KNOX CENTRE FOR MINISTRY & LEADERSHIP

Leadership Handbook

Graham Redding and Kevin Ward

Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership

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Foreword

The task given to the Knox Centre seemed simple enough: Produce a paper for the church on a biblical theology of leadership. I'd been involved in a similar exercise ten years earlier when the Equipping the Leadership Policy Group, of which I was co-convenor, produced a paper on leadership for mission (See **Appendix A**). Perhaps all I need to do, I thought, is dust off that paper, spruce it up a bit, and give it a new lease of life. Indeed, after ten years the general tone and content of the paper seemed to have stood the test of time rather well; the main challenge would be to underpin it with a more explicit biblical theology.

But therein lay the difficulty. Although the Bible gives many wonderful examples of leadership, including that of Jesus himself, the actual *concept* of leadership is not talked about at any length, nor can a singular biblical theology of leadership be readily identified. Leadership, as a subject in its own right, is a relatively modern phenomenon. Books, seminars and academic courses on leadership abound in both secular and religious contexts. Every man and his dog, so to speak, seems to have latched on to the idea that organisational growth and wellbeing, including that of the church, demands good leadership. Leadership training has become a boom industry, especially in the corporate world; bookshop shelves overflow with best-sellers like Kouses' and Posner's *The Leadership Challenge*. The fact that many of these books carry endorsements from church and secular leaders alike indicates that, for many people, good leadership is deemed to have certain generic qualities. It consists of so-called "universal principles" that transcend ideological and religious boundaries and can be applied equally well in secular and religious contexts – principles like inspiring a shared vision, working relationally, enabling others to act, having transparent processes, communicating well, and being accountable.

As Christians, what are we to make of all this? What can we learn about leadership from the secular world? What might we want to critique? Is there anything distinctive about a faith-based, biblically-informed approach to leadership? And how might all this relate to the particular leadership needs and challenges facing the church at this time?

These are the sorts of questions this handbook will seek to address. Its purpose is to help people think about leadership from a Christian perspective and to explore the practical implications of their understanding in and for a variety of contexts.

The production of this handbook has been a collaborative exercise, drawing on the expertise and experience of several people, but especially that of Dr Kevin Ward, who teaches a course on leadership at the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, and who has kindly contributed several key sections of this handbook.

As with other resources produced by the Knox Centre, this is a document that will be continually refined in response to feedback. To this end, if you have suggestions as to how this handbook might be improved, please email: principal@knoxcentre.ac.nz

Graham Redding
Dunedin, November2011

Ministry and Leadership

The first thing we need to do is draw a distinction between ministry and leadership, because sometimes the two terms are used interchangeably, as if to say that everyone who is called to ministry automatically assumes a leadership role. This is not the case. Whilst it is indeed true that everyone who is baptised has conferred upon them a call to discipleship and is, in a sense, commissioned for ministry by none other than Christ himself through the power of the Holy Spirit, not everyone is called or indeed suited to the task and responsibility of leadership. Leaders require particular sets of skills, competencies and commitments appropriate to the positions to which they are called or appointed.

The second thing to note is that, just as there is a variety of ministries, so too there are a variety of leadership positions and roles. While some of these are given more recognition than others, often because of the levels of responsibility and public profile associated with them, all forms of leadership deserve proper processes of discernment, appointment, training and support.

> 1. *Spend some time identifying all the forms of leadership in your church or ministry context. Which ones are well supported and resourced, and which ones are perhaps neglected or taken for granted by comparison? Is this a problem? If so, what can be done about it?*

Leader, Manager, Moderator or Chaplain?

If the first thing we must do is draw a distinction between ministry and leadership, the second thing we must do is draw a distinction between a leader, a manager, a Moderator and a chaplain.

There are many ways of describing what leaders do. Here is one definition: *In a Christian context, leaders build capacity and sustainability within their designated areas of responsibility and mobilise the people they serve to become the mission-charged community of disciples they are being called to be in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit*.[1]

By way of comparison, the role of *managers* is to manage the people and resources entrusted to them to achieve desired outcomes, the role of *Moderators* is to moderate or convene meetings (General Assembly, Presbytery, Synod or church council), and the role of *chaplains* is to provide for the religious and spiritual needs of their members. These roles all have an honoured history and place, but they do tend to focus more on the internal, pragmatic needs of the organisation than the vision and purpose for which the organisation exists.

At the risk of over-generalising, advocates for change in the Presbyterian Church point out that our church courts are geared more towards management than leadership, that our Moderators are geared more towards diplomacy and the facilitation of discussion than leadership, and that our parish clergy are

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[1] Based on a definition by Anthony B. Robinson in his book, *Changing the Conversation: A Third Way for Congregations*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2008, p.84

geared more towards the provision of a congregational chaplaincy service than leadership. As a result, our church suffers from an absence of real leadership.

> 2. *Are these observations and comparisons fair? What would you add or change?*

Apprenticed to Christ

A Christian perspective on leadership must surely begin with Jesus. Many lessons on leadership can be drawn from his example: The importance of vision and purpose, as defined by the Kingdom of God; the importance of prayer and times of solitude, as modelled by Jesus at critical times in his ministry; the importance of building a team, as illustrated by Jesus' calling of the disciples; the importance of a servant heart, as demonstrated in Jesus washing his disciples' feet and exhorting them to love their neighbours as themselves; and so on.

But Christian leadership consists of more than following the example of someone who lived two thousand years ago. It also involves, through the power of the Holy Spirit, sharing in his risen and ascended life, or as John puts it in his Gospel, *abiding in* the Son just as the Son abides in the Father.

This suggests three things: Firstly, Jesus' exhortation to abide in him is accompanied by a commandment to love one another in the power of the Spirit.[2] We abide in Christ not as solitary individuals but as persons-in-community. Participation in a common life, in which we practise the rule of love, provides a critical backdrop to Christian leadership. Leadership is utterly relational, and is exercised for the sake of others (not to bolster the ego of the leader). The Apostle Paul makes the same point when, in his letter to the Ephesians, he says that the gifts that Christ gave that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, were "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of full stature in Christ."[3]

Secondly, the reality of abiding in Christ through the power of the Spirit suggests that our commitment to, and regular involvement in the act of public worship is intrinsic, not incidental, to the task of leadership (as it is for ministry), for it is in worship that the reality of abiding (collectively) in Christ is given its supreme focus and expression. Our theological forebear, John Calvin, went even further. He said that being in union with Christ was a "special fruit" of the Lord's Supper.[4] At the table, our Lord, who is the host, gives himself to those who gather in his name to feed on him by faith with thanksgiving. A real spiritual union takes place as the Spirit joins us to the Son and enables us to share in his communion with the Father. We might even go so far as to say that Christian leadership is nourished at the Lord's Table, where our personal and collective experience of being in union with Christ is felt and affirmed most deeply.

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[2] Cf. John 15:1-17:26
[3] Ephesians 4:11-13
[4] Calvin, J., *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 4.17.2

Thirdly, it suggests that, as with ministry, any form or position of leadership can only be understood in a secondary or derivative sense. In Hebrews 8:2, the risen and ascended Lord is described in terms of the "one true minister of the sanctuary", the *leitougos ton hagion*. Any ministry that we might exercise is secondary to this. It derives its life and character from he who is the one true minister, the pioneer and perfector of our faith. Calvin used to say that the true leader of the church's worship is not the minister (or in today's language, the so-called "worship leader") but Christ. As with ministry, so too with leadership. It is good to be reminded of this lest we sever the concept of leadership from its proper grounding in the person and work of Christ. As Christian leaders we are apprenticed to Christ, called to not only follow his example, but also to seek his mind, to abide in him, and to nurture our relationship with him. We do this in the power of the Spirit.

Leaders who abide in Christ and seek his mind learn to look at the world through his eyes and pray as he would have us pray. They undergo a shift in perspective. How does Paul put it in 2 Corinthians 5:16-17? "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new." And then again in Colossians 3:1-2: "So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

> 3. *As you reflect on Jesus' life and ministry, what insights do you gain into the nature of leadership?*
> 4. *What does abiding in Christ through the power of the Spirit mean for you and your understanding of leadership?*

Of good character and right conduct (or the priority of character over technique)

In the Colossians passage referred to above, immediately following his exhortation to focus on things that are above, not on things that are on earth (or fleshly things), Paul goes on to denounce some behaviours and exalt others, culminating in this inspirational exhortation: "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body..." (Colossians 3:12-15)

This exhortation, and others like it in Paul's letters, highlights the importance of good character and right conduct in the Christian life, not as products of our own moral striving, but rather as the outworking of our abiding in Christ and living by power of the Holy Spirit. And what is true for Christians

generally is even truer for Christian leaders: "Be above reproach," Paul says to those who aspire to the office of bishop.[5] "Be blameless," he says to those who would be deacons.[6]

For Christians, leadership can never be just about the office you hold, the work you do, or the competencies you possess; it is also, and perhaps more importantly, about who you are. Actually, it's not even just about who you are; it's about who you are *in Christ*, or more accurately, *who you are becoming in Christ*. Paul does not preach moral perfectionism; he preaches Christ crucified and risen.

This is important to bear in mind. Like the twelve disciples Jesus gathered around him, and like many of their Hebrew predecessors like Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Elijah, Saul and David, we are works in progress, or as Paul puts it, we are like clay jars,[7] fragile and flawed, afflicted in every way, but, by the grace of God, bearers of a remarkable treasure,[8] ambassadors for Christ,[9] and in the process of being transformed from one degree of glory into another.[10]

For the most part, local church councils and congregations are left to discern and decide for themselves what sort of character traits befit a Christian leader and conversely what sort of conduct might disqualify someone from holding a position of leadership in the church, but occasionally a ruling is made by a higher court of the church. This happened a few years ago when, after 20 years of acrimonious debate over the issue of sexuality and leadership, the General Assembly ruled that persons who are in sexual relationships outside of monogamous, heterosexual marriage shall not be appointed to positions of leadership in the Presbyterian Church.

> 5. *How to stress the importance of good character and right conduct for leaders without reverting to moral perfectionism and displaying the kind of self-righteousness that Jesus denounced in the religious leaders of his day is a real and constant danger for Christians. How might this danger be averted? Can you think of an example where the issue has been handled well, or not handled well?*
> 6. *Suppose that someone in your church objects to someone else being ordained as an elder on the grounds that that person is known to drink alcohol and to smoke, and has been divorced. What are the key issues here, and how do you think they should be handled?*

Handling power

All leadership positions involve the use of power. The critical questions are, "How is that power to be exercised?" and "To what end?" These are questions of manner and purpose. Undergirding them is the sobering recognition that few things corrupt the human heart and distort our actions so completely and

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[5] 1 Timothy 3:2
[6] 1 Timothy 3:10
[7] 2 Corinthians 4:7
[8] 2 Corinthians 4:7
[9] 2 Corinthians 5:20
[10] 2 Corinthians 3:18

effectively as the lust for, and use of power. Human history and personal experience both seem to prove the truth of the adage that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Sadly, this appears to be just as true inside the church as outside it. Critics of Christianity are quick to point to the Crusades (religiously sanctioned military campaigns) against Islam in the Middle Ages, the twelfth-century Spanish Inquisition, which involved the torture and persecution of heretics, including Jews, the church's complicity in the subjugation and exploitation of entire peoples and nations throughout the period of history known as Christendom, and the church's sanctioning of patriarchy and its failure to stem the oppression and abuse of women and children. Hardly a month goes by it seems without the media exposing yet another situation involving the alleged abuse of power by a church leader. Whether it be a situation of sexual misconduct, or that of a power struggle resulting in schism, or that of a charismatic leader or founder of a cult engaging in some form of spiritual abuse and emotional manipulation, these cases confirm in many people's minds that the abuse and misuse of power in the church is rife.

The Presbyterian Church is hardly in a position to take the moral high ground here. It too has been scandalised from time to time by ministers and leaders abusing the power entrusted to them. It too has been beset by power struggles. Most recently, the long, drawn-out sexuality and leadership debate had all the hallmarks of a struggle for dominance and power in our denomination, not helped by an adversarial form of decision-making that created winners and losers. Indeed, power struggles within the church often seem even more intense and bitter than those outside the church because nothing less is deemed to be at stake than the integrity of scripture and the truth of the Gospel. When so much is at stake, no quarter can be given. The ends are deemed to justify the means. The body of Christ is divided into factions, not unlike the church in Corinth during the Apostle Paul's day. In this sort of context a vote that decides in favour of one faction over another seldom brings about the unity and reconciliation of which Paul urges in his letters.

In its witness to Jesus, the New Testament has a lot to say about power. For example:

- In the Magnificat (Mary's song of praise anticipating Jesus' birth), Mary declared with joy that the Lord "has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly." (Luke 1:52)
- When the devil promised Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if he would only bow in worship to him, Jesus replied, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" (Luke 4:6-8)
- Jesus pronounced God's blessing upon the poor and persecuted (Luke 6:20-23) and God's judgment upon the rich and comfortable (Luke 6:24-26), and exhorted his followers to love their enemies, do good to those who hate them, bless those who curse them and pray for those who abuse them (Luke 6:27-28).
- Jesus told stories about a topsy-turvy kingdom in which the first will be last and the last will be first (Matthew 20:16), and he said that it would be harder for a camel to go through an eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God (Luke 18:25).

