

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF LEADERSHIP

## Additional Handout for Leadership Matters

### INTRODUCTION

For as long as there have been people there have been leaders. The words 'leader' and 'leadership' may not be in our concordances, but we can all think of Old Testament leaders – Moses, David, Deborah, Nehemiah. Reflection on leadership can be found in writings of the Greeks and Romans and in Western literature of the last 2000 years. In the Church, there has been recent interest in the Rule of St Benedict (sixth Century) as a source of wisdom on how to lead. However, research on leadership is relatively new, starting in the early 20th century.

### 'GREAT MAN'/ TRAIT THEORIES

The earliest studies (1920s) assumed that effective leaders were born, not made, and set out to identify certain characteristics. So research looked at what characteristics are shared by great leaders, so that these factors could be used when selecting leaders. Leaders were seen as exceptional men who possessed innate characteristics such as intelligence, energy and dominance.

### BEHAVIOURIST

Attention turned in the 1940s from 'who leaders are' to 'what leaders do'. Research asked subordinates questions about their bosses' behaviour, and identified two essential aspects of leadership:

- Providing clear instructions and directions (task-oriented leadership behaviour), and
- Giving personal support and encouragement (relationship-oriented leadership behaviour).

Focusing on these two behaviours was believed to make people good leaders.

### CONTINGENCY/ SITUATIONAL

In the 1960s and 1970s thinkers on leadership went in another direction. Perhaps effective leadership involves doing the right thing at the right time. The most widely-used of 'contingency' approaches, 'Situational Leadership', was developed by Dr Paul Hersey and Dr Kenneth Blanchard (1988). By using a model to assess the willingness and capability of followers to do a job, managers can determine what combination of task and relationship behaviour will be most effective in a particular situation (see Relational Leadership p.36-41). Another example is John Adair (1973) whose model identifies three strands of leadership: task, team, and individuals; good leaders need to focus on all three, but may need more emphasis on one of these according to different situations.

### TRANSACTIONAL TO TRANSFORMATIONAL

A political historian, James McGregor Burns studied great leaders in politics and history (e.g. Napoleon, Churchill, Martin Luther King) and what it was that made them

successful. In his 1978 book, *Leadership*, Burns explains the difference between leaders who create visions to transform followers and societies, and leaders who get followers to do as the leader wishes by means of a transaction, i.e. money, praise or some other reward (or punishment). At best, transactional leaders get what they expect, while transformational leaders get performance beyond expectations. Transformational leadership is a strong element in the understanding of leadership today. Transformational leaders inspire those around by providing meaning, optimism and vision. They encourage their followers to question assumptions, reframe problems and be creative and innovative. They try to understand their followers' needs and desires and see it as their duty to help their followers realise their potential. This is very different from the more hierarchical 'command and control' model which it has replaced in most spheres of leadership.

### STRANDS OF LEADERSHIP THINKING TODAY

Currently there is an explosion of research and new strands of thinking on leadership, including work on women as leaders. For example:

- *Leadership and the New Science*, Margaret Wheatley, Berrett-Koehler, 1999.
- *Good to Great*, Jim Collins, Random House, 2001.
- *One Thing You Need to Know*, Marcus Buckingham, Simon and Schuster, 2005.
- *Enlightened Power: How Women are Transforming the Practice of Leadership*, Linda Coughlin, Ellen Wingard, Keith Holliham (eds), Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- *Leadership Next*, Eddie Gibbs, IVP, 2006.
- *Through the Labyrinth*, Alice Eagly and Linda Carli, Harvard Business School Press, 2007.
- *Executive Intelligence: What All Great Leaders Have*, Justin Menkes, Collins, 2005.
- *The New Psychology of Leadership*, Haslam, Reicher and Platow, Psychology Press 2011.

# IS OUR LEADERSHIP TOO PROFESSIONAL?

## David Andrew, The Briefing

The avalanche of books, videos and seminars on leadership continues at a maddening pace. As seems usual, Christian interest in 'leadership' is now catching up to where the world was about 20 years ago.

But why all this interest about leadership in Christian circles, and why now? What is the problem that all of this material seeks to address? Is there a Christian view of leadership? How does a Christian view of leadership fit into the life of a pastor, or for that matter into the life of a Christian dad or Christian mum or anyone else who is Christian and is trying to 'lead' in some way?

'Leadership', of course, is not one single animal. Leadership varies depending on *what* you are leading and *where* you are leading it to. Much of the current 'leadership' concern among Christians stems from the discomfort many pastors now feel about how they are leading their congregations. It is also increasingly clear that many clergy do not know how to lead congregations – which is why some have a habit of moving on every seven years or so to greener pastures.

The discomfort arises, I would like to suggest, because we have not really understood what leadership is. We tend to regard leadership as almost entirely an issue of character and godliness. But leadership is *more* than character. It includes character, but it also must include a *set of skills* for a particular job. To a significant extent, leadership is a 'skill' issue, not a 'spiritual' or 'ethical' issue.

In this essay, I would like to explore this aspect of leadership, and to propose some mental models to help us think further about it.

### A Changing World

Most pastors or clergy currently work according to models of parish management that have not changed much since the Reformation. But the rest of the world has changed. Most lay people have dealt with these changes in their daily lives, and have experienced first-hand the evolving nature of work in our modern world. Some of the changes have been good and some not so good – but the world *has* changed.

It is a more uncertain world. People no longer join the workforce at a specific level and expect to work for 30 years in the same job. Being a clergyman or pastor also carries a lot more uncertainty than it once did. Denominational 'brand loyalty is a thing of the past. If there is a better church down the road, then there is every chance that people will leave your church and go there. Lay people are not prepared to be treated as passive

receptors of whatever is served up from the pulpit irrespective of the quality – lay people read more, they ask questions, and they really *do* believe in the 'priesthood of all believers'.

So it is not unnatural that clergy are a little more nervous than they used to be. Lay people will not sign up to spend a lifetime listening to those who are 'unconsciously incompetent' in their work. In other words, the clergy find themselves in much the same position as everybody else in the modern workforce: no guarantees without some sort of performance.

