senator Walter Mondale on the migrant worker subcommittee prior to attending Yale Law (Carlson, 1992; York, 2007). During law school Hillary worked in multiple capacities concerning child welfare, providing free legal services for the poor, etc… Following graduation from Yale she returned to Washington D.C. to work on “the presidential impeachment inquiry staff advising the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives during the Watergate Scandal” (National First Ladies’ Library). Once Nixon resigned and the Watergate Scandal ended Hillary relocated to Arkansas, home to Yale classmate Bill Clinton, and began teaching along his side at the University of Arkansas Law School (National First Ladies’ Library).

After moving to Arkansas, marrying Bill Clinton, being appointed by Jimmy Carter to the board of legal services corporation in 1978, becoming the First Lady of Arkansas (for 5 terms), followed quickly by becoming a partner in the Rose Law Firm, co-founding the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, and so much more she then became the First Lady of the United States, for two terms. Hillary Rodham Clinton truly made her mark on our country, crusading for healthcare reform, globally advocating gender equity, among many other issues (National First Ladies’ Library).

So from where did her drive to lead in so many arenas come? Clinton has been a devout Christian throughout it all; Clinton’s testament to how her faith has gotten her through her ups and downs has been no secret in politics. Clinton has played a very active role in the Church, she has been part of a secretive Capitol Hill group known as the Fellowship along with many other left and right-wing party members alike, not in an effort to win more votes, just in an effort to stay in touch with her own personal Christ centered beliefs, in an effort to lead morally. Clinton has openly
acknowledged that she turned to Tillich’s sermon on grace during the trying time she encountered as she publically faced her husband’s infidelity (Joyce, 2007, p. 48). The prayer group she joined in 1993, with many other conservative Washingtonians including Susan Baker, Joanne Kemp, Eileen Bakke, and Grace Nelson, were her support system in faith for the eight years she was First Lady. Clinton truly believes that the key ingredient in her power is her diligent faith. “Throughout her time at the White House, Clinton writes in Living History, she took solace from ‘daily scriptures’ sent to her by her Fellowship prayer cell, along with Coe’s assurances that she was right where God wanted her” (Joyce, 2007, p. 50). Clinton has since become a New York Senator followed by her current position as the U.S. Secretary of State and attributes it all to a divine calling to public service, making her an instrumental part of the president’s foreign policy decision process.

**Rice-Clinton Comparison**

While former Secretary of State Rice seems to embody many transformational leadership characteristics and the current Secretary of State, Clinton, seems to follow an Authentic Leadership model there are many common threads that are woven into each style as has been demonstrated through their actions while in each respective position.

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<tr>
<th>Rice Characteristics</th>
<th>Clinton Characteristics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>Leadership Style - Transformational</td>
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*Rice – Example of Transformational Moral Leadership.* Transformational leaders embody the 4 I’s of transformational leadership which include: idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation (Yukl, 2010). Rice is tied formidably to transformational leadership as a leader and as a committed follower. The idealized influence transference that took place during the Bush administration while Rice stood watch as the Secretary of State was evident through her actions. Simultaneously the high correlation of trust that was also made evident through increased measures of self-efficacy demonstrated through performance during a volatile time was apparent.

- Pioneered Transformational Diplomacy – An effort to advance democratic reform globally.
- VPPs (Virtual Presence Posts) – Enables the U.S. to have a diplomatic presence in a foreign country without physically being there. A mixture of knowledge and proficiency among foreign and civil service officers abroad.

*Clinton. Example of Authentic Moral Leadership.* Authentic leaders are generally motivated, confident, and energetic; they are generally very driven toward a particular cause and are unwavering when it comes to mission fulfillment (Yukl, 2010). They are typically optimistic leaders that can overcome adversity and challenges set before them (Yukl, 2010). Their sense of values and integrity can
often be traced to their own personal history and tied back to convictions established in the natural developmental process that occurs through life experience. Demonstrated through internalized values and beliefs Clinton’s commitment to moral leadership is often seems to “transcend left and right with an ecumenical faith that rises above politics” (Joyce, 2007, p. 50). Some examples are as follows:

- **Children’s Health Insurance Program** – A federal initiative that provides health insurance for children whose parents are not afforded health insurance coverage on their behalf.

- **Creation of “Vital Voices”** – An initiative to support and promote women’s involvement within their nation’s political process (National First Ladies’ Library).

**Conclusion**

Although Rice and Clinton are separated by party lines and take different approaches to leading, they are seemingly united in the fight to follow Christ’s calling to help others. These two prominent female leaders have truly touched the lives of many in need and have encouraged many to follow in their footsteps. They have broken through barriers and have set the stage for many young Christian women to follow, not because they have a political appetite for glory but because they rejoice in following the path God has set for them. Because of them, many of our youth will not know, other than in history books, the glass ceiling that has been broken in the process of their triumph through Christ, but will instead see the power
and fulfillment of Christ-centered leadership. “In asking God to guide her decisions, Rice told Newsweek. ‘It’s not as if you ask God, Should we try to take down the Taliban?’ Rather, when Rice kneels at night, she often asks that God help her to ‘walk in your way and not my own’” (Blunt, 2003, p. 45). It is obvious that each of these women are still actively fulfilling the path Christ has set for them and in doing so continue to make themselves the “go-to” female leaders they are today through moral leadership.
References


http://www.ifapray.org/archive/ScienceArtCulture/Science_Art_Culture_Archives/Condoleezza%20Rice%20Secret%20Weapon.html