- When a dispute broke out among his disciples about which of them would be regarded as the greatest, Jesus told them that "the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves." (Luke 22:26)
- In a profound act of humility on the night of his arrest, Jesus washed his disciples' feet, knowing that one of them would betray him, another would deny him and the others would all abandon him (John 13:1-20).
- One of the earliest hymns of the church, which Paul quoted in his letter to the Philippians, testified to the humility of Christ Jesus, "who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:5-11)
- In a wonderful exposition on the logic of the cross, Paul declared that "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God." (1 Corinthians 1:27-29)

What we see in these and other similar passages is a redefinition of power. Traditional categories of dominance, control, selfish ambition and force give way to new categories of love, compassion, service and humility. "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit," Paul exhorted his Philippian readers, "but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others." (Philippians 2:3-4)

We need to be clear about what this means and what it does not mean. It does not mean that leaders must become like the proverbial doormat, allowing others to walk all over them. It does not mean abdicating the responsibility of leadership. What it does mean is that Christian leadership must be infused with a strong ethic of service, undergirded by a strong pastoral concern, and be committed to prayerfully seeking the mind of Christ in a collegial manner. It will prefer consensus decision-making processes to adversarial alternatives. It will ensure everyone has an opportunity to be heard. It will regard the processes of discernment and decision-making as important as the end decisions. It will seek ways for those who are adversely affected by a particular decision to live with the decision and to remain in communion with the church. In so doing, it will seek the peace and unity of the church, not by papering over cracks of disagreement, but by taking to heart Paul's likening of the church to a human body in which every part is equally valued and reliant on the other parts for its own functioning and wellbeing (1 Corinthians 12:12-26). It will be authoritative when necessary, but never authoritarian, which means that it will know the importance of accountability. It will be decisive but never wilfully divisive. It will share power, not accumulate power.

One of the good things about the Presbyterian way of ordering the church is that it resists a hierarchy of persons and favours a collegial style of leadership in which power is shared – in theory, anyway. Critics argue that, in practice, the Presbyterian model of leadership often seems to result in an absence of real leadership. The lack of continuity generated by a regular turnover of Moderators at Presbytery and General Assembly levels does not help. Nor does the fact that many elders and church councils, afflicted

by a lack of confidence and training, abdicate their responsibility to "rule" and defer to the clergy. Power meanwhile is flowing like water in all sorts of subterranean ways and accumulating in certain pools outside the official structures. Indeed, by structuring power so horizontally, we may have actually created a situation where we cannot hold the real holders of power accountable.

Moreover, while the collegial model of power-sharing reduces the risk of the abuse of power, it does not eliminate it altogether. We must remain vigilant. We must remain vigilant not only with regard to subtle and not-so-subtle manipulations of decision-making processes, but also with regard to individual leaders being vested with too much power (and adulation). Such caution does not represent the tall poppy syndrome. Rather, it recognises the corrosive effect of power, and it says to our leaders, "We love and respect you too much to put the same sort of temptation before you that the devil put before Jesus in the wilderness."

> 7. *How well do you think the structures of leadership and processes of decision-making in your own church or ministry context embody the biblical model of power referred to above?*
> 8. *In your own experience as a leader, what issues of power have you had to wrestle with?*

Rethinking success

Closely related to the issue of power is the issue of success. In organisational terms, success is usually measured numerically: How big is your church, your youth group, your children's programme? What growth has there been in the number of people at worship over the past year? How many people in your ministry team? How many outreach and community projects is your church committed to? And so on. Under this model, the successful minister or leader is the one who enables organisational growth. The chief mark of success is size, as expressed in the Mitre 10 promotional slogan: "Big is good!"

There are some problems with this model though. For a start, it seems to go against the many biblical examples of God choosing what is weak in the world to shame the strong, and of the Kingdom of God being likened to such small and largely invisible things as a mustard seed and leaven in bread. In his book *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity*, Eugene Peterson says, "The biblical fact is that there are no successful churches. There are, instead, communities of sinners, gathered before God week after week..."[11]

Moreover, when we measure the church against the criterion of organisational success then we are bound to conclude that the last few decades of institutional decline have constituted nothing less than spectacular failure. We look to those churches that are bucking the trend and devise formulas for growth that will (hopefully) reverse the decline and bring about the success we crave. We pin our hopes on leaders who we believe have the charisma and ability to generate growth, but if the hoped-for growth doesn't occur then hope quickly turns to blame. This tendency suggests that underlying our fascination with techniques and models of success is a deep anxiety.

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[11] Eugene Peterson, *Working the Angles*, Eerdmans, 1987, p.2

What we fail to recognise in all of this is that the decline of the church in recent decades owes less to a failure in leadership than it does to a complex array of historical, sociological and cultural factors associated with the breakdown of Christendom[12] throughout the western world. In this increasingly secular and pluralist post-Christendom environment, the church finds itself more on the margins than at the centre of society. The kind of leadership required for ministry and mission in today's context is quite different to that which was needed under Christendom. When we understand this, then the key question is not, "What must we do in order to grow the church?" but rather, "In this new and rapidly changing context, what kind of church is God calling us to be in Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit?" This question is concerned not with organisational success as such, but with discernment, faithfulness and obedience.

The success of ministry and mission does not depend on us. Essentially success in organisational terms places too much emphasis on human agency. If we start with the fact that we are participating in the ministry of Christ through the power of the Spirit, then we are invited to assume a different posture in leadership, one that has a trustful quality, trusting and resting in God's power.

> 9. *Do you agree with the statement that "the kind of leadership required for ministry and mission in today's context is quite different to that which was needed under Christendom"? If so, in what ways it is different?*
> 10. *This section is titled, "Rethinking success". What do you think is involved in this?*

Making sense of ordained and non-ordained forms of leadership

The word "presbyter", from which the name "Presbyterian" is derived, is a New Testament word, often translated as "elder". The Presbyterian Church is a church ruled or governed by elders. Our sixteenth-century Reformation forebears, who included among their number John Calvin and John Knox, believed this to be consistent with the early church, as testified to in the New Testament.

In the Reformed tradition, the ministry of eldership has always been regarded as being complementary to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament, as reflected in the oft-used reference to "ruling elders" and "teaching elders" and in the practise of both elders and ministers being ordained.

A useful way of understanding the relationship between ministers and elders can be found in Isaiah 55:10-11, which likens God's word to rain and snow that come down from heaven and do not return (to heaven) until they have accomplished that for which they were sent, namely to water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout. Drawing on this image, the Scottish Kirk's 1578 *Second Book of Discipline* said that "as the Pastors and Doctors should be diligent in teaching and sowing the Seed of the Word, so the Elders should be careful in seeking the Fruit of the same in the people." That is to say, through the

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[12] The term "Christendom" describes a period of history dating back to the fourth century A.D. when Christianity was the dominant cultural and religious force in the western world and entire countries, and indeed continents, were deemed to be Christian. The legacy of Christendom is all around us – in music, literature, art, politics, law, education, social customs, and so on.

ministry of the Word, the Word of God is sown, but in order for that Word not to return to God empty it needs elders to seek its fruit among the people of God. They do this through a ministry of prayer and pastoral care and spiritual oversight. The fact that both minsters and elders are ordained reflects the complementarity of their ministries – one to sow the Word, the other to diligently seek its fruit.

Having said that, leadership is more than ordination. Leadership is a gift and a responsibility which may be conferred upon and exercised by those who are not ordained - for example, youth leaders, APW leaders, home-group leaders, etc. The concept of servant mission leadership applies equally to these people as it does to ministers and elders.

The traditional model of parish ministry has tended to assume that ordained ministers, by virtue of their office, are the real leaders, and other ministries and positions of leadership are subordinated to theirs. This belief is reinforced by the oft-used distinction between clergy and laity. In Scripture, however, the word *laos* ("people" - I Peter 2: 9-10) designates the whole people of God without distinction, not just a particular part of that people. The laity includes the clergy (*kleros*), it does not exist apart from it.

Just as the New Testament refrains from making the kind of distinction between clergy and laity that we make today, so it also refrains from making a distinction between sacred and secular ministries and vocations. All are in this world and are part of it. The differences are to be found in the particular functions assigned to individual persons, according to their gifts, one of which is ordained ministry.

At the same time as we recognise that leadership is broader than ordained ministry, we must not down-play the role and significance of that ministry in the life of the Church. It is an apostolic ministry. Just as Jesus Christ himself was consecrated (ordained) for his ministry, so he consecrated his twelve apostles, and so the Church ordains ministers of Word and Sacrament to proclaim the *kerygma* and teach the *didache* in obedience to the apostolic witness to Christ and in following their examples and ordinances. In other words, ordained ministers play a crucial role in reminding the Church of what it is called to be and of the priority of God's reign. They serve as guardians and proclaimers of the Faith, and in so doing play a vital role in the leadership of the Church.

In recent years congregations have been financing the appointment of youth leaders/pastors, children and family workers, pastoral care workers and other specialist ministry positions, many of which have a leadership component to their role. Since these are significant positions filled by very committed people it is often asked, why not ordain them to their ministry? While there is much to be said for commissioning such folk in the setting of public worship, ordination to eldership has a distinctive role that marks it out from those appointed from time to time to serve the church in other capacities. That is to say, elders are elected by the people to represent them in the spiritual oversight or governance of the church. Traditionally, this has meant sharing with ministers in the task of providing guidance, focus and unity to the multiplicity of gifts, ministries that build up the body of the church.

By accepting this role elders are not granted more status than other people in the congregation. They are church members who have accepted election by their fellow church members to represent them in the spiritual oversight of the church. It is because they remain church members that they can fulfil the

role of representatives of the people in the governance of the church, while accepting the role of being encouragers of the people – and their minister – in their roles.

When this opportunity to serve one another is understood we can see that what distinguishes elders and ministers is the function they have in the church, not prestige or rank. Those appointed to the ministry of Word and Sacrament, through their calling, remind the Church of its identity as Christ's servant, and sign and witness to the Gospel, and they call the Church to be true to its nature. Those appointed to the office of eldership, through their calling, lead and guide the community's response of faith, build fellowship, encourage and exemplify a spirit of service and witness. The offices of minister and elder, therefore, though different, lead the church's life and service in complementary ways.

Tensions can emerge between church councils and ministry staff, employed or appointed to exercise particular ministries, many of which have a significant leadership component. Many church councils are ill-equipped to administer the myriad of requirements that are enshrined in employment legislation; some expect the minister to handle this on their behalf, but the minister may or may not be trained or skilled in this area. The Presbyterian Church's Assembly Office is available to offer advice here. It is very important that church councils act as good employers.

In thinking about the relationship between a church council and ministry staff (excluding the minister of Word and Sacrament), here are some things to be aware of:

1. Thought needs to be given not just to the ability of ministry staff to do specified jobs, but also to how well they "fit" and respect the "culture" of the congregation. This is especially so when a person is appointed from outside the congregation (and indeed the Presbyterian Church) and may not identify with its life and mission in any way other than a formal employment relationship. In some situations it might be helpful to offer to new staff some form of orientation.
2. When an employment position is filled from within the congregation, the potential for blurring the lines between employment obligations and pastoral care increases substantially. This risk is especially evident if the employment relationship begins to deteriorate.
3. Care needs to be taken by elders not to meddle in employment related matters. Ensure that proper lines of employee management are defined clearly and followed strictly.
4. The church council should respect the expertise that ministry staff bring to their positions. At the same time, ministry staff should respect the oversight role that the church council exercises and the continuity that it provides. After all, ministry staff come and go, whereas it is the church council that articulates the missional vision of the congregation and holds the institutional memory.
5. With the advent of ministry staff teams consisting mainly, if not exclusively, of paid personnel, there is a risk of a new professionalism in ministry undermining the biblical concept of the priesthood of all believers. The move towards the specialisation and professionalization of ministry can give rise to a perception that real ministry is done by the paid professionals, and that everyone else is there merely to support the professionals in their work. It can also give rise

to a perception that ministry is what happens inside the church, while the Reformed emphasis on the priesthood of all believers being worked out in the community and in secular vocations is eroded.

For more information about the leadership role exercised by elders, see the *Handbook for Elders*, copies of which may be obtained from the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership.

> 11. *What misunderstandings about ordination do you think exist, and how might they be addressed?*
> 12. *Does your church have paid ministry staff? If so, how would you describe the relationships between those staff and the church council? Are there any issues that need to be addressed?*

Learning the art of discernment

Discernment is a key aspect of leadership. In a Christian context, discernment is linked primarily to the will of the Triune God and to the task of "seeking the mind of Christ" and "listening for what the Spirit is saying to the church." Discernment is both a personal and collective act. It involves the interpretation of both scripture and context. It utilises both reason and intuition. It is prayerful and consultative. It respects the collective wisdom of the majority even as it listens for God's voice in the words and pleas of those on the margins. It strives for consensus decision-making that avoids dividing a committee or church court into winners and losers in regards to a particular issue.