Worse still is the problem of pastors who, while knowing a great deal about the Bible because of their specialized training (and good laity want to learn from this), also assume that they know about all other matters in leading a church simply because they are the clergy. And this is not true, and can never be true. We are part of a body.

When they go to theological college, pastors are simply not taught how to lead – *nor should they be*, for that is not the function of a theological college. As well as this, these same clergy are not taught to lead churches when they are ordained into their domination – which is where they should be taught such skills. Speaking of the Anglican system with which I am familiar, the curate system of training is a failure because the subject matter of parish or congregational leadership is still an uncharted mystery to many of those doing the training. Most clergy that are good leaders are good leaders because of some other experience beside their clergy work.

Hence there is often a sense of failure of leadership by the clergy at local, denominational, and international levels. And there does not appear to be anywhere to go to learn the skills within Christendom – except from those Christian writers and seminar leaders who have digested and regurgitated 20 year-old leadership thinking and rebadged it as Christian.

Clergy frustration is therefore not a surprise. How can a pastor be expected to run a volunteer social organisation when he has never had any training in what is required of him? But what is the training he needs? He learns his theology and biblical exposition at theological college – but how do you run a church? What is it you are running? Put another way, how can you learn 'leadership' when we are not agreed on what the thing is that we are leading in the first place?

The worst response, and the most galling response, is when clergy resort to wrongful authoritarianism to deal

with the issue. It is most certainly right that clergy have authority, but authority does not mean that all discussion and working through of issues is done devoid of any input by others in the congregation. This is when people leave.

## So What is This 'Church' you are Leading?

Here then is another problem in 'leadership' theory: Is 'leading' the 'church' the same as leading anything else? What is the same and what is different about leading a church and leading a Scout Group or a local business? The problem in most thinking about 'leadership' is that the question of leadership is not thought about in terms of the task where the leadership is being exercised. It is true that leaders have certain character prerequisites, but this is not the whole story, and not all leaders can lead in all situations. Winston Churchill may have been the best war leader for Britain, but he was not the best peace time leader. What is the task being led? What is the job? What is the job of leading a church? What skills are needed in various areas?

Now the minefield of leadership theory opens up. Greater minds than mine need to wrestle with these questions, but my summary of the problem at the level of leading a church, is this:

- **Many pastors aren't sure what a church is meant to be.** Is it an evangelism school? A training college for godly living? A workshop for future ministers to learn how to preach? A social workshop? A combination? Says who? In practice, the problem is that a minister makes the decision on what the church is and that's what the church is stuck with – a school for evangelism, a social welfare organisation, or whatever. But while any of these may be an appropriate program, they are not the sum total of what a church is. But the strategic direction from the top of the organisation should help ministers work this out at the tactical level.
- **If you don't know what it is, how do you know where you are going with it?** This follows naturally from the first point. What happens in practice is that most ministers just work week to week hoping enough people turn up to keep the place going – plus some evangelism to keep it topped up – but with no clear vision or mission. And no clear methodology for integrating different processes towards a common goal. Thus sub-optimisation occurs, where a single issue or matter becomes the driving force of the whole church program, to the detriment of

THE SUBJECT MATTER OF PARISH OR CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP IS STILL AN UNCHARTED MYSTERY TO MANY OF THOSE DOING THE TRAINING.

other important elements. In other words, whatever is flavour of the month becomes the direction of the church.

- **No ownership by the congregation at appropriate levels.** While the pastor may carry the can for the decisions made, many clergy simply make and implement the decision and tell everyone afterwards, and

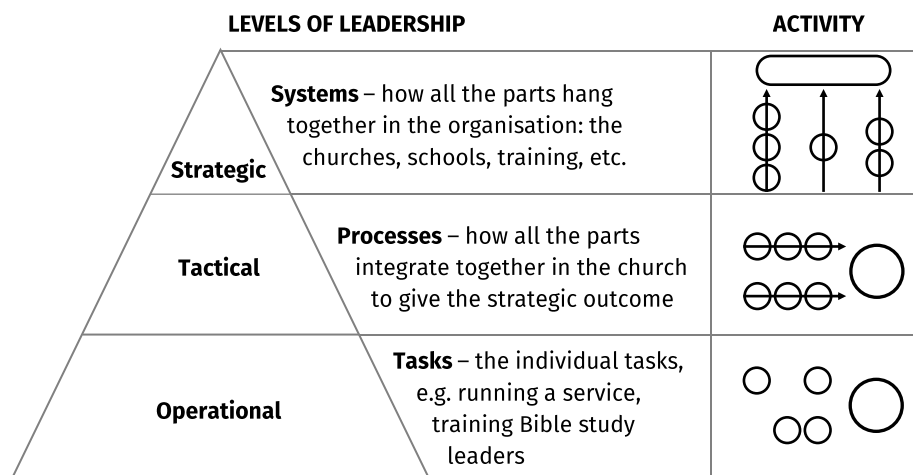
then wonder why no one is on side with the decision. Sometimes you have to go it alone, sometimes you go with everybody – but never ever go without a prior discussion with the key stakeholders in the decision!

- **A misunderstanding of levels of leadership** – a failure to understand the difference between *operational leadership* (how to run discrete tasks such as leading a Bible Study Group), *tactical leadership* (how to put integrated processes in place to get a desired outcome) and *strategic leadership* (how to work the processes towards a goal). Most clergy problems come at the tactical level – that is, knowing how to put it all together to make the church run.

## Levels of leadership: a basic model

Leadership is knowing where you are going, the processes required to get there, and the project management skills to make it happen, all within the overall strategic direction of your congregation, or your group of congregations (denomination). These skills do not fall out of the sky. They need to be learnt.

There are different levels of leadership and they need to be integrated to achieve a common way forward. Leadership may be diagrammatically shown as:



In this model, there are three levels of leadership. The Strategic drives the Tactical, and the Tactical drives the Operational. They must all fit together; otherwise, we can end up doing 'orphaned' operational tasks that have no bearing on the tactical or strategic outcomes we're trying to achieve. Churches are full of these activities – good and worthwhile things, often started for excellent reasons, but which now continue to exist simply because they continue



to exist.

One of the problems, of course, is that strategic level leadership, which ideally would be exercised across congregations at a regional or even metropolitan level, rarely happens.<sup>2</sup> In practice, many congregational pastors find themselves like the owners of a small-to-medium-sized business, where they must find the time to lead Strategically, as well as Tactically, and even Operationally (when there is no one else to lead the Wednesday night Bible study).

Even so, understanding the different levels of leadership helps us to see where the real problem is, and why most Christian leadership books fail to address it adequately. The problem for most pastors is at the *tactical* level of leadership – running and integrating the processes in a church to get the outcomes required, and getting the congregation on side with the required outcomes. It's the nitty gritty skills of project managing all the different tasks and processes within a congregation so that they work together to achieve the congregation's goals.

Unfortunately most Christian leadership material hardly addresses these practical leadership skills. Instead, it tends either to focus on:

- the character of the leader, or
- the biblical and gospel principles that should underpin his leadership style, or
- *operational* tips and techniques – like the importance of having a good car park in drawing people to church.

Most companies recognize that *tactical* leadership requires special input and training. They send their middle managers and above to courses on 'Project Management' that cost several thousand dollars per person and run for three or more whole days – and then they send them back a few more times to top-up and do refresher courses. There are courses on 'decision-making', 'people management', and so on.

For the Christian pastor, however, basic training such as this is almost never provided. And yet they are expected to perform a complex task of tactical (and sometimes strategic) leadership, in a voluntary organization, with congregation members who are increasingly unwilling to accept mediocrity.

No wonder pastors are feeling uncomfortable about leadership.

### But What About the Gospel?

What I have written thus far may leave some readers

uncomfortable. "But what about the gospel?" I hear you say. Surely it is the gospel of Jesus that grows churches, not corporate leadership techniques.

This is absolutely true. No church will experience true spiritual growth without the gospel of Jesus. The prayerful proclamation of his saving death and resurrection is what changes lives, and draws sinful people into God's kingdom. More than that, the gospel contains within it a set of *values* that should shape everything we do. Our churches and ministries should be 'gospel-shaped' enterprises. But here is where the confusion creeps in. The gospel is a *message* and a *value*, but it is not a technique. The gospel must drive and underpin all that is done in a church – it must be there for a true church to exist! But the *technique* of leading a church is the method by which the church's gospel work is organized and integrated over time. Indeed, it is very possible to have all the technique of 'good leadership' but no gospel; and it is equally possible to have the gospel but with a complete absence of leadership skills. This is what can happen:

<b>A</b> Gospel and Leadership Skills	<b>B</b> No Gospel and Leadership Skills
<b>C</b> Gospel and No Leadership Skills	<b>D</b> No Gospel and No Leadership Skills

**A** best chance of sustained church growth.

**B** possible to have growth because of leadership skills, but it is not 'gospel' growth. Not really a church at all – a successful social club.

**C** probably will have growth because of gospel, but full potential not realised because of lack of leadership skills.

**D** very little chance of the church getting anywhere at all. Not really a church at all – a social club.

The combination we must be striving for is skill in leadership combined with the bedrock gospel value. We excel in training our pastors in the latter; my observation is that we leave them sadly ill-equipped in the former, to their own frustration and to the cost of their congregations.

And this brings me to the question of professionalism,

### The Problem of Professionalism

John Piper's recent book, *Brothers, we are not Professionals*, was reviewed in Briefing #298. Piper warns against having a gospel of leadership that replaces a gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus. In this he is absolutely right.

But the title of Piper's book is unhelpful. It is unhelpful because the problem is not too much professional leadership – the problem is getting clergy to have both a gospel understanding of what a church is, *and* the necessary leadership skills to lead a church, and then *integrating* these matters so that a church is well led and gospel-based. The problem for Piper in America is position

**B** above, where the gospel is *replaced* by leadership skills (and often the leadership skills are not too brilliant anyway!). The problem may not be the leadership skills; the problem is a country where the gospel is not fundamental to many churches or where you can go through theological college without ever having to spend too much time on the gospel in the first place! Piper says "we pastors are being killed by the professionalizing of the pastoral ministry". Not true. Piper has slurred the word 'professional'. What is killing church leadership is the amateur nature of the leadership plus the absence of the gospel. In Australia, in my own circles, I think the problem is more often position **C**— that is, gospel values, but fewer and worse leadership skills.

Piper is right however when he warns about clergy competitiveness and the career mentality of those who seek the status of the clerical position, and this is no doubt a big issue in the USA. But this is not a problem of professional leadership – it is a problem of normal sin, and it is just as rife in the corporate world as it is in the church world. Piper's spiritualisation of clerical work tends towards medieval Catholicism. Christian clergy work is no more or less demanding than any other leadership role at the same level of hours and responsibility in the corporate world.

## Concluding Thoughts

So far I've tried to unravel what we mean by 'leadership'. I've suggested that we need to understand that leadership operates at different levels, and that different skills are required at those different levels. I've argued that we need to have clear in our minds a distinction between these practical skills of leadership, and the gospel values that should underpin all that we do.

Especially at the *tactical* level, where so many of our leadership problems occur, there is a need for certain basic skills in project management, people management, decision-making, financial planning, and so on. These skills do not ensure success (let alone faithfulness), nor are they the key elements in the running of our churches. The gospel of Jesus Christ is what should determine our goals and our values; Jesus and his message should be our passion and our song. Yet this does not preclude the acquiring of basic skills in leading and organizing a group of people to work together towards a common goal. In fact, our desire to align our own purposes and plans with *God's* purposes, and to preach the gospel of Jesus, should motivate us to do whatever we can to be more efficient and effective in labouring together as workers in his harvest.

I'm aware that I have raised as many questions as I have answered, and that much thinking remains to be done, especially in respect of how the Bible should inform our models of leadership. That will have to be a task for others.

My concluding exhortation would be to draw your minds to the Bible, and to the God of the Bible who from the beginning knew exactly where he was going (Genesis to Revelation), how long it would take, and what the steps would be to get there. The Bible is a strategic plan, focused on Jesus. And God gets it right, because he is God.