There are some good resources on the subject of congregational discernment. Here are two such books, recommended by Lynne Baab,[13] who has herself written and spoken extensively on this subject:

1. Morris, D.E. & Olsen, C.M., *Discerning God's Will Together: A Spiritual Practice for the Church*, Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1997.
   This is a practical book with many concrete steps that make congregational discernment seem possible.
2. Fendall, L., Wood, J. & Bishop, B., *Practicing Discernment Together: Finding God's Way Forward in Decision Making,* Newberg, Oregon: Barclay Press, 2007.
   Three Quaker authors describe the process of listening carefully to group members and also to the Holy Spirit working through them.

The incorporation of communal spiritual practices (e.g., worship, singing, silence, prayer and Bible study) into committee meetings can go a long way towards facilitating discernment and building consensus. So can the cultivation of listening skills and the sensitive and skilled use of meeting procedures. What we are really talking about here is committees seeing themselves first and foremost as forums for doing business in the context of discerning God's will, not merely doing business for its own sake.

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The thing about discernment is that you don't need to always rush things. Occasionally you will have to make decisions quickly, but much of what comes before committees and church councils could wait one or two meetings to let things sift out through prayerful consideration of the key issues. Committee members can be encouraged to stop and pray at any point in the discussion or voting process. The leader can suggest a pause for prayer, and so can a committee member. Sometimes a pause to pray for God's guidance in the discussion can slow things down enough that new ideas emerge.

Another book worth reading in this regard is: Olsen, C.M., *Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders*, Alban Institute, 1995. Both this and the books referred to above are available for loan from the Hewitson Library at Knox College.

When discernment and consensus have been achieved, people are far more likely to leave meetings feeling energised and inspired, rather than discouraged and exhausted, and they will have a renewed sense of who and what the church is called to be.

As well as learning to apply communal discernment practices, leaders also need to exercise discernment on a personal level. This involves the following:

i. Practising personal habits of faith, such as prayer and Bible study, through which I learn to "wait on God";
ii. Having the humility to search my own heart and motives, to remind myself that I am not infallible, and to recognise that I do not have a monopoly on the truth;
iii. Seeking the counsel of others, including supervisor, confidantes, colleagues and spouse;
iv. Listening for the voice of Christ in the words of those who hold different views to mine;
v. In listening to others, being able to truly hear what they are saying as opposed to hearing just what I want to hear;
vi. Dealing with criticism constructively (rather than resentfully), and being able to distinguish between valid and invalid criticisms.
vii. Being patient, recognising that discernment is more often constituted by a gradual realisation of the way forward (often through a convergence of factors, in which I recognise God's hand at work) rather than a blinding flash of insight.

> 13. *How might the goals of discernment and consensus be better served in your ministry and leadership context?*

Serving a vision

It is hard to think of a book on leadership or of any celebrated leader's autobiography that does not identify vision as a key leadership ingredient. From a faith perspective, however, we are bound to ask, *whose* vision? Is it the leader's personal vision? No. Is it the vision or mission statement of the organisation the leader serves? No. It is *God's* mission, or the *Missio Dei* as it is sometimes called by theologians.

Leadership Handbook

One of the most dramatic biblical portrayals of the *Missio Dei* is found in the book of Exodus, which describes a movement from slavery towards freedom. This movement owes everything to a God who hears the cry of his people, comes down to deliver them from their Egyptian oppressors, and brings them to a land flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:7-8). It involves an arduous 40-year journey through the wilderness. But the people do not journey alone. The God who delivered them also accompanies them, leading them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21), providing bread from heaven for their daily sustenance (Exodus 16:4), establishing a covenant with them (Exodus 20:2, 24:1-8 and 31:18), issuing commandments and providing regulations by which their life together might be structured and shaped (Exodus 20:2-23:33), and providing instructions for worship (Exodus 25:1-30:38).

God also provides the people with a leader, Moses, whose life and actions constitute a fine biblical case study on leadership. For the purposes of this section of the handbook, we would highlight the following:

i. Moses' leadership was borne in a moment of personal encounter and calling which owed everything to God's initiative (Exodus 3:1-22). The vision he served from that point on was never his own; it was God's.

ii. As he learned to place his trust in God alone, Moses was able to overcome his own doubts, personal insecurities and lack of confidence (Exodus 4:1-17) and find the courage to confront the Pharaoh in the face of overwhelming odds (Exodus 5:1f.).

iii. Moses never let success go to his head or sought credit for himself. Victory belonged to God and to God alone, as evidenced in the institution of the Passover (Exodus 12:1-28) and in the "song of Moses" (Exodus 15:1-18).

iv. Moses shared the responsibility for leadership with his brother Aaron (Exodus 7:1-2) and people who were appointed as elders of Israel. With shared responsibility, however, comes risk. Sometimes your colleagues let you, themselves and God down, and they betray the vision and trust that has been entrusted to them (Cf. Exodus 34). Moses experienced the disappointment and loneliness that occasionally comes with leadership.

v. When the people quarrelled and complained, even to the point of wishing they were back in Egypt, Moses held fast to his knowledge of God's goodness and faithfulness (Exodus 16:1-17:7).

vi. When the people expressed a preference for worship that gratified their desires (Exodus 32:1-6), as symbolised in the forging of a golden calf (an ancient fertility symbol), Moses first interceded for them (Exodus 32:11-13), then rebuked them (Exodus 32:19-24) and then called them to account (Exodus 32:25f.). In this dramatic incident, faithfulness was deemed to be infinitely more important than self-gratification. It constituted nothing less than a choice between life and death.

vii. After leading the Israelites to the verge of the Promised Land, Moses was told by God that although he shall see the land with his own eyes, he shall not cross over the Jordan River and enter it (Deuteronomy 34:4). So Moses died not in the land of promise but in the land of Moab in an unknown burial place (Exodus 34:6). To us this might seem grossly unfair, but from a biblical perspective God's promises are bigger than any one leader. In serving the *Missio Dei* we do not always see the fruits of our labours. In serving a vision for what God intends and is doing

in the world, we need to take a long-term biblically-shaped view, not succumb to short-term pressures and ego-centred expectations.

> 14. *In your ministry or leadership context, what are the sorts of things that perhaps pressure you to settle for something less than the vision you serve?*

Articulating the vision in the form of a strategic plan

Within the overarching vision of the *Missio Dei*, congregations will feel the need to articulate a vision that reflects the particularities of their context. A strategic plan serves this purpose. There are many ways of undertaking a strategic planning process. Whichever method is followed, the important thing to remember from a faith perspective is that strategic planning is an exercise in spiritual discernment. Gil Rendle and Alice Mann describe it as a series of "holy conversations", underpinned by certain assumptions, including the following:[14]

i. Change happens through conversation: It is not the plan that will change people and give direction to the congregation. It is the conversations that constitute the planning process that change people. The task of the leader is to structure the conversations.

ii. A planning process provides process, direction and structure for conversation: The product of a planning process is not necessarily a written plan. The important product is the conversations that change a congregation. The transparency and integrity of the process is as important as the end result.

iii. Planning is about making decisions: It is about helping people move beyond points of disagreement and competing preferences to reach consensus around certain choices. Consensus involves more than mere agreement. Agreement can come from settling for the "lowest common denominator"; but good planning is about responding to a call, risking for a future.

> 15. *What has been your experience of strategic planning in your ministry or leadership context? Were you happy with the process and result? Do you have a strategic plan that works for you?*

Understanding congregational systems

When the Apostle Paul describes the church in his letters, he often uses relational metaphors like the body of Christ and the family of God. These images remind us that the church is not so much an organisation to be controlled and managed as it is a living organism with a life of its own. Leadership is exercised within the context of this relational life. The better we understand the functioning and implications of a living system, the more effectively we are able to make the personal adjustments necessary to be able to lead well.

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[14] Cf. Gil Rendle and Alice Mann, *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as Spiritual Practice for Congregations*, Alban Institute, 2003.

 Systems Theory arose in the 1920s, first in the field of biology, but quickly expanding to other fields including the social sciences. One area where it has been very beneficial is dealing with troubled children, where it has been found that working with the family as a social unit is much more effective than dealing with the child as a solitary individual.

In recent times, Systems Theory has been applied to congregational life. Much of the material on church life published by the Alban Institute draws on the concept. The first person to do this was a Jewish Rabbi, Edwin Friedman, in his book, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (1986)*.* Following on from this, we recommend Peter Steinke's *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach* (1996, 2006).

When Paul uses the metaphor of the human body to describe the church he highlights the interdependence of the various parts that comprise the body. This concept of interdependence is important not only for understanding the nature of organisational health; it is also important for understanding the nature of organisational change and growth, and in particular grasping the distinction between solving technical problems and achieving adaptive change.

Problem solving is instinctive. When a problem presents itself, whether that be a cut finger or a problem in the workplace, we draw on our mastery of certain techniques to isolate it, diagnose it and treat it. The more complex the problem, the more we rely on the right expertise to help us solve it, but the basic approach is the same. However, as a body or an organisation moves from one stage of life to another, or as it faces issues of a systemic nature, or as it is confronted by a vastly changed and changing context, the sort of thinking that is required is no longer one of solving problems but rather one of adaptive change. Adaptive change often involves a shift in mindset, the possibility of imagining a different future, and the capacity to ask a different set of questions.

Because problem solving is instinctive, there is tendency for us to try to reduce the need for adaptive change to a series of problems to be solved. But when this happens the "solutions" will usually prove ineffective. Despite lots of talk little will really change because we have been confusing the need for adaptive change with a problem that needs to be solved through the application of certain formulas and techniques.

> 16. *Consider the reality of church decline. If we take a problem solving approach we might ask, "What must we do in order to grow the church and reverse the decades of decline?" If we take an adaptive change approach we might ask, "What sort of church is God calling us to be in Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit?" Compare these two approaches in relation to your own ministry or leadership context.*

Whilst problem solving will always be a necessary skill within any organisation, if the church truly is a living organism then it requires more than this. It requires adaptive leadership. Adaptive leadership requires the ability to imagine a future that is true to the core calling or purpose of the church, to describe that future in relation to the particular set of circumstances that define this church (whether

that be defined locally, regionally or nationally), and to mobilise the people for whom I have responsibility to move towards that future.

This will involve change. Not just change for change's sake, but adaptive change. And it will involve identifying and dealing with obstacles to adaptive change. One of the basic principles of understanding systems is that any system will fundamentally try and keep things the same. This is called *homeostasis*, the capacity of the human body, for example, to keep its internal environment steady. If agitated, an organism seeks stability, seeks to correct the imbalance. It is what enables our body to repair itself and move back to health, or a damaged environment to repair itself over time. Reflecting on this analogy, this is why many congregations seem fundamentally wired to keep things the same and often initially resist change. But adaptive change is not only unavoidable; it is necessary.

> 17. *Organisations, like human bodies, need forces that both generate change and provide stability. What happens when these two things are out of kilter?*

Resistance to change is often accompanied by anxiety. There are two types of anxiety: chronic and acute. Chronic anxiety refers to the constant or general level that a person or system has; acute anxiety refers to that which is generated by a particular crisis or threat. The higher the level of emotional stability, the lower the level of chronic anxiety, and the better equipped we are to handle a spike in the level of acute anxiety if or when it occurs.

Every system has some degree of chronic anxiety in it. Like a virus in the system, it can quickly spread. Steinke identifies four "viruses" that commonly turn congregations into "anxiety pits":

- *Secrets* (gossiping, whispering)
- *Accusations* (blaming, fault-finding)
- *Lies* (deceiving)
- *Triangulation* (drawing someone else into a relational problem, so shifting burdens elsewhere)

> 18. *Can you identify examples in your experience as a leader, where any of these have been operating and damaging the health of a congregation? How did you respond as a leader? Did you in anyway contribute to the spread? How might you have responded differently?*

The human brain has three different parts to it:

- The Neo-Cortex which is the rational part, the so-called "thinking brain".
- The Limbic System which regulates our emotional responses, the so-called "feeling brain"
- And the R-System (Reptilian) which is the instinctive or reactive part of the brain. This is automatic and kicks in when we feel under threat and
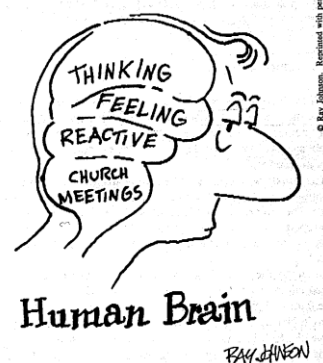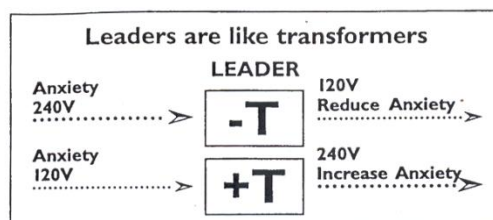
leads us to either "fight, flight or freeze".