We, in this fallen world, don't always get it right. We sketch out our desired outcomes, we devise our strategies to get there, we seek to implement them over time. But (as a famous tract once put it), we cannot control ourselves or society or the world. Pastors and clergy won't have all the answers; neither will the laity. We need to labour together, as fellow workers, as we preach and live the gospel of his grace and long for his appearing. We need to help each other, and utilize whatever gifts God has given us for the benefit of his church, and for his eternal glory.

## ENDNOTES

1. Theological Colleges *may* claim they train in leadership – but my experience has been that they don't. Furthermore. I don't want them to! I went to a very good theological college to learn theology, and that is what I got when I attended Moore Theological College in Sydney. Some minor classes were done on some areas of 'leadership', but they were irrelevant to the task of congregational leadership, and they did not explicitly rest on any biblical 'model' of 'leadership'.
2. There are heartening signs that this may be changing. In the Sydney Anglican Diocese, of which I am part, Archbishop Peter Jensen has led the process of constructing a strategic direction for the diocese; a clearly articulated mission, based on the gospel mission of Christ, with targets to aim for and strategies to head towards those targets. This is the first example I have seen of a denominational leader putting a target on the wall, and seeking to lead people to achieve it. The next step, in my view, is to support the clergy with training in 'tactical' leadership at the congregational level.

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# CONFIDENCE

## Additional Handout for Leadership Matters

### Background

Confidence is a vital factor in leadership. Many leaders are driven inappropriately by a hidden lack of confidence. Use this handout to aid discussion in your peer cell.

### Assess

On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 = no confidence at all and 10 = totally confident, where would you place yourself?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

'Confidence is the sweet spot between arrogance and despair'.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter

'Imposter syndrome' is 'the suspicion that we are not as good as everyone says we are, that our successes may have been accidental, and that, consequently, we may not be entirely sure how to repeat them.'

Marcus Buckingham

### Reflect

Why do you think some leaders have a low view of themselves?

'And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the beloved; with you I am well pleased"' (Mark 1:11).

'Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God..' (2 Corinthians 3:4).

### Discuss

Our research shows us that the tendency to under-confidence is most common in women, and over-confidence is most common in men. Why might this be the case?

How can we as leaders have a right confidence in ourselves as people God has called to leadership?

## Biblical Self-Esteem

Taken from *The Dilemma of Self-Esteem: The Cross and Christian Confidence*, Joanna and Alister McGrath, Crossway

Christian self-esteem should be grounded in our attachment to God through Christ. This contrasts with some secular approaches to self-esteem.

- **Cognitive Behaviour Therapy** Looking outwards towards achievements and successes and the way in which events are appraised.
- **Client-Centred Psychotherapy** Looking inwards towards ourselves, stripped of spurious external assessments.
- **Christianity** Looking upwards towards God and the risen Christ.

Paul's letter to the Philippians can be seen as an extended commentary on Christian self-esteem.

- **'To all the saints in Christ Jesus' (1:1)** Our confidence rests in God's faithfulness to his promises.
- **Imprisonment for Christ (1:13)** It is not our situation which determines our self-esteem; it is what we allow God to do through it.
- **'I will continue to rejoice' (1:19)** Christian faith means a sure and firm confidence that, whatever happens, God will be able to use us. Self-devaluation is one of the most effective ways of preventing God doing anything through us. Insisting we are of no value is not false modesty, it is an insult to God.
- **'In humility count others better than yourselves' (2:3)** The essence of humility does not lie in self-deprecation or devaluation, but in positive evaluation of others. Humility is not about lowering our view of ourselves, but raising our view of others.
- **'...even death on a cross' (2:8)** Christ deems us worth saving. By becoming like us, he has brought new dignity to human nature. By humbling Himself, Christ has raised us up.
- **'If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more...' (3:4)** Christian self-esteem is not based on any national privilege, family entitlement, personal accomplishment. It is based solely on what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.
- **Resting our self-esteem in God leads to peace and rejoicing** 'Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say rejoice' (4:4); 'Do not worry about anything...' (4:6).
- **'I can do all things in him who strengthens me' (4:13)** Paul felt able to boast of his weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12), knowing that the power of Christ might rest upon him.
- **'I have learned, in whatever state, to be content.'** (4:11) Paul can be content in all circumstances by refusing to base his self-esteem upon any circumstance.

## For Reflection

How is your self-esteem? Where are its roots?

How will you grow in godly self-esteem?

'THE ENEMY'S STRATEGY... IS TO KILL [HUMAN'S] ANIMAL SELF-LOVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE; BUT IT IS HIS LONG-TERM POLICY, I FEAR, TO RESTORE TO THEM A NEW KIND OF SELF-LOVE – A CHARITY AND GRATITUDE FOR ALL SELVES, INCLUDING THEIR OWN. FOR WE MUST NEVER FORGET WHAT IS THE MOST REPELLENT AND INEXPLICABLE TRAIT IN OUR ENEMY: HE REALLY LOVES THE HAIRLESS BIPEDS HE HAS CREATED, AND ALWAYS GIVES BACK TO THEM WITH HIS RIGHT HAND WHAT HE HAS TAKEN AWAY WITH HIS LEFT.'

CS LEWIS, THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS



# CHURCH SIZE DYNAMICS

**Tim Keller**

One of the most common reasons for pastoral leadership mistakes is blindness to the significance of church size. Size has an enormous impact on how a church functions. There is a 'size culture' that profoundly affects how decisions are made, how relationships flow, how effectiveness is evaluated, what its ministers, staff, and lay leaders do. We tend to think of the chief differences between churches mainly in denominational or theological terms, but that underestimates the impact of size on how church operates.

The difference between how churches of 100 and 1,000 function may be greater than the difference between a Presbyterian and a Baptist church of the same size. The staff person who goes from a church of 400 to a church of 2,000 is making a far greater change than if he or she moved from one denomination to another.

## **Every Church Has a Size Culture that Goes with its Size That Has to be Accepted**

Most people probably have a size culture that they prefer. However, many people moralize their favourite size culture and treat other size-categories as spiritually and morally inferior. They may insist that the only biblical way to do church is to practice a different size-culture despite the fact that the church itself is much bigger or smaller than they desire it to be.