When stress and anxiety levels are high, the Reptilian System is amplified. People become more thoughtless, more instinctive, more reactionary – fight, flight or freeze. The same is true of the feeling brain. One of the functions of the thinking brain is to exercise veto power over the instinctive forces of the two lower brains. This is the basis for the often given advice that when you are caught up in a highly emotive argument count to ten before you speak, or act. It gives time for your thinking brain to get into action.

When systems or congregations become highly anxious some of the following might be evident:

- Polarisation, rigid opposition, "all or nothing" thinking.
- Scapegoating, blaming, criticising.
- Withdrawal, cut-offs, criticising.
- Magnification of differences
- Unwillingness to learn
- Yearning for quick fixes or magic solutions

Obviously the manner in which leaders respond in this kind of environment is critical. A leader who can monitor his or her level of anxiety and can keep that anxiety at a lower level than those in the group will have a significant calming effect.

Leaders are like transformers

LEADER

Anxiety 240V ·········≻ -T 120V Reduce Anxiety ·········≻

Anxiety 120V ·········≻ +T 240V Increase Anxiety ·········≻

> 19. How do you react as a leader in a highly anxious situation? Do you act in ways that ramp up the emotional atmosphere or are you able to reduce it? How might you contribute to a better climate?

A key aspect of defusing an anxious environment and providing adaptive leadership is the ability to distance yourself from the situation, to "get on the balcony" and observe and analyse the situation (including your own role in it) from a more objective perspective. This ability can be broken down into four categories:

- You need to be aware of your own level of reactivity and the part that you play in the emotional processes in the church.
- You need an ability to reduce your own level of emotional reactivity in the midst of difficult situations.

- You need an ability to differentiate between intellectual and emotional functioning and not allow the latter to dominate your decisions.
- You need an ability to act on the basis of your principled beliefs in a way that is consistent with your goals.

> 20. *What are some ways you can think of to gain a greater degree of objectivity about current issues in your congregation?*

Many of us carry personal issues from our past that create anxiety for us in certain situations and/or make it difficult for us to achieve the required level of objectivity. If this is so then we need to seek some professional help in dealing with these so we can lead in more productive ways.

Leading change

In the above section, as we began to talk about the dynamics of organisational change, we drew a distinction between technical and adaptive change. Applying certain strategies and techniques to solve problems is not enough. Leaders require adaptive skills to anticipate, create and revise their institutional cultures. In recent times, the need to lead and manage change has become a critical element of pastoral leadership.

Change used to be episodic. It was about movement from an old stable situation, through a period of instability, to the new stable situation. It didn't happen very often and took place within a generally accepted framework. Today it is different. Change is continuous and permanent. It is a world of constant white water. Part of the challenge of pastoral leadership is that we are responsible at the same time for both leading change and providing stability. Our communities demand change and reward us for stability.

According to Charles Handy, we are now in a time of diversity and divergence, in contrast to a post-World War II period of conformity and convergence.

Convergence: When everybody in the group is asked the same question you get a similar answer. This was the world of the 1940s, 50s and early 60s. Votes were taken because consensus was viewed as the resolution to problems. Everybody would buy into the result and go along with the decision. To use a New Zealand political analogy, this was the period of First Past the Post (FPP) – single-party government, one dominant voice.

Divergence. The questions are the same, but the answers are different. Votes no longer solve problems as everybody does not converge around the dominant view. They keep working for their own divergent view or leave and form a new party or church. Returning to our political analogy, this is the period of MMP – multiple voices represented in parliament, government by coalition.

> 21. *How is the movement from a period of convergence to one of divergence evident in your church or ministry context? What tensions or challenges have arisen as a result?*

The process of change will almost inevitably trigger emotional reactions. This is especially so in regard to institutions like the church that contain and convey ultimate beliefs and values.

Gilbert Rendle, *Leading Change in the Congregation* (Alban, 1998), provides the following helpful diagram. Because we are living in a period of unprecedented and rapid social change many people are already anxious about change and may feel their church is the one place at least where things will be relatively stable. There is a significant generational difference because those under forty have grown up in this rapidly changing world and so are not only more comfortable with change they may even expect it.
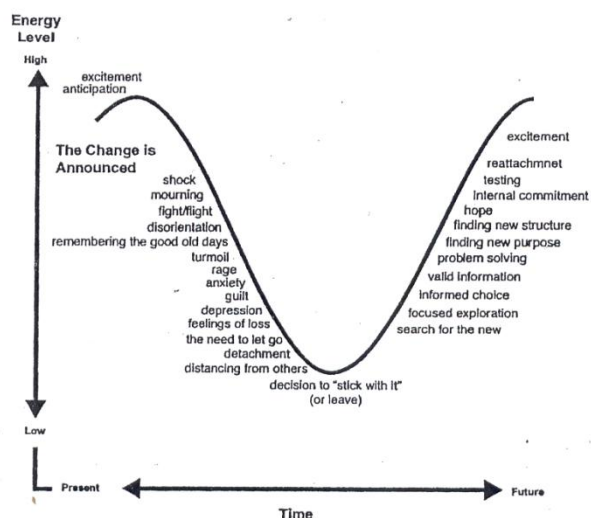
The left hand side of the graph, the early period, is about feelings, which explains why many people's reaction to change is at first more emotional than reasoned. That we respond this way does not mean we are difficult people out to thwart someone's precious scheme or stubborn people opposing the will of God, just that we are ordinary human beings. Managing change means dealing with people's hearts as well as their minds, and in the change-process the initial focus needs to be on the pastoral aspects of dealing with this dimension. We are never just reasoned or argued into change. Many institutional changes fail because leaders focus on the changes they are introducing but neglect the personal transitions people must make to accommodate the changes.

Adding to the dilemma and, often, escalating the reactivity of the congregation is the response of leaders who try to explain the necessary change in greater detail as a way of dealing with the fears and reactions. This response creates a classic disconnect in communication. We often hear leaders say, "If only we could get the people to understand." This is the wrong approach. When dealing with the left side of the roller coaster, it is more important for leaders to listen (and demonstrate that they have listened) than it is for them to talk. Note, though, that listening does not require you to agree with what is being expressed. Rather than defending the ideas, or trying to avoid the feelings being expressed in the congregation, it is more fruitful for leaders to inquire what information is being expressed in the feelings and working empathetically with these.

> 22. *One of the greatest barriers to change is fear. Think of a change you would like to introduce in your ministry or leadership context. Identify the fears people may have that would hold that back. What resources or support might be offered to manage that fear?*

When introducing change, it pays to bear in mind the following three principles:

Changing people is more important than changing structures: The decades of the 1980s and 1990s were renowned for organisational restructuring in the belief that if things were structured differently then they really would be different. However it is people rather than structures that determine the culture of an organisation, and if the people do not embrace change then reality will stay much the same. Many churches went through restructuring during this period, but in reality little changed because the people in the new structures continued to behave in the same old way. We will never change our churches to a missional mode, however much we restructure, unless we change the people in them to think and act missionally. This will likely require a shift in thinking (and theology) as well as behaviour.

Change runs more smoothly when people participate in its planning: Involvement in the planning process tends to generate the necessary force for change. Facts personally researched are better understood, more emotionally acceptable, and more likely to be utilised than those passed down by someone else. Participation in analysis and planning helps overcome resistance, which arises from proceeding too rapidly or too slowly. It enables people to process the questions and perspectives they bring.

Change involves overcoming resistance: People will usually feel threatened by the thought of innovation in something which they have long taken for granted, but over time and with the right encouragement they can come to accept and support a new idea. Here is a helpful graph of how in a normal population individuals might adapt to the idea of change over time.

Leaders fall into one of the first two categories. That is why they are leaders. The mistake we make, though, is of thinking that others are as enamoured of change as we are. We can be impatient and fail to remember that we have 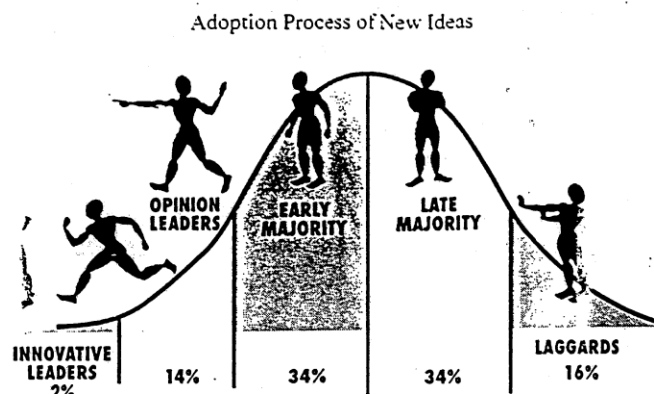been thinking about and working through the issues for months, sometimes years before others. Frequently we do not allow enough time for others to catch up, process the ideas and their emotional reactions and "catch the vision". Acceptance of change takes time, usually more time than many leaders anticipate or allow.

Adoption Process of New Ideas

> 23. *Think about each group in the graph and try and identify some of the people in your church you might place in each? How might you work with them to move them to more positively engage with a change process?*

Perhaps the most significant groups on the graph are the early and late majorities, who together form a "silent majority", so-called because most of the noise and emotional heat comes from the groups at either end of the graph. There is a need to consult widely (surveys are a helpful tool) to find out where people are at. A useful rule of thumb is that, by and large, you are probably going at about the right pace

if the early majority are reasonably comfortable and the late majority are not complaining too much. You need to accept that the laggards might never be happy. In such circumstances, here is a good piece of advice to hold on to: "I cannot give you a certain formula for success but I can give you one for failure. 'Try to please everyone'!"

One final insight to be gleaned from this graph is that the best people to communicate with and deal with the emotional issues of each group are those from the group just ahead. It is a rather pointless exercise having those who are innovative leaders trying to convince the laggards. It just produces a lot of heat and little light. The best people to talk to them are the late majority; likewise the early majority to the late majority. This is also helped by the fact that people in each group tend to have significant social networks with those either side of them, but few with those further away. This illustrates the importance of having within the team leading the change people from all of these groups instead of it being just a group of enthusiasts. This might make the process slower and messier in the earlier stages, but it is more likely to yield fruit in the long run. The advice to go slowly can be summed up in the adage, "A person convinced against their will is of the same opinion still."

John Kotter, in his book *Leading Change*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), outlines an eight-stage process of creating major change:

    i.   Establishing a sense of urgency – identifying crises, potential crises or major opportunities;
    ii.   Creating a guiding coalition with enough power to lead and support the change process and getting it to work together like a team;
    iii.   Developing a compelling vision to direct the process and strategy for achieving it;
    iv.   Communicating the change vision to the entire organisation – and also modelling it;
    v.   Empowering broad-based action by removing obstacles, changing structures to support the change and encouraging risk taking;
    vi.   Generating short term wins and recognising and celebrating these (nothing succeeds like winning);
    vii.   Consolidating gains and producing more change by dealing with systemic resistance (conflict) and barriers (ineffective structures). Putting in place people who can implement the vision.
    viii.   Anchoring new approaches in the culture, particularly through the development of leaders.

This has been helpfully applied to a church context by J. Herrington, M. Bone, and J.Furr in *Leading Congregational Change* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2000). They make the critical point that "the transformation of an existing congregation is never a quick or easy process. ... A realistic figure for comprehensive transformation of a congregation might be five to seven years." Based on his study of churches in New Zealand Kevin Ward supports this claim, and says the tendency for so few ministries to go beyond a five year period may be a significant factor in the lack of real and lasting congregational change. Indeed, it usually takes quite some time for ministers and leaders to be trusted and accepted as part of the local community. If radical change is proposed too early in their ministry, they will be perceived as an outsider who fails to appreciate the history and values associated with the church as it is.

The relationship between change and a congregation's history must be understood and respected. Change leaders should value and respect the past, celebrate the history and its key personalities. It is vital to build positively on history, to see the past as a foundation for the future.

> 24. *Identify an issue of change in your church where people have felt threatened? How was that handled? Was there anything that could have been done better?*

It is important to develop trust before initiating significant change. Trust develops over time. It is not incidental that research indicates the most effective years for a minister in a church are between 5 and 15 years. It is now recognised that trust is the critical element for effective leadership in a culture of distrust and cynicism. Lovett Weems writes: "The greatest asset one can bring to congregational renewal leadership is the bond of trust established with others in the church. Building such trust is hard work, and it takes time. However it is… the 'cultural foundation' stone on which everything else rests."[15] Some speak of a "trust threshold" or a "radius of trust." Where a high level of trust has been developed, remarkable change can be accomplished with a minimum of acrimony and delay.

> 25. *What kind of things can you do that might increase the trust of your congregation with you, and also with the leadership group in the church?*

One final insight is that *change presumes dissatisfaction* with the status quo*.* Effective change leaders assess the chances for change by evaluating the level of dissatisfaction. The higher the level, the greater the potential for change. Incidentally, this means the first task of a leader wanting to bring about change might be to increase the level of dissatisfaction, but how one goes about this is all important. It is better to help people imagine a different and better future than create a culture of complaint and criticism. Moreover, only if there is a high degree of trust can leaders do this while still being able to lead in the direction of the kind of change needed.