For example, if some members of a church of 2,000 feel that they should be able to get the senior pastor personally on the phone without much difficulty, they are insisting on getting the kind of pastoral care that an under 200-size culture provides. Of course, the pastor will soon be overwhelmed. The members may, however, insist that if he can't be reached he is failing his biblical duty to be their shepherd.

Another example – a new senior pastor of a church of 1,500 may insist that virtually all decisions be made by consensus by the whole board and staff. Soon the board is meeting every week for six hours each time! But the pastor may insist that for staff members to be making their own decisions means that they are acting unaccountably or that the staff lacks community. To impose a size-culture practice on a church that does not have that size will wreak havoc on it, and eventually force the church back into the size with which the practices are compatible.

This means that a wise pastor may have to sympathetically confront people who are just not able to handle and live in the church's size culture – just like many people cannot live in cultures different than the one they are used to. Some people are organizationally suspicious, and often for

valid reasons from their experience. Others can't handle not having the preacher as their pastor. We must suggest to them they are asking for the impossible in a church our size. We must not imply that it would be immaturity on their part to seek a different church, though we should not actively encourage anyone to leave either.

## **Flexibility in the Categories**

Reading books on church size can be confusing because everyone breaks down the size categories somewhat differently. This is because there are many variables in a church's culture and history that determine exactly when a congregation gets to a new size-barrier. For example, everyone knows that at some point a church becomes too large for one pastor to handle. People begin to complain that they are not getting adequate pastoral care and so on. The time has come to add staff. But when does that happen? In some communities that may happen when the attendance rises to 120, while in others it does not happen until the church has nearly 300 coming. It depends a great deal on expectations, on the mobility of the city, on how fast the church has grown, and so on. Despite the variables, the point at which another pastoral staff member must be added is usually called 'the 200 barrier'. That is a good average figure, but you must keep in mind when reading that, when books discuss the 200 barrier, your own church might come up against the threshold at some different attendance figure.

## **General Principles**

Here are the general trends or changes that come as a church grows larger.

### **INCREASING COMPLEXITY**

The larger the church the less members have in common. There is more diversity such as age, family status, etc., and thus a church of 400 needs four to five times more programs than a church of 200, not two times more. Therefore, larger churches are disproportionately more complex than their smaller counter-parts. They have multiple services, multiple groups, multiple tracks and eventually they really are multiple congregations.

Also, the larger the church the more staff per capita need to be added. Often the first ministry staff persons are added for every increase of 150-200 in attendance. A church of 500 may have two to three full-time ministry staff, but eventually ministry staff may need to be added for every 75-100 new persons. Thus a church of 2,000 may have 25 staff.

### **SHIFTING LAY-STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

On the one hand, the larger the church the more decision-



making falls to the staff rather than to the whole membership, or even to the lay leaders. On the other hand, the larger the church the more the basic pastoral ministry such as hospital visits, discipling, oversight of Christian growth, or counselling is done by lay leaders rather than by the professional ministers. Generally, in small churches, policy is decided by many and ministry is done by a few while in the large church, ministry is done by many, and policy is decided by few.

### **INCREASING INTENTIONALITY**

The larger the church:

- The more systemic and redundant communication needs to be. Without multiple forms and repeated messages, people will feel 'left out' and 'I wasn't told about it.' The larger the church the less informal, word-of-mouth communication works.
- The more systemic and deliberate assimilation needs to be. The larger the church the less newcomers are visible to the congregation's members. Thus new people are not spontaneously and informally welcomed and invited in. Assimilation must be systemic and pathways identified or established by asking, 'how will newcomers get here?' 'how will they be identified by the church?' 'where will unbelievers learn Christianity's a) relevance, b) content, c) credibility?' 'who will move them along the path?' 'where will believers get plugged in?' 'who will help them?' and so on.
- The more extremely well-organized volunteer recruitment has to be. The larger the church, the harder it is to recruit volunteers. Why? First, it is much easier to say no to someone who you do not know than to someone you know well. The larger the church the more likely you are to have someone try to recruit you that you don't know well. Second, it is easier to feel less personally responsible for the ministries of a large church and think, 'they have lots of people here, they don't need me.' Therefore, the larger the church the more well-organised and formal the recruitment of volunteers must be.

### **INCREASING QUALITY OF PRODUCTION**

The larger the church:

- The more planning and organization must go into events. More lead time is necessary to communicate well. A higher quality of production in general is expected in a larger church and therefore events cannot simply be just thrown together. Spontaneous, last minute events do not work.
- The more high quality aesthetics must be present. In smaller churches worship is based mainly on horizontal relationships with the other people present. The musical offerings of singers who are ungifted nonetheless is appreciated because 'we all know them'

and they are members of our fellowship. But the larger the church the more worship is based on the vertical relationship and on a sense of transcendence. If an outsider comes in who doesn't know the musicians, the mediocre quality of production is distracting from their worship of God. They don't have a relationship with the musicians, which offsets the lack of giftedness. So, the larger the church, the more the music becomes an attractor on its own.

### **INCREASING OPENNESS TO CHANGE**

The larger the church the more the church is subject to constant and sudden changes.

Why? Smaller churches do not change rapidly and have less turnover because individual members feel more powerful and necessary, so they stay put.

The larger the church the more power for decision-making moves away from the whole congregation to the leader and staff.

Why? Too much is going on for the congregation or the board or eventually even the staff to make all the decisions in group. Power moves toward individual staff or volunteer leaders and so change happens more quickly. As that happens decisions can be made more easily without everyone signing on. Changes then come more rapidly. As we saw above, the larger the church the more complex it is and therefore the mores schedules, events, programs there are to change.

### **LOSING MEMBERS BECAUSE OF CHANGES**

The larger the church the more it loses members because of changes. Why? Smaller churches seek to avoid losing members/adherents at all costs. This allows individuals and smaller groups to exercise power far greater than their numbers. Someone always experiences change as loss, and since the smaller church has a great fear of conflict, it usually will not institute a change that may result in lost members. Thus smaller churches do not lose members very often.