> 26. *If you want to bring about change, how might you constructively and appropriately increase dissatisfaction with the status quo?*

Managing conflict

Conflict manifests itself in many ways externally (between people) and internally (within ourselves). For most of us conflict is regarded as a negative experience, disruptive and painful, to be avoided, perhaps at all costs. However, strategies of avoidance and denial seldom work. Only if we see conflict as a natural and inevitable part of life are we more likely to develop means and methods to deal with it constructively and creatively. Conflict can provide opportunities for growth and creativity that might not emerge otherwise. It stimulates interest and activity, serves as a safety valve for hostilities, prompts change and strengthens the human character.

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[15] Lovett H. Weems, *Take the Next Step: Leading Lasting Change in the Church*, Nashville: Abingdon, 2003, p.38.

> 27. *Do you agree that conflict can be positive? Think of some conflict you have been through that led to positive outcomes. What were these?*

Badly handled conflict will make people feel defeated and demeaned, generate distrust and disillusionment, and produce apathy and alienation. Research indicates that skill and openness in managing conflict is one of the principles critical to church vitality and growth. It is naïve to think we can bring about significant change without conflict. Indeed, conflict will often be a precursor to change.

There is nothing new about conflict in churches: The disciples of Jesus quarrelled frequently (Mark 10:35-45); Jesus said there would be conflict among his followers (Matthew 18:15-17); Paul was distressed with the church at Corinth not because there was conflict, but because they resorted to secular courts to resolve it (1 Corinthians 6:1-6); and Paul himself was often at the centre of conflict (Acts 15:36-41; 2 Corinthians 7:2-13).

Listed below are some of the primary causes of conflict experienced in churches today:

i. *Personality clashes*. Appreciating diversity is easier said than done when confronted by a person whose motivation, outlook, values, personality and way of doing things is just so different to our own.

ii. *Theological disagreements.* If the protracted sexuality and leadership debates in our church highlighted anything, surely it was that theology matters, and when people disagree over their ultimate beliefs then the resultant conflict can be bitter and intense.

iii. *Role confusion*. A clash of expectations concerning the role of a minister or leader can erode trust and goodwill. A common example here is expectations around pastoral care – many congregations and church councils would like their ministers to place a higher priority on routine parish visiting.

iv. *Unclear structures and processes.* Decision-making process and church structures may be such that people and committees get in each other's way. There may be no clear guidelines about the roles and responsibilities of minister, church council, ministry staff, volunteer leaders and committees. The lack of clarity is a source of constant conflict: no one is sure who is to do what.

v. *Outdated structures.* The changing size of a congregation can be a source of trouble. Structures that served the congregation well when it was of a particular size no longer do the job. Declining churches can feel burdened by an infrastructure that, if it is to be maintained, requires more responsibility to be carried by less people. Conversely, growing churches can experience a loss of community as their minister takes on an increasingly managerial role and small groups give way to larger, more formal committees.

vi. *A mismatch of leadership style.* Leadership style analysis often measures two variables: how much attention leaders pays to tasks, and how much to relationships. Often it becomes an issue where the departing minister had either a highly relational or highly task oriented style and the church expected the opposite. Those who appreciated the previous minister's style lament the absence of those qualities. Another issue is that of an authoritarian leadership style in a church that is used to a consultative style, or vice versa.

vii. *Change is rushed.* Many ministers arriving in a new church do not take the time to get to know the congregation and build trust and credibility before making changes.

viii. *Inadequate communication.* For any organisation, communication is the lifeline. Sometimes communication is neglected, breaks down or is simply nonexistent, and members begin to feel left out and uninformed. Over time, misunderstandings creep in as misinformation is carried through the grapevine. As conflict escalates, members of one faction tend to avoid speaking to other factions. Information tends to be kept within factions and as it grows in intensity, each faction's perceptions and information becomes more and more distorted.

> 28. *How does the above list compare with your experience? Would you add or change anything?*
> 29. *In your current ministry or leadership context is there any conflict? If so what do you think are the underlying causes?*

What can be done? Here are some suggestions:

i. *Deal with the personality issues*. In some cases this will call for increased levels of tolerance and flexibility as the leader manages a diversity of personality types and perspectives. In other cases, however, it will involve reining in bad behaviour and confronting difficult people. While patience is called for, and while attempts must be made to understand an antagonist's views, the time may come when the antagonist's behaviour needs to be confronted and the person told that their behaviour is unacceptable. If it has reached this point then it should be handled not just by the minister, but by the church council.

ii. *Offer theological leadership in a manner that is invitational, involving and respectful of others.* Avoid "laying down the law". Don't turn every theological issue into a biblical and doctrinal battle ground. Allow for diversity of opinion even as you teach what you believe to be true and encourage and strive for consensus. Drawing on a farming metaphor from the Australian outback, theological leadership works best when it adopts a well-digging, not a fence-building approach.

iii. *Clear up role confusion*. Check the *Book of Order*, job descriptions and other relevant documentation to clarify roles. Think through and talk over the subject until there is a common understanding, making (and documenting) necessary clarifications.

iv. *Clarify decision making processes and structures.* See what the *Book of Order* has to say about church councils and check that each committee has proper terms of reference detailing responsibilities and lines of accountability.

v. *Modify church structures as needed within parameters allowed under the Book of Order.* In determining what sort of structure suits your church, keep in mind two key criteria: suitability (in relation to the size of your church) and sustainability. You don't want to develop a structure that requires a disproportionate amount of time and energy to maintain.

vi. *Adapt your leadership style to the context.* Good leadership understands the importance of context and is able to adapt.

vii. *Spend time getting to know your people.* This should be a major priority in the first period of a ministry or leadership position.

viii.   *Improve communication.* Be proactive not reactive. Always ask yourself, "What needs to be communicated to whom, by what method, and when?" Provide opportunities and channels for feedback, not only in relation to particular issues under discussion, but also about the church generally.

The following are common, but unhealthy, ways of responding to conflict when it emerges:

- *Denial* – ignoring or avoiding it in the hope it will go away;
- *Projection* – refusing to accept personal responsibility and projecting blame on to someone or something else;
- *Coercion* – using the power of one's position to enforce compliance;
- *Giving in* – choosing the path of least resistance;
- *Distortion* – misrepresenting the views of one side in order to gain sympathy and support for another;
- *Win-lose elimination* – forcing people to choose sides.

> 30. *Can you think of times when you have responded to conflict in one of these ways? What were the consequences?*

Sara Savage and Eloene Boyd-McMillan talk about *the norm of niceness*:[16] "People are supposed to be nice in church. Translation: no anger, no disagreement, no problems, no conflict." They point out this can be particularly felt by Christian women. "Nice Christian women do not get angry. Nice Christian women do not argue, disagree, cause problems or enter into dispute." Church leaders can suffer similarly from the expectation they will be nice to all. Any challenge they deliver to the congregation may be interpreted as 'not being very nice.' "If we understand 'peace and unity' to mean the complete absence of difference, conflict or individuality, then we will never be able to achieve this state in the church, and we as leaders are pursuing an impossible goal."

The call that Christians feel to be loving, kind and patient should never excuse the repression of conflict. Repressed conflict just resurfaces as "passive-aggressive behaviour", or as "blown-cork aggression".

By way of contrast, the following behaviours help make for healthy dialogue when dealing with conflict:
- *Keep the channels of communication open*
- *Talk about what is right not who is right*
- *Try to look inside the other's frame of reference*
- *Don't judge motives*
- *Be open to meaningful participation by all*
- *Look for short term or immediate goals.* Try to work on what everyone can agree on and head towards it.
- *Build mutual trust.* Be honest, give others benefit of doubt, don't work behind backs.
- *Be willing to compromise*

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[16] Savage, *Human Face of Church*, 57-8.

- *Seek options for mutual gain*
- *Don't lose control of your emotions*
- *Don't retaliate.*

Perhaps the most important skill when involved in conflict is *active listening.* A good deal of the messiness of conflict arises from both sides not feeling heard.

> 31. *Can you think of examples of church conflicts that have been satisfactorily resolved? What were the critical factors in achieving resolution?*

To conclude this section, here is a helpful policy commitment adopted by the Mennonite Church (USA) in 1995:

Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love: Commitments in Times of Disagreement

"Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3), as both individual members and the body of Christ, we pledge that we shall:

In Thought

Accept conflict	1.	Acknowledge together that conflict is a normal part of our life in the church. Romans 14:1-8, 10-12, 17-19 15:1-7
Affirm hope	2.	Affirm that as God walks with us in conflict we can work through to growth. Ephesians 4:15-16
Commit to prayer	3.	Admit our needs and commit ourselves to pray for a mutually satisfactory solution (no prayers for my success or for the other to change but to find a joint way). James 5:16

In Action

Go to the other.	4.	Go directly to those with whom we disagree; avoid behind-the-back criticism.* Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-20 .
In the spirit of humility...	5.	Go in gentleness, patience and humility. Place the problem between us at neither doorstep and own our part in the conflict instead of pointing out the others'. Galatians 6:1-5

Be quick to listen	6. Listen carefully, summarize and check out what is heard before responding. Seek as much to understand as to be understood. James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13
Be slow to judge	7. Suspend judgments, avoid labeling, end name calling, discard threats, and act in a nondefensive, nonreactive way. Romans 2:1-4; Galatians 5:22-26
Be willing to negotiate	8. Work through the disagreements constructively. Acts 15; Philippians 2:1-11 • Identify issues, interests, and needs of both (rather than take positions). • Generate a variety of options for meeting both parties' needs (rather than defending one's own way). • Evaluate options by how they meet the needs and satisfy the interests of all sides (not one side's values). • Collaborate in working out a joint solution (so both sides gain, both grow and win). • Cooperate with the emerging agreement (accept the possible, not demand your ideal). • Reward each other for each step forward, toward agreement (celebrate mutuality)

In Life

Be steadfast in love	9. Be firm in our commitment to seek a mutual solution; be stubborn in holding to our common foundation in Christ; be steadfast in love. Colossians 3:12-15
Be open to mediation	10. Be open to accept skilled help. If we cannot reach agreement among ourselves, we will use those with gifts and training in mediation in the larger church. Philippians 4:1-3
Trust the community	11. We will trust the community and if we cannot reach agreement or experience reconciliation, we will turn the decision over to others in the congregation or from the broader church. Acts 15 • In one-to-one or small group disputes, this may mean allowing others to arbitrate. • In congregational, conference district or denominational disputes, this may mean allowing others to arbitrate or implementing constitutional decision-making processes, insuring that they are done in the spirit of these guidelines, and abiding by whatever decision is made.

Be the Body of Christ	12. Believe in and rely on the solidarity of the Body of Christ and its commitment to peace and justice, rather than resort to the courts of law. I Corinthians 6:1-6

*Go directly if you are European-North American; in other cultures disagreements are often addressed through a trusted go-between.

Managing crises

From time to time churches will find themselves rocked by crises. Such crises can erupt without warning or they can build over time like a slow pressure cooker. They can be the result of external circumstances, like the Christchurch earthquakes, or internal actions, like cases of sexual or financial impropriety. Whatever the cause, the first effect is likely to be one of shock, followed by a sense of disorientation and confusion. At such times, people will look to their appointed leader(s) for direction.

In her book *Landing in the Executive Chair*,[17] Linda Henman talks about what a leader should learn in order to prepare for a crisis and what a leader should do during a crisis. Quoting an English proverb, "A smooth sea never made a skilled mariner," Henman draws several lessons from the seafaring metaphor. Firstly, she says, there are often early warning signs that a storm is brewing. Sailors have a saying, "Red sails in morning, sailor take warning; red sails at night, sailor's delight." Take notice of early warning signs. Be aware of persistent complaints, rumours and resistance to change. These always seem to start off small and begin to swell. Don't ignore them and find out exactly if there is the potential for a crisis brewing over the horizon. If there is, move smartly to address the issues and talk with the people concerned, always ensuring that correct processes are followed. Do a risk analysis and, if the emerging crisis has legal ramifications or has the potential to attract media interest, contact the Presbyterian Church's Assembly Executive Secretary.

If you cannot prevent a crisis, at least manage it. When a crisis arises, the initial reaction can be one of denial and avoidance. We want to hide and let someone else deal with it. Leaders do not have this luxury. In times of crisis they have to step up to the mark and give the measured, professional leadership that is required. This will involve several things:

Consult: Develop a response plan in consultation with your leadership team. A quick phone call or two can get this consultation process under way. Work out what needs to be done straight away and by whom, determine what resources and steps will be needed over the coming days, and identify those people who need to be informed and consulted.