But in larger churches individual members or smaller groups have far less ability to exert power to resist changes they dislike. And (as noted previously) since larger churches experience constant change, they regularly lose members who feel 'it's just too big now' or 'I can't see the pastor any more' or 'we don't pray spontaneously any more at church' and who resist much change. Leaders of churches that grow large are more willing to lose members who disagree with procedures or philosophy of ministry.

### **SHIFTING ROLE OF THE MINISTERS**

The larger the church:

- The less available the main preacher is to do pastoral work. In smaller churches the pastor is available at all times, for most occasion and needs, to any member or



unchurched person. In the large church, there are many more lay ministers, staff, and leaders than the small church has people! So the pastors must recognize their limits, and spend more time with staff and lay shepherds, and in prayer and time with God.

- The more important are the minister's leadership abilities. Preaching and pastoring are sufficient skills of pastors in small churches, but as a church grows, leadership skills become critical. And the larger the church the more important the leadership skills of vision-casting and strategy design rather than only administration.
- The more the ministry staff moves from being generalists to being specialists. Everyone from the senior pastor on down must focus on certain ministry areas and concentrate on two to three main tasks. The larger the church the more the role the senior pastor must specialize on: a) preaching, b) vision-keeping and vision-casting, c) identifying problem ahead of time before they become disasters.
- The more important it is for ministers, especially the senior pastor, to stay put for a long time. As noted above, smaller churches do not change rapidly and have less turnover. The innate stability of smaller churches can thus absorb the change of ministry every few years if necessary. But the larger the church the more the staff in general and the senior pastor in particular are the main source of continuity and stability. Rapid turnover of staff is therefore much more detrimental the larger the church.

### **STRUCTURING SMALLER**

The larger the church the smaller the basic pastoral span of care.

In smaller churches the classes and groups can be larger, because virtually everyone in the church is cared for directly by full-time trained ministry staff, each of whom can care for 50-200 people.

In larger churches, however, the internal groupings need to be smaller, because people are cared for more by lay shepherds, who can care for 10-20 people if he/she has proper supervision and support. Thus, in a larger church, the more groups you have per 100 people in attendance, the better cared for people are and the faster the church grows.

### **EMPHASIS ON VISION AND STRENGTHS**

The larger the church:

- The more the church tends to concentrate on doing fewer things well. Smaller churches are generalists and feel the need to do everything. This comes from the power of the individual in a small church. If any member wants the church to speak to some issue, the

church makes its effort in order to please them. The larger church, however, identifies and concentrates on approximately three to four major things and works to do them extremely well, despite calls for new emphases.

- The more distinctive vision becomes important to the members of the church. The reason for being in a smaller church is relationships. The reason for putting up with all the changes and difficulties of a larger church is to get the mission done. Therefore people join the church because of the vision – so the particular mission needs to be clear.
- The more the church develops its own mission outreach rather than supporting already existing programs. Smaller churches tend to: 1) support denominational mission causes and/or 2) contribute to other existing para-church ministries. Larger churches feel more personally accountable to God for the kingdom mandate and seek to either start their own mission-ministries or to form partnerships in which there is more direct accountability of the mission agency to the church.
- The more lay leaders need to be screened for agreement on vision and philosophy of ministry, not simply doctrinal and moral standards. In smaller churches, people are eligible for leadership on the basis of membership and tenure and faithfulness. In larger churches, the distinctive mission and vision of the church becomes more important. Therefore it is important to enlist without apology leaders who share a common philosophy of ministry with the staff/other leaders.

## **Specific Size-categories**

### **HOUSE CHURCH: 0-40 IN ATTENDANCE**

**Character** The house church is often in urban areas called a 'storefront church' or in rural areas called the 'country church.'

It operates essentially as an extended small group. It is a highly relational church in which everyone knows everyone else intimately.

Lay leaders are extremely powerful and they emerge relationally – they are not appointed or elected. They are usually the people who have been at the church the longest and have put in the most time and money to the work.

Decision-making is democratic, informal and requires complete consensus. Decisions are made by informal relational process. If any member is unhappy with a course of action it is not taken by the church.

Communication is word-of-mouth and information moves very swiftly through the whole membership.

The pastor often is a 'tent-maker' and part-time, though a church of ten families who tithe can support a full-time minister. The minister's main job is shepherding, not leading or preaching.

**How it grows** House churches grow in the most organic way possible – through attraction to its warmth, relationships, and people. New people are simply invited and continue to come because they are befriended. There is no 'program' of outreach.

**Crossing the threshold to the next size-category** The house church like any small group, gets to saturation rather quickly. Once it gets to 40+ people the intense face-to-face relationships become impossible to maintain. It then faces a choice: either a) multiplying off another house-church, or b) growing out of the 'house-church dynamics' into the next-size category of being a small church.

If it does not do either:

- Evangelism essentially becomes impossible.
- The fellowship itself then can easily become ingrown and 'stagnant' – somewhat stifling, sometimes legalistic.

An ongoing problem of the stand-alone church of this size is the low quality of ministry to specific groups like children, youth, singles and so on.

If it opts for 'a' above and multiplies itself into another house church – and eventually several – the two churches can form an association which does things like youth ministry together. They could also meet for joint worship services periodically.

If it opts for 'b' above and grows out of the house church size into a 'small church', it needs to prepare its people for this by admitting the losses of intimacy, spontaneity, informality and agreeing to bear this as a cost of mission, of opening the ranks to new people. This has to be a consensus group decision to honour the dynamics of the house church even as it opts to change those dynamics.

#### **SMALL CHURCH: 40-200 ATTENDANCE**

**Character** This category includes churches that are just barely out of the house church stage up to churches that are ready for multiple staff. But they share the same basic characteristics.

While the relational dynamics are now less intense, there is still a strong expectation that every member must have face-to-face relationship with every other member.

While there are now appointed and elected leaders, the informal leadership system remains extremely strong. There are several lay-people – regardless of their official status – who are 'opinion leaders'. If they don't approve of new measures the rest of the members will not support them.

Communication is still informal, word-of-mouth, and still relatively swift.

The pastor is still primarily a shepherd. While in a larger church, the people will let you pastor them if you are a good preacher. In a smaller church people will listen to your sermons if you are good pastor.