Care: In many crises, the first active response will be a pastoral one, providing prompt and appropriate levels of care (and prayer) for those who are directly affected. If the leader cannot provide this care

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[17] Linda Henman, *Landing in the Executive Chair*, Career Press, 2011

personally, at least organise somebody who can. In other situations, however, especially those that involve allegations of misconduct, the first response should not always be pastoral, insofar as immediate risk management and dealing with presenting issues may require very specific action – for example, ensuring that a vulnerable person is removed from a dangerous environment, reporting abuse to police, etc. Unfortunately, some church ministers and leaders who have acted in their view pastorally towards alleged offenders in the past have in fact allowed very damaging situations to continue. For example, in their attempts to resolve pastorally reports of suspected sexual abuse, they have effectively allowed abusers time to develop more secretive ways of continuing their destructive behaviour. Even if you get it wrong, sometimes it is necessary to act in very decisive ways – as long as you can provide good reason (to a court of law potentially) for acting that way. Perhaps most importantly, leaders need to know and understand their limitations and their own competencies, and refer situations to specialists and appropriate authorities where necessary. If you are unsure what to do, or what the correct procedure is, contact the Assembly Office.

Contain: Containing a crisis does not mean suppressing it. It means keeping calm, carefully and prayerfully developing appropriate response and communication strategies (including media), analysing risk, mapping out various scenarios, ensuring proper processes are followed, putting in place necessary resources and keeping the right people informed. Response strategies will generally fall into three time zones: Immediate (or short-term), medium-term and long-term. The biggest risk when focusing on the urgent and the immediate is failing to give sufficient thought to the medium-term and long-term ramifications and the sorts of responses that are necessary to deal with these. The longer a crisis rolls on the more one is likely to encounter problems of fatigue, disillusionment and low morale.

Communicate: Many a crisis is exacerbated by poor communication. Good communication will inform and clarify and inspire confidence. It will be tailored to the needs of particular audiences or stakeholders (internal and external to the organisation). It will be considered, consistent and timely. It will serve the truth, not merely seek to protect the image of the organisation. That said, it will also take care not to add fuel to a fire or expose the organisation to additional or unnecessary risk. Where the media are involved, advice and support should be sought from the Assembly Office.

Conflict of interest: Where a particular leader's role or actions are deemed to be part of the crisis, he or she must declare a conflict of interest and step aside to allow someone else to take charge of the situation.

Self-care: The immediacy of a crisis will demand a lot from a leader. It is crucial that leaders have self-care strategies in place to ensure that they do not crash and burn once the immediacy of the crisis is over and they can no longer rely on adrenalin to get them through each day.

Rituals: Special worship services, symbolic liturgical actions, prayer vigils and other such corporate spiritual activities can all play an important part in helping churches and their wider communities deal constructively with crises and transition from one phase of responding to another.

> 32. *Can you think of a crisis that was handled well or badly? What lessons about leadership can you draw from that situation?*

Leading teams

Today there is major shift away from the notion of the individual heroic leader to a focus on people working together in teams to achieve even greater outcomes. We see this in business, in education and in sport, to mention just a few areas. Many churches, too, are seeing the advantages of adopting a team ministry approach.

In reality it should always have been the practice of the church, but this often got lost in the individualism of Western culture. In his book *Leading the Team Based Church*, George Cladis reminds us that the seventh-century Greek theologian John of Damascus described the relationship of the three persons of the Trinity in terms of "perichoresis", which means literally "circle dance." This conveys an image of the three persons of the Trinity in a constant circular movement in which "the oneness of God is not the oneness of a distinct self contained individual; it is the unity of a community of persons who love each other and live together in harmony."[18]

In questioning traditional structures of power and control, Cladis calls for a "round table leadership" that reflects the circle fellowship of the Triune God, where the hierarchical distinctions of clergy and laity give way to a sense of the body of Christ, with each part equal and important. So when we think of team, the image of "circle" should immediately come to mind. "In a circle we can all see each other. No one is left out. We are all interconnected. We hold up each other."[19]

Leonard Sweet argues that the Christian tradition is "teamwork obsessed."[20] Jesus spent his ministry building a handful of itinerant disciples into a committed team, bonded together for mission. In the early church, leadership was always team based. Gilbert Bilezikian writes, "There is no evidence in the New Testament that any early Christian community existed that was under the local leadership of one dominant individual."[21]

What is important to a team?

A team values the relationships that constitute the team: This means that each person (and their particular gifts and perspective) will be valued for who they are, not merely for what they bring to the table.

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[18] George Cladis, *Leading the Team Based Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999) 4.
[19] Cladis, *Leading the Team Based Church,* 6
[20] L. Sweet, *AquaChurch* (Loveland: Group Publishing, 1999) 191.
[21] Gilbert Bilezikian, *Community 101* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 155.

A team engenders cooperation, not competition: A climate of acceptance, openness to advice and working together for the greater good brings about the best results, and is consistent with a New Testament understanding (Cf. 1 Corinthians 12).

A team is not a committee: You will be familiar with the adage that "a camel is a horse designed by a committee." What this saying suggests is that committees will inevitable achieve results through compromise. And while this is fine when the goal is to find a solution acceptable to a wide range of people, teams have a different focus. Committees and teams should not be confused. It is like the difference between leadership and management. At the risk of over-generalising, the following differences exist:

Committee	Ministry Team
Task or issue focused	Mission and ministry focused
A group of individuals with a shared task	Persons in relationship
Meets on a routine time schedule	Does what it takes to accomplish the mission
Roles not clearly defined	Clear roles based on gifts and calling

> 33. It is often said that the Presbyterian Church has a committee culture. Do you agree? If so, how might this be changed? What are the challenges in endeavouring to do so?

To function effectively, teams need six things:

1. An owned vision or sense of mission. "Ministry teams are fuelled by a mission God has given them to go and do. They act with purpose and design to fill God's will as best they can discern it… They sense that their work has ultimate meaning, they sense that they are proceeding to do something highly significant."[22]

2. A team leader. Teams need someone to give definition to the team's purpose, establish the ground rules of teamwork and serve and encourage the team (providing they don't try and do too much or take over). The leader needs to:

- Know the art of delegation. This does not merely involve telling someone what to do. It involves enthusing them for the task and being prepared to mentor and train them for the task.
- Look for and encourage the potential not the shortcomings.
- Expect and develop the best out of people.
- Use affirmation and praise liberally.
- Correct carefully, constructively and quickly.

Some of the key skills needed are:

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[22] Cladis, *Leading the Team Based Church*, 12

- Keeping the vision alive and in front of the team
- Two way communication; the ability to listen and pass on information
- Fostering of team values and culture
- Nurturing the teams spirituality, the sense of God's presence being active
- Facilitating team meetings and processes
- Training development of personal and ministry skills for the team

> 34. *Try and think of some good team leaders you have known. How have they functioned? What made them effective?*

3. Competent team members. Select team members who have the following characteristics:

- the necessary skills to achieve the desired outcomes or goal(s)
- a strong desire to contribute
- the ability to work collaboratively with others

4. Unified commitment. The involvement of team members in a common cause enhances commitment. "People tend to support what they have helped to create". Involvement of members must reflect the important balance between individual members' differentiation and integration among the whole team.

5. Clearly Defined roles. Members of a committee usually know why they are there – to represent someone or something (often signified by their title). When you change into a team approach (titles should be mostly absent) it is essential that the people involved clearly know not only why they are there but what their roles are. This enables them to focus on their part and to make it an effective part of the whole.

6. A collaborative climate. Collaboration flourishes when there is trust which promotes effective, honest communication and coordination among team members while encouraging freedom in staying focused on problems.

> 34. *Some writers prefer to talk about a "team of leaders" than a "team that is led". What do you think they mean by this? How does it fit within your understanding of the church and leadership?*

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it.

Everybody was sure Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

- Argus Poster

One writer, reflecting on his own experience, suggests the following "discipline of relationships" that need to be maintained if a team is to work effectively.

- *Communication:* we must keep each other informed of what we are doing. This means attendance at team meetings is vitally important.
- *Openness:* We need to be open with one another. It does not help team relationships if we keep secrets from one another. In the case of certain pastoral confidences, there may be times when pastoral members of the team will not be free to be open. However there is no place for members to keep secrets from one another.
- *Honesty:* closely linked with openness. When it comes to our thoughts and our feelings we need to be honest with one another. If something has upset us, then we need to communicate this in an appropriate way. Today's niggle could be tomorrow's resentment, and next week's breakdown. Likewise in our decision-making, we need to be honest with one another. If a member of the team is unhappy with the decision being made s/he needs to say so. The very questioning of a decision often enables the making of a better decision.
- *Loyalty:* outside our meetings, we must always stand up for one another. None of us is perfect and we will mess up. However we must resist the temptation of criticising one another to others.

Mutual encouragement, trust, patience and respect are other important qualities.

> 35. In teams you are currently involved with, how good are the relationships within it? Where does it come short in some of those listed here? How might you act to change that?

In organisational terms, the church might be described as a voluntary society or a "community of volunteers." Without these volunteers almost everything the church does would grind to a halt. Church leaders always need to remember this. We all need motivation to give our best shot, but what motivates people who are volunteering is different from that which motivates paid employees.

Theories of motivation fall into two broad categories:

- *External*, sometimes called extrinsic approaches claim that we do what we do to gain rewards or to avoid punishment – "carrot and stick".
- *Internal*, otherwise referred to as intrinsic theories, describe motivation as coming from within the individual. The internal theories say that people do what they do because ultimately they want and choose to.

By and large, Christian leaders should not rely on external motivation methods with volunteers, who are not motivated by financial gain (the carrot) and who should not be made to feel guilty (the stick). There is no room for manipulative tactics. Not only do such tactics lack integrity, they generate disillusionment and resentment.

Differences between volunteers and employees suggest several different reasons external approaches to motivation don't work in congregations:

1. The *rewards* are different:
- Volunteers experience their reward in terms of satisfaction derived from serving God and neighbour, and being appreciated for what they do.
- Employees earn a wage or salary in accordance with an employment contract.

2. The *motivation* is different:
- Volunteers are committed to serving the mission of the church and to building up the body of Christ.
- Employees do the job that they are paid to do.

Taking an employer-employee approach with volunteers can be counter-productive. We need to ask, what are the internal motivators that will lead volunteers to want to give their best? When forming teams, an empowering system invites prospective volunteers to ask the question, "What gifts, talents or passions do I have to share?" By working with them to answer the question the congregation creates a strong, healthy, system that can expand its ability to help people discern a ministry opportunity and then train, support and deploy them. Too often a congregation sees involvement solely in terms of its own needs. It is easy to slip into the "we need ..." mode: "How can we get more volunteers so the work can be done?" But the personal question, about whether God has gifted someone with a particular gift for ministry deserves equal consideration. To do this a congregation must be willing to present the opportunity for people to explore their own potential and gifts, assist them to discover the joys of ministry and share the satisfaction that comes from serving others as part of a team.

> *36. What sorts of changes might be needed to move from an individualistic model of leadership to a more team-focussed style?*

Avoiding death by committee

Jokes abound about the Presbyterian penchant for forming, and serving on committees. Like the one that asks how many Presbyterians does it take to change a light bulb? Answer: Ten. One to actually change the bulb, but only after nine others have formed a committee to discuss the issue, consulted the Book of Order, referred it to the finance committee for an opinion on the financial implications, urged caution on the grounds that this sort of thing was tried once before, and then referred it to the property committee for action.

If we didn't laugh we'd cry. We've probably all felt it – the disillusionment caused by serving on, or reporting to a committee that either seems to go round in circles, or whose natural mindset seems to be one of gate-keeping rather than permission-giving, or which is a forum for perpetual conflict between certain personalities and factions, or whose membership appears to consist of people who are there more out of a sense of duty than enthusiasm for the work of the committee, or is badly run and lacks a clear sense of purpose and direction. We often come away from these sorts of committee meetings feeling drained, dispirited, frustrated and angry. Many an innovative idea has languished and died in

committee. And many a minister, leader and committee member has felt that he or she has languished and died in committee too!