Effective, loving shepherding of every member is the 'driving force' of ministry – not leadership or even speaking ability. A pastor who says, 'I shouldn't have to shepherd every member, I've delegated that to my elders or small group leaders' is trying to practice large church dynamics in a small church environment.

However, the pastor of a small church will as the church grows, feel more and more the need for administrative leadership skills. Small churches do not require much in the way of vision casting or strategizing, but they do eventually present a need for program planning, mobilization of volunteers, and other administrative skills.

Changes are still processed relationally and informally by the whole congregation, not just the leaders. But since the congregation is larger, decisions take a longer time than either the house church or the medium size church. Ultimately, however, change in a small church happens from the bottom up through key lay leaders who are central to the informal leadership system. No major changes can be made unless you get at least one of these people to be an ally and an advocate for the change.

**How it grows** Small churches also grow through attraction by newcomers to the relationships of the congregation. However, in the small church it is the personal relationship to the pastor that is the primary attraction to the new person. The pastor is therefore key to beginning to grow these new ministries and/or classes/groups that bring in new people. He can do this by securing the backing of one key informal leader. Together they can begin a new group, class, or ministry that will bring in many new people who were not previously attending the church.

**Crossing the threshold to the next size-category** This church may eventually face the famous '200 barrier'. To make room for more than 200 people in church takes a significant commitment to some or all of the following changes.

First change – **multiple options**. There must be a willingness to question the unwritten policy that every



voting member should have face-to-face relationship with every other member.

When a church gets to the place where the older members begin to realize there are members who they barely know or don't know at all, the complaint may come with a tone of moral authority: 'this church is getting too big.' Another form of this is the complaint that the church is getting 'impersonal'. Essentially, this attitude must change.

Often the key change that a congregation must allow is the move to multiple options such as more than one Sunday service, or putting more emphasis on small group ministry than coming to the one, unified, corporate prayer meeting, and so on.

As a general rule, multiplying options creates a growth spurt. The single best way to increase attendance is to multiply Sunday services. Two services will immediately draw more people than one service did. Four Sunday school electives will generally draw more people than two Sunday school electives. Why? Because when you give people more options, more people opt!

#### Second change – **a willingness to pay the cost of an additional primary ministry staff person**

It is a sociological fact that a full-time minister cannot personally shepherd more than about 150-200 people. At some point any human being loses the ability to personally contact, stay in touch, and be reasonably available to all the people.

The minister's span of pastoral care can be stretched with part-time or full-time speciality administrative staff, such as children's workers, secretaries, administrators, musicians, etc. There are variations to this figure depending on a) the minister's personality and energy level, and b) the local culture. For example, the more white-collar community tends to demand far more specialized programs and therefore you may find in such a place that you need a full-time ministry staff for every 100-150 in attendance.

Eventually a second ministry staff person must be hired. This commonly is another ordained pastor, but it could be a lay person who is a counsellor, overseer of small groups, supervisor of programs, who does lots of shepherding work and teaching, etc. It is important to be sure that this second staff person really can grow the church and thus pay for him/herself. So, for example, it may not be best to have the second ministry staff person to be a youth minister.

It would be better if the first ministry staff person was a small group minister or a minister of evangelism and outreach. Or, if the senior pastor is excellent in outreach, the second staff person could be more of a pastor/

counsellor who complements the gifts of the first minister and works with those inside. Initial staffing must be for growth.

The tension that often occurs in a church this size is that the church is big enough so that the pastor begins to feel burned out, but is it big enough to financially support a second minister?

#### Third change – **a willingness to let power shift away from the laity and even lay leaders to the staff.**

As you get through this size barrier the old everybody-must-come-to consensus approach to decision-making becomes far too slow and unwieldy. Why?

In the small church approach to decision-making, it is considered impossible to proceed with a change if any member is strongly opposed or especially if it appears that a change will result in some people leaving the church.

As a church nears the 200 barrier, there now is almost always someone who experiences change as a loss. Therefore, no changes can ever occur unless many decisions that used to involve the whole membership shift to the leaders and staff. But it is not just that the laity must cede power to the leaders. The lay leaders must also cede power to the staff and volunteer leaders.

In a smaller church it is usually the lay leaders who know most about the members rather than the pastor. The lay leaders have been there longer and thus have more knowledge of the past, more trust from the members, and more knowledge of the member's abilities, capacities, interests, opinions, etc.

Once a church gets beyond 200, it is the staff that knows more about the church members than the lay leaders, and increasingly the new members in particular, take cues from the pastor(s) rather than from the lay leaders.

Increasingly the lay officers board or elders will not be able to sign off on absolutely everything and will have to let the staff and individual volunteer leaders make decisions on their own.

Fourth change – **a willingness to become more formal and deliberate in assimilation and communication** For a church to move beyond this barrier it usually must stop relying on communication and the assimilation of newcomers to happen naturally without any planning. Communication will have to become more deliberate and redundant instead of word of mouth. For example, every new family could be assigned a 'sponsor' for six months – a member family who invites the new family over to their home, sits with them in the new members' class, and so on.

Fifth change – **the ability and willingness of both the pastor and the people for the pastor to do shepherding a bit less and leading a bit more.**

The next size church requires: a) a lot more vision-casting and strategizing, and b) a more administrative know-how. The pastor of the medium size church will have to spend much more time recruiting and supervising volunteers and programs to do ministry that in the smaller church the professional minister would have done directly. This takes administrative skills of planning, delegating, supervising, and organising.

In this next-size church, the pastor simply is less available and accessible to every member. Even with the hiring of additional ministry staff, every member will not be able to have the same access to the senior pastor as they did before. Both the people and the senior minister need to acknowledge this cost.

Sixth change – **will moving to new space and facilities be crucial** to breaking this growth barrier?

Sometimes, but not usually. Usually the key is going to multiple options/services, staffing for growth, and making the other attitudinal changes mentioned above.



# GALLUP LEADERSHIP TALENTS

## Additional Handout for Leadership Matters

### 20 LIFE THEMES IN FIVE AREAS

- Direction and purpose (vision – strategic thinking).
- Relationships (relator – team).
- Drive to execute (ego drive – activator).
- Management/ Implementation (arranger – discipline).
- Values (responsibility and ethics).

### Direction and Purpose

#### LEADERS WITH VISION

- Have deep held beliefs about justice, freedom, the value of people.
- Are passionate about their desire to impact the lives of others positively.
- Talk about how their organisation's future will positively impact those it serves.
- Create and articulate vivid pictures of the future to be achieved.
- Communicate their ideas in ways which inspire commitment.

#### LEADERS WITH FOCUS

- Have clear, specific goals which guide their action day-to-day.
- Set priorities and spend time on the important activities.
- Think and plan three years ahead.
- Make their expectations clear to associates.
- Are rarely distracted from key goals.

#### LEADERS WITH CONCEPT

- Grasp complex ideas: enjoy intellectual challenge and ideas.
- Always explain why – convey to others the reasons for action and decisions and what the impact will be.
- Read and discuss to expand their knowledge base and understanding.
- Can more easily incorporate new ideas into existing ways of working.

#### LEADERS WITH STRATEGIC THINKING

- Imagine a range of paths to the future, test out the best route.
- Develop alternative routes by questioning 'what if?'
- Are proactive in their thinking, don't wait for problems to arise.
- Spend time musing about future possibilities and plan contingencies to prepare for these.

# Relationships

## LEADERS WITH RELATOR

- Offer friendship, support, concern and care for colleagues.
- Build close, personal relationships with colleagues.
- Know a lot about each person with whom they work.
- Make an investment in people, so that commitment and loyalty are stronger.
- Are open with others; let people know them, are prepared to be vulnerable.

## LEADERS WITH INDIVIDUALISED PERCEPTION

- Recognise that each person is unique.
- Tune into the individual rather than the group.
- Recognise the special talents, inclinations and needs of each of their associates.
- Question and listen to people.
- Adjust their approach to meet the needs of the individual.
- Move from the person and their situation to the rule.

## LEADERS WITH DEVELOPER

- Find enjoyment in the growth, development and success of the others.
- Actively invest their time in other people for their benefit.
- Set others up for success by working with strengths.
- Seek opportunities for their people.
- Trust others with responsibility and decision-making.

## LEADERS WITH MULTI-RELATOR

- Are charming and outgoing.
- Easily develop a rapport with others.
- Enjoy meeting and extending relationships with a wide range of people.
- Value talents in others and use wisely.
- Enjoy being 'out front'.
- Develop the 'right contacts' to be able to influence, gain support and information.

## LEADERS WITH STIMULATOR

- Are empathetic and able to say just the right thing to others.
- Involve people and encourage participation.
- Look for ways to build morale.
- Freely offer praise/recognition to others.
- Make work fun, can laugh and have a sense of humour.
- Keep people upbeat about their work and their environment.

## LEADERS WITH TEAM

- Value the contribution of each colleague.
- Empower people by relinquishing ownership, allowing people to find their own path and welcome help.
- Solicit ideas and listen to each person.
- Focus the group on achieving a common goal.
- Develop mutuality, common support and commitment.
- Are open, accessible and approachable.



## Drive to Execute

### LEADERS WITH EGO DRIVE

- Are comfortable with who they are.
- See themselves as being able to make a difference – have self-confidence.
- Seek challenge/ risk to prove they can do things.
- Will comfortably lay claim to significant accomplishments.
- Enjoy influencing others.
- Give confidence to those they lead through their own self-assurance.

### LEADERS WITH COMPETITION

- Look for external measurement to know how they are performing.
- Like to 'beat' previous 'bests'.
- Strive to win and enjoy winning.
- Measure their accomplishments against others.
- Can see competition in discussions and performance.
- Invent competitions in which to take part.

### LEADERS WITH ACHIEVER DRIVE

- Value work and enjoy being busy.
- Are never satisfied with current performance.
- Are intense and work with pace and rigour.
- May work harder and longer than others.
- Need to achieve in a constructive way – to 'get through the list'.

### LEADERS WITH COURAGE

- Confront difficult issues head-on.
- Come on even stronger when people resist or oppose them.
- Can be aggressive – sometimes intimidating – through the force of their personality.
- Tend to react with emotion when hitting obstacles.
- Do not procrastinate when there are difficulties to be faced.

### LEADERS WITH ACTIVATOR

- Recognise they need the support of 'followers' to be effective.
- Find short-cuts and eliminate 'bottle-necks'.
- Are very persuasive – 'sell' their ideas to associates.
- Are biased to action; need to make things happen.
- Can get people to follow them.
- Make decisions and move forward.
- Are frustrated by delay, inactivity and long meetings.



## Management/ Implementation

### LEADERS WITH ARRANGER

- Are responsive to changes in need or situation.
- Effectively rearrange people and resources to respond to the unexpected.
- Are flexible in their approach to work.
- Seek to optimise the contribution people make.
- Consider alternative methods and work arrangements to increase effectiveness.
- Know how to work the macro system to make things happen effectively.

### LEADERS WITH PERFORMANCE ORIENTATION

- Quantify the results expected, i.e. have specific ways to measure progress.
- Utilise scores and measurements to lend objectivity to their assessment of people and outcomes.
- Focus on results more than on the process to achieve them.
- Create clear expectations and provide objective feedback on performance.

### LEADERS WITH OPERATIONAL

- Have a capacity for administering systems to help people be effective.
- Identify who can best handle responsibility or challenge for particular assignments.
- Quickly identify problems, define solutions and move forward.
- Manage to keep the workflow smooth in operations.
- Eliminate bureaucracy and duplication.
- Can see how systems and processes work efficiently at a macro level.

### LEADERS WITH DISCIPLINE

- Are orderly and systematic in their approach to work.
- Are well-organised, timely and efficient.
- Like structure and may routinely add it to their life.
- Typically display good follow-through and completion of tasks.
- Can be relied on to hit deadlines.
- Pay attention to detail, like to 'get things just right'.

## Values

### LEADERS WITH RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICS

- Are highly conscientious and feel a deep sense of duty and commitment.
- Do what they say they will do.
- Display integrity – are found trustworthy.
- Take ownership for work.
- Earn the trust of associates.
- Put high value on honesty and integrity in others.