While there is no one-size-fits-all solution to this, there are some things we can do to make committees more dynamic and effective, including the following:

i. We should perhaps avoid an undue focus on "committees" (although they are a fact of life in the most organisations, including the church), and encourage people to explore other, potentially better, ways of working together. Just in the same way we should always ask is a meeting really necessary, is a committee really needed? Are there more effective ways to achieve what needs to be done? For example, setting up working or task groups or project teams which are tasked with achieving specific outcomes within a specific timeframe (i.e. they are not open-end in their nature as committees tend to be). In discussing these alternatives, it would also be helpful to talk about how people come together and learn to operate effectively as a group.

ii. If a committee is necessary, make sure it has clear terms of reference which spell out its purpose and the scope of its work.

iii. Appoint a person with the time and skills to convene the committee.

iv. Appoint people to serve on the committee who: (a) have an interest in the work of this particular committee and have the time to serve on it; (b) can work as part of a team and respect the views of others; and (c) have particular skills, attributes and backgrounds that are relevant to the committee's work. Thought might also be given to appointing people to serve for a particular length of time (say, four years) at the conclusion of which they are either eligible for reappointment for another term or obliged to rotate off the committee to allow someone else to serve.

v. Appoint a person to keep the Minutes (or record) of each meeting. These should be typed up within a few days of the meeting, run past the convenor, and distributed to committee members as soon as possible. They should then be approved (or amended) at the next meeting. Because the Minutes provide the only formal record of the decisions and work of a committee it is important that they are accurate. This is especially so when something crops up that requires previous Minutes to be looked at to find out what was previously discussed and decided.

vi. Plan the Agenda of each meeting and ensure that reports and documents pertaining to a given meeting are distributed to committee members well in advance of the meeting. Planning the
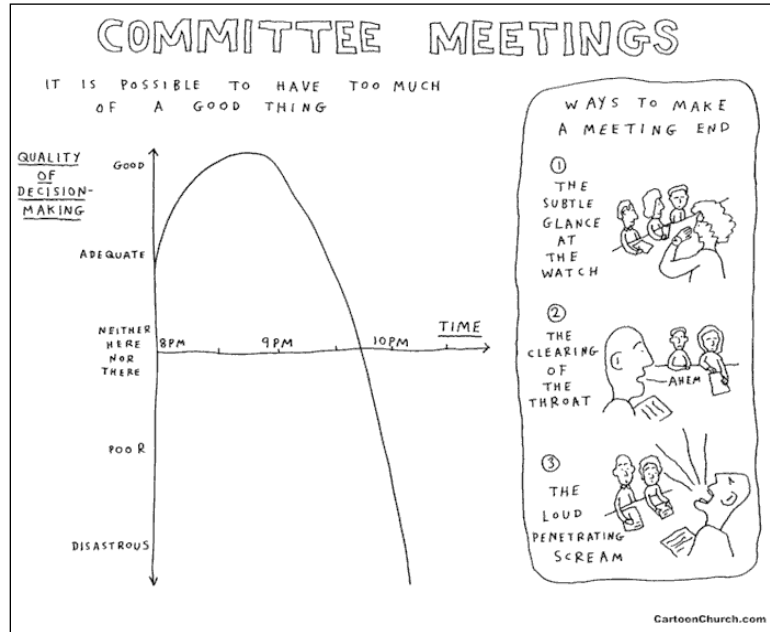
Agenda will involve: (a) Determining the order in which business is discussed; and (b) Prioritising items of business and ensuring that the main items are given sufficient time and not squeezed out by minor items.

vii. Set a finishing time for each meeting and determine a process by which unfinished business might be dealt with, either by deferral to the next scheduled meeting, or by referral to an executive group with delegated authority to deal with business between meetings, or by holding another meeting as needed. As a general rule, aim to keep all meetings under 2 hours.

viii. Incorporate communal spiritual practices (e.g., worship, singing, silence, prayer and Bible study) into committee meetings.

ix. Precede or follow meetings with fellowship, which might include a shared meal, but at the very least should include a cuppa. Such practices remind us of the relational nature of our work.

x. Establish speaking protocols to give everyone the chance to be heard and to minimise the risk of discussions being dominated by just one or two voices. For example, each person can speak once to each item of business, and is only allowed to speak a second time if the convenor is satisfied that everyone else has had an opportunity to speak.

xi. Keep a tight rein on General Business. All items of General Business should be brought to the attention of the convenor prior to the start of the meeting, and preferably in time to be included on the Agenda. The convenor should discuss with the person raising the item of General Business the best way of dealing with it – is this the right forum for the item to be dealt with; how urgent is it; does it need a paper to be written and circulated in time for the next meeting?

xii. For each resolution that is passed, decide who will be responsible for actioning the resolution and by when. It is the convenor's job to follow up on these decisions. Progress reports should be called for at subsequent meetings.

xiii. Establish good communication systems – internally within the committee, as well as externally to: (a) those persons who are impacted by particular decisions that have been made; (b) other relevant committees; (c) the church court to whom the committee is accountable; (d) the congregation.

For more advice on how to run a good meeting, and information about meeting procedures, see page 6 of the *Parish Handbook* on the PCANZ web site. Remember, good meeting procedures are not an end in themselves; they are a means to an end. They should serve, not detract from, the higher goals of discernment and consensus.

> 37. *Where might there be room for improving the way your committee meetings are run?*

Maintaining personal health and wellbeing

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence to suggest that low morale, fatigue and burnout are all too frequent experiences for people in key ministry and leadership positions. There are many contributing factors. Some are internal; some are external.

Internal factors can include:

i. Personality type: People who are competitive, driven, ambitious, task and achievement-oriented and recognition-dependent can also have fragile temperaments and can be less able to cope with criticism, stress and failure.

ii. Lack of self-care: This can include poor hygiene and diet and a lack of exercise, not having any interests and friendships outside of work, not spending sufficient time with spouse and family, not building some form of Sabbath rest into weekly routines, and not being able to relax without feeling guilty.

iii. Personal insecurities: Beneath the outgoing and cheerful demeanour of a leader can be a wounded soul plagued by lack of confidence, loneliness and unresolved feelings of hurt and anger (sometimes associated with past relationships, including one's parents).

iv. Spiritual barrenness: Behind the public persona of some religious leaders there can be a spiritual emptiness and a private life riddled with contradictions and inconsistencies. There is no shortage of Christian leaders being exposed in the courts and through the media as having feet of clay.

v. Vocational crisis: For some ministers and leaders this takes the form of uncertainty and confusion about their role and calling in the midst of rapid societal and organisational change and institutional decline. A real but generally unspoken expectation that they will be agents of church growth rather than ministers of the Gospel can be a heavy burden to bear. For others it takes the form of disillusionment with the church as an institution that is too often rocked by scandal, internally divided, and can often be a bad (and even exploitative) employer.

vi. Life transitions: Movements from one stage of life to another can be unexpectedly stressful. We often focus on the so-called "mid-life crisis" but other transition times can be equally challenging. During such transitions we may have to cope with physical and emotional changes, as well as changes to some of our closest relationships (including with parents, spouses and offspring). These changes can trigger spiritual crises, wherein forms of spirituality and patterns of piety which served us well in younger days no longer sustain and nourish us.

External factors can include:

i. A stressful or negative work environment, including ill-defined or unrealistic expectations, an unacceptably high workload, and a lack of training, support and collegiality.

ii. A lack of job security. As many churches continue to decline, their annual budgets come under increasing pressure, and the funding for many paid ministry and leadership positions is under threat. In some cases, full-time positions are reduced to part-time positions, but with no corresponding reduction in expectations around workload and results.

iii. Stress-inducing events and circumstances, including the breakdown of relationships, the death of a loved one, financial problems, sudden and dramatic lifestyle change, significant health problems, sexual dysfunction or frustration, and social isolation.

iv. A prevailing (western) culture and global economic system that makes living an authentic Christian life incredibly difficult. Leaders often feel more acutely than others the tension

between cultural conformity and the radical call to discipleship because of the expectation that they will successfully model the life of discipleship.

Of course, not all stress is bad. Good stress, properly channelled, releases adrenaline and can motivate and enable us to reach optimum levels of performance. But unrelieved and compounded stress can lead to depression, with accompanying physical symptoms. It is tempting, under such circumstances, to relieve this sort of stress through the use of chemicals, whether in the form of tranquillisers, pain relievers or alcohol. However, while these might mask the symptoms in the short-term, they usually prevent us making the necessary changes to deal with the stress properly.

A significant step on the path to wellness is to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy forms and levels of stress, and to find appropriate ways of addressing the latter. Rigorous self-assessment, prayer, regular supervision, a doctor's visit, and in some cases specialised counselling, can each play a part in this regard. Other positive steps one can take to understand, manage and ease stress can include the following:

i. Drawing sustenance from your relationship with Christ. At the beginning of this handbook we talked about the importance of *abiding in Christ* – personally and in communion with others. The more you have developed a spiritually balanced life and nurtured your relationship with Christ the better placed you will be to cope with stress and difficulty.

ii. Listening to your body. While such things as constant headaches, chest pains, sleeplessness, irritability, uncharacteristic outbursts of anger, skin rashes and bowel problems can be symptomatic of all sorts of ailments, including organic disease, they can also be symptoms of stress. They can be likened to messages that our body is trying to send us. We need to learn to ask not only "What is wrong with me?" but also "Why do I have this symptom at this time? What is my body telling me?"

iii. Undergoing a personality assessment like Myers Briggs or Enneagram can help you understand more about your personality type and the impact it has on the ways you think, act and react. Armed with this information, you are better placed to develop a leadership style that suits your personality and develop stronger coping mechanisms. Understanding different personality types can also help you work out what makes other people tick and how to work constructively with colleagues who are of different personality types to your own.

iv. Finding strength and solace in the scriptures. Psalms of lament, for example, not only give voice to the despair, loneliness and hurt that many leaders feel from time to time; they also serve as a vehicle for processing these raw emotions and reminding the stressed leader of God's prior faithfulness and steadfast love. They give us words to pray when our own words fail us. Then in the stories of Saul and David and the like, we read of flawed characters who, like leaders of every generation, are often burdened by failure and plagued by doubt, yet whose lives have been claimed by God for a purpose and become powerful witnesses to God's grace and power. These sorts of stories become for us sources of encouragement and hope.

v. Doing an inventory of your strengths, gifts and competencies and comparing these with the requirements of your ministry/leadership position or job. Do they constitute a good match?

How significant are the differences? Can they be addressed through normal processes of personal and professional development or are they indicative of a fundamental mismatch? With the right support and encouragement can you grow into your role, or are you like a square peg in a round hole? Should you be thinking about a growth or an exit strategy?

vi. Implementing a proper regime of self-care, including healthy eating patterns, regular exercise, plenty of sleep, spiritual disciplines, Sabbath rest, and taking up a sport, craft, hobby or community involvement can dramatically improve your mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing.

vii. Identifying root causes of workplace stress (not just reacting to surface symptoms), keeping things in perspective, handing things over to God in prayer, learning how to manage conflict, following the right process(es) for raising concerns, and addressing issues without personalising them (or demonising particular persons).

viii. Confiding in someone. Professional supervision can prove very helpful and should be a given for anyone in a significant ministry or leadership position. It can also be helpful to talk things through with a close friend or confidante. But be careful who you choose. Do not choose someone who may have a conflict of interest or who may not be particularly good at keeping confidences. Search your own heart. Always be mindful of the Apostle James' warning about the immense damage that can be caused by a loose or bitter tongue (James 3:1-12). Do not use the need to confide as a means of winning people over to your point of view.

There are lots of excellent resources on the above and related issues. Lynne Baab has written some really helpful books, including the following:

- *Beating Burnout in Congregations* (Alban Institute, 2003) looks at causes of burnout among congregational volunteers, with ideas for prevention and healing.
- *Personality Type in Congregations* (Alban Institute, 1998) gives an overview of ways the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator can be used in congregations.
- *Fasting* (IVP, 2006) is a practical book with stories of people who fast both from food and from other things, such as media, shopping, and technology.
- *Sabbath Keeping* (IVP, 2005) is an introduction to ways to keep the Sabbath with stories from many people who observe the Sabbath.
- *Sabbath: The Gift of Rest* (IVP, 2007) explores eight biblical passages with their theological and practical themes that undergird the practice of Sabbath keeping. The studies in this guide cover what Sabbath is and how to practice it. The guide may be used for individual or group study.
- *A Renewed Spirituality* (IVP, 2002) discusses patterns of midlife spirituality, along with six spiritual paths that people at midlife find helpful.

Books and articles by well known American author, Eugene Peterson, are always worth reading. On the subject of retaining one's vocational integrity in the midst of hostile cultural forces and institutional pressures, the following book is highly recommended: *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Eerdmans, 1987).

In addition to the above, the former National Mission Coordinator for the Presbyterian Church, John Daniel, has been commissioned by the Synod of Otago and Southland to produce a booklet on wellness in ministry, and this should be available soon.

> 38. *Have you ever suffered personally from ministry-related stress, poor health and a lack of wellbeing? What were the symptoms? How did you deal with it? What have you learned?*
> 39. *Does the above list of internal and external stress factors, and the things you can do to address them, resonate with anything in your experience? Is there anything you would add?*

Dealing with pressures on spouse and family

People in significant ministry and leadership positions in the church know the impact their call to ministry and appointment to a ministry/leadership position can have on their spouse and family. Here are some of the more common pressures:

i. The usual stipend-based remuneration system, which provides a basic living allowance rather than a salary commensurate with qualifications and experience, is often not enough to live on without careful financial management and/or supplementary sources of income. The frugal lifestyle that generally accompanies the call to ministry can be hard for some people to adjust to.

ii. The expectations that are placed upon spouses and families vary from church to church, and in most cases they are not nearly as strong as they used to be a few generations ago, but they can still be quite real – for example, that spouse and children will regularly attend worship and be involved in the life of the church, including women's association (when the spouse is a wife), and Sunday School and youth group (for the children). Some spouses and children can feel that they are constantly under a spotlight when they're at church; they can never just be themselves. This feeling can be accentuated if the manse is situated next door to the church.

iii. When ministers and leaders are subject to criticism by persons or factions in their churches, and these criticisms come to the attention of their spouses and children, it can be a very difficult time. While ministers and leaders have supervisors to help them interpret what is happening and to keep things in perspective, their spouses do not have that luxury. And confiding in a friend who is also a member of the congregation is usually not an option. This can leave them feeling isolated, with unresolved feelings of hurt and anger.

iv. Ministry and leadership positions in the church usually have a strong vocational element to them, as reflected in the language of call. Supporting this sense of call can be costly for some spouses, especially if it means subordinating or putting on hold their own vocational and career aspirations.

v. For those who take up a ministry or leadership position that involves shifting to a new town or city, it is often their spouses who bear the brunt of settling in – organising the home, getting the kids settled into a new school, meeting neighbours, establishing new daily routines, making new friends, finding their feet in the church, etc. – all at a time when they are possibly still grieving

for what they have left behind. Stress associated with significant times of transition is often underestimated.

vi. One of the ways that ministers and leaders deal with stress is to "unload" to their spouses, who play a crucial listening and encouraging role. But where do the spouses go to "unload"? Moreover, who attends to their pastoral and spiritual needs? After all, these needs will not necessarily be met in a church they are attending as much out of a sense of obligation as personal choice.

vii. Owning up to and addressing marital and family problems can be difficult for any couple, but how much more so for Christian leaders who often carry an added burden of expectation that they will have a marriage and family life that fulfils a "biblical ideal" and is a model for others. The temptation to just keep on papering over the cracks is huge. Unfortunately, this strategy of avoidance can end in disaster. And if a marriage does break down then the ripple effect in the church can be significant, as will be the associated stress levels.

Given all these potential pressures, and knowing what a difference a good marriage can make, Christian leaders should not take marriage and family life for granted. Leadership positions in the church often require a lot of evening meetings and weekend obligations, thus making it hard for leaders to give as much time to their families as they would like. However, acknowledgement of this difficulty should not become an excuse. A neglected marriage and family life can severely weaken those relationships upon which we depend most for personal wellbeing, and can have long-term consequences. Moreover, when the strength and intimacy of a leader's marriage has been eroded then the leader becomes particularly vulnerable to seeking emotional and sexual fulfilment in inappropriate and adulterous relationships.

> 40. *Which of the above pressures, if any, resonate with your own experience? Are there any that you would add? How did you deal with these? What lessons have you learned over the years?*
> 41. *What strategies would you recommend for maintaining a healthy marriage in ministry and leadership?*

Defining roles, assessing performances and upskilling

It is really important that leaders and those who come under their authority have clear position descriptions and (where applicable) employment contracts so that each person on the team knows:

i. what their respective roles are and how each position relates to others on the team;
ii. the lines of reporting and accountability;
iii. the specific tasks and responsibilities that define the job;
iv. how performance will be measured;
v. terms of employment (where applicable).

Templates for position descriptions and employment contracts can be obtained from the Assembly Office in Wellington. The Assembly Office is also able to offer advice on all recruitment and employment matters. There is no excuse for churches failing to comply with employment legislation. Indeed,

legislative compliance should be regarded as a minimum standard; the church should be striving for high standards in relation to employment and human resourcing matters. It should not, as so often appears to happen, use the language of call and vocation and sacrifice to somehow excuse shoddy or exploitative employment and resourcing practices.

While it is accepted practice for paid ministry and leadership positions to have regular (usually annual) performance appraisals, thought might also be given to which voluntary ministry and leadership positions might also benefit from these things. Performance should be measured against "key performance indicators" or expected results, as defined by the position description. It should be regarded as a tool for giving constructive feedback and identifying areas for future focus and development; it should not be regarded as a tool for simply criticising the person concerned. It will include an element of self-appraisal as well as feedback from others. The process should be transparent and have the support of the person being appraised.

A good appraisal system should identify areas for personal and professional development. A commitment to lifelong learning and continual upskilling is a healthy sign. It recognises that a leadership role is often something into which we grow; we do not necessarily possess all the requisite skills and competencies at the outset.

> 42. *Do the key leadership positions in your church all have clear position descriptions and processes for performance appraisal? And do your paid positions comply with employment legislative requirements?*
> 43. *Do you regard your church to be a "good employer"? What things do you think could be done better in this regard?*

Further Recommended Reading

Anderson, Ray, *The Soul of Ministry: Forming Leaders for God's People*, Westminster John Knox Press, 1997

Anderson, Ray, *Living the Spiritually Balanced Life: Acquiring the Virtues You Admire*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998

Boers, Arthur, *Never Call Them Jerks*, Alban Institute, 1999

Cladis, George, *Leading the Team-Based* Church, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999

Everist, Norma Cook & Nessan, Craig, *Transforming Church Leadership*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008

Herrington, Jim, Creech, Robert & Taylor, Trish, *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1993.

Herrington, Jim, Bonem, Mike and Furr, James, *Leading Congregational Change*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000

Keel, Tim, *Intuitive Leadership*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007

Lewis, Douglass, *Meeting the Moment: Leadership and Well-being in Ministry*, Abingdon: Nashville, 1997

Oswald, Roy, *Clergy Self-Care,* Alban Institute, 1991

Rendle, Gilbert, *Leading Change in the Congregation*, Alban Institute, 1998

Robinson, Anthony, *Changing the Conversation*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008

Robinson, Anthony, *Transforming Congregational Culture*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003

Roxburgh, Alan, *The Missional Leader* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006

Savage, Sara and Boyd-MacMillan, Eolene, *The Human Face of Church:* Norwich: Canterbury, Press, 2007

Steinke, Peter, *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*, Alban Institute, 1996, 2006

Willimon, William, *The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002

At a more popular level, we recommend the following books:

Berkley, James (Ed), *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration: Practical Insights from a Cross-section of Ministry Leaders*, Baker Books, 2008

Hybels, Bill, *Courageous Leadership*, Zondervan, 2002

Prentice, Colin, *When People Matter Most: Vision-Driven Leadership*, Dunmore Publishing, 2006

Smith, Alan, and Shaw, Peter, *The Reflective Leader: Standing Still to Move Forward*, Cambridge Press, 2011

Stott, John, *Calling Christian Leaders: Biblical Models of Church, Gospel and Ministry*, InterVarsity Press, 2002

Sweet, Leonard, *Summoned to Lead*, Zondervan, 2004

Recommended web sites

The Teal Trust: www.teal.org.uk A British organisation, the Teal Trust seeks to encourage Christian leaders to develop their leadership, so increasing the capacity of the church for mission and ministry.

The Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership: www.greenleaf.org Founded in 1964 by Robert Greenleaf, the Greenleaf Center promotes the awareness, understanding, and application of the concept of servant leadership.

Appendix A: Leadership for Mission (2004)

1. Introduction

1.1   God invites the church to join with God's mission in the world. The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand has made the development of healthy congregations a priority so it may work more effectively with God in this mission.

1.2   To achieve this, our Church has identified the need for good leadership. "Servant mission leadership" describes the kind of leadership our Church believes it needs. Understanding more clearly what this phrase means will help us identify potential leaders and equip them to exercise leadership more effectively.

1.3   Servant mission leadership may mean different things to different people. How you think about it will relate to the community you belong to. But it has some core features we can agree on. Broadly speaking, 'servant' refers to the style of leadership and 'mission' refers to the direction that leadership takes. More specifically, servant mission leadership is about vision, accountability, character and variety.

2. It's about Vision

2.1   The job of the servant leader is not to serve exclusively the people of the congregation or the organisation called the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. It is to work with others in serving the *mission* of God.

2.2   This mission is the 'vision' that informs the plans for the future of a congregation. It is a vision of life in all its fullness for both humankind and creation, grounded in the good news and mission of Jesus Christ, and it involves, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, interpreting and extending the Presbyterian Church's place in that mission.

2.3   This vision includes:
- The ability to tell the difference between what is of God and what is the latest fashion.
- The ability to communicate in ways that make sense in today's world.
- Respect for tradition coupled with an eagerness to usher in the Church of the future.
- Creativity that is neither gimmicky or trite.
- Perseverance that won't quit when the going gets tough.

3. It's about Accountability

3.1   Servant leaders know they are answerable for their actions, and that there is value in giving an account of their actions. They also know that mutual accountability strengthens the Church and enhances the vigour of its mission. As a result they will:

- exercise their leadership in a professional manner
- adhere to the Church's code of ethics
- be committed to ongoing learning
- seek an appropriate level of supervision

4.   It's about Character

4.1   Servant leadership is not only a matter of having the right skills, important as these are. It is also about having the right character and spirit. It's about trustworthiness. This implies a life of personal faith and prayer that enables leaders to grow in the likeness of Christ and to draw upon Christ's wisdom and strength for the task of leadership. Paul encouraged the Church at Philippi to "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ" (Philippians 2:5). He then identified humility, integrity, servanthood, and obedience to the mission and will of God as part of the character of Christ.

4.2   Trustworthy leadership – will show among other things:

- an appropriate use of power that avoids its misuse and abuse
- authority without becoming authoritarian
- a reconciling ministry, willing to be decisive without being divisive, determined to advocate for those whose voice is not being heard
- faithful stewardship of the resources available for mission

5.   It's About Variety

5.1   Parish ministry has often assumed that Ministers of Word and Sacrament have the responsibility of leadership in the Church. This belief is reinforced by a distinction often drawn between clergy and lay people. This distinction is not grounded either in Scripture or the Reformed Tradition of which our Church is part.

5.2   In the Presbyterian Church, leadership doesn't stop with the people who are ordained, ministers or elders. Leadership is a gift and a responsibility given to many within the Church community including youth leaders, APW leaders, and those leading home-groups.

5.3   Much Christian leadership is also exercised in the wider community. The New Testament doesn't distinguish between ministries in the Church and the wider world. Everyone has their own calling, depending on their gifts. The ministry of Word and Sacrament, which serves as a guardian of the gospel, is one among these many ministries. All the Church's leaders are invited to exercise servant mission leadership.

6.   Summary

6.1   Although it will take different forms in different contexts, some characteristics lie at the heart of servant mission leadership.

- it reflects a contemporary **vision** of the mission of Jesus Christ
- it is appropriate and **accountable** to the gospel
- it reflects a **character** built on personal faith

it can be practiced by the any within the **variety** of church leaders in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Appendix Two: Code of Pastoral Ethics

The 1996 General Assembly commended to the Church the following Code of Ethics as an agreed minimum standard of practice. It can be found on the PCANZ web site: www.presbyterian.org.nz

Introduction

This Code is to be read in the context of the Preamble to the *Book of Order*, the Statement on the *Book of Order*, and the Standards set out in Chapter 1, Section A. These set out the basis of the faith, order and discipline of this church. The discipline of our church applies to ministers and other office-bearers, communicants and adherent members who have arrived at the years of discretion.

This Code is a statement of how the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand understands the standards of conduct of those members who undertake the work of pastoral care in its name. In this context the term minister will include all, clergy and lay, who undertake the work of pastoral care.

Pastoral care involves the formation of special relationships characterised by openness and trust. These relationships are developed in a variety of settings and a variety of ways, from informal pastoral care to structured counselling situations.

This Code indicates acceptable ethical behaviour for those offering pastoral care. While its focus is pastoral care, it is also applicable wherever there is a ministry relation between people. By the grace of God we are called to serve, and through the power of the Holy Spirit we are sustained and encouraged to keep within this code.

Responsibilities to Those to Whom We Offer Pastoral Care

1) Ministers will deal truthfully with people, encouraging free and open discussion, upholding their best interests, rights and well-being.

2) Ministers will respect the right of people to privacy and confidentiality of information except when there is a clear and imminent danger to those people or others, at which time they will be informed of those limits.

3) Ministers will recognise the dignity and worth of every person and will offer pastoral care without unfair discrimination.

4) Ministers will not abuse their position by taking advantage of people for personal, financial or institutional gain.

5) Ministers will recognise that sexual intimacy in the pastoral situation is unacceptable and will not subject people to sexual exploitation, sexual harassment or sexual abuse.

6) Ministers will recognise that there are limits to their competence and will refer people to others when this proves necessary or desirable. They will not attempt counselling without training.

7) Ministers will recognise that there is a cultural context for pastoral care and will act with awareness and sensitivity.

Responsibilities to the Church

1) Ministers will uphold high standards of practice in ministry and work for the advancement of those standards.

2) Ministers will exercise stewardship in the time given to ministry, guarding against both over commitment and avoidance of responsibility.

Responsibilities to Colleagues and Other Pastoral Workers

1) Ministers will promote co-operation with colleagues, pastoral workers and members of other helping professions, treating them with consideration and respecting professional confidences.

2) Ministers will seek mediation through the courts of the church when conflicts with colleagues or others within the church community arise.

3) Ministers will take action through the proper channels concerning unethical conduct by colleagues or other pastoral workers.

Responsibilities to the Wider Community

1) Ministers will act to prevent and eliminate unfair discrimination in the wider community.

2) Ministers will encourage as part of their pastoral task, participation in the shaping of social policies, advocating the promotion of social justices, improved social conditions and a fair sharing of the community's resources.

Personal Responsibilities

1) Ministers will use regular approved supervision to maintain accountability and a high standard of pastoral care.

2) Ministers will use regular opportunities for spiritual growth, personal recreation and refreshment.

3) Ministers will seek to extend and enhance their knowledge.