

The **EMPOWERED** Church

RELEASING MINISTRY
THROUGH
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND MINISTRY

CHAPTER ONE

I Theme: Leadership and ministry

Frank had been the senior pastor of his church for nine years. He had taken over the church when it had about fifty members and over the next six years it had grown to close to three hundred members. Growth had stopped. Frank had studied church growth principles, was aware of a '200 barrier', and had sought to do all the right things to avoid it. But despite all his efforts, growth had ceased, even though there was a strong feeling of life in the church and a continual flow of new people coming into the church.

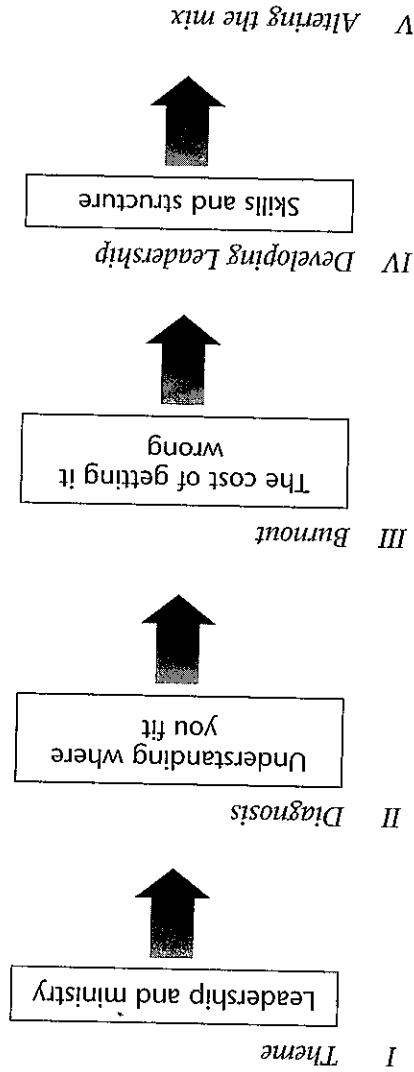
At this point Frank asked if I would visit the church and see if I could put my finger on the problem. I met with Frank's staff and key leaders. They were united behind Frank and seemed to have a clear sense of unity of purpose. They loved the church and believed in Frank's capacity to lead the church to further growth.

There was a slight space problem in the main sanctuary, but there was still room for growth. I sensed that the problem lay elsewhere, and so I began to focus on Frank's leadership style and his understanding of leadership principles.

The first thing I asked Frank to do was take out a blank piece of paper and draw a line down the middle of the page. I then asked him to write in the left-hand column the things in his role that he enjoyed the most or felt most competent in, or that seemed to bear good fruit. On the right-hand side of the page I asked him to write the tasks he enjoyed the least, or those he felt least competent in, or those that seemed to be a waste of time or seemed to bear little fruit, or those that created most stress. I don't have a copy of what he wrote, but it was something like this:

CHAPTER ONE The Distinction between Leadership and Ministry

FLOW OF IDEAS



- Preaching at services
- Counselling
- Praying for the sick
- Encouraging leaders
- Mission tips
- Preaching elsewhere
- Staff lunches
- Financial budgets
- Board meetings
- Administrational planning
- Strategic planning

I asked Frank to use the two headings 'Leadership' and 'Ministry' and decide which heading better fitted one column than the other. He chose to put 'Ministry' over the left column and 'Leadership' over the right.

This opened the way for us to begin to explore the real reason why the church had stopped growing. It took time for our discussions to bear fruit. To use the jargon of modern management, a paradigm shift was necessary. I could point the way, but Frank had to fundamentally change his belief systems before he could change the way he led the church, and this took time.

Three years later, the church is now 450 strong and growing steadily.

What was it that needed to change in Frank's belief system? The answer to this question is the central concept developed in the rest of this book. It is a model (paradigm) that I have discovered, used and taught and that has brought great blessing to my own church and many others.

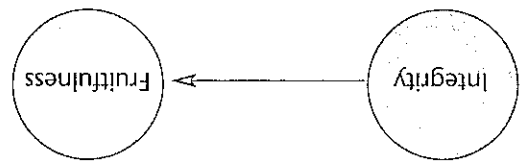
Understanding the difference between leadership and ministry

In Psalm 78:72 we read, concerning the kingship of David over Israel, that he shepherded them with 'integrity of heart', and 'with skilful hands he led them' (NIV).

I have a small index card on my desk with Psalm 78:72 written out in full to remind me of my need for both integrity and skill.

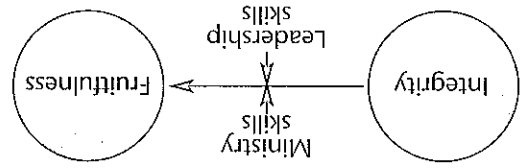
For many years the Christian books I read on Christian leadership (eg *Paul the Leader*, by J Oswald Sanders) dealt with matters of integrity rather than matters of skill. The books were written by wonderful preachers and teachers who equated godliness and fruitfulness and saw the keys to effectiveness as being prayer, fasting and holiness.

The trouble with this view is that many pastors who faithfully pray, fast and pursue holiness in the fear of the Lord are ineffective leaders. In simple terms, their model of effective leadership could be depicted as follows:



Many of the authors of books on Christian leadership have pastored in the context of existing well-established organisational structures which have supported rather than hindered their ministries. They have been neither missionaries nor church planters. God has blessed their own churches, often because of the power of their ministry gifts, but few others in their churches have had any opportunity to develop in regard to ministry. They are often one-man bands who can skilfully play the tunes people want to hear. But leaders they are not.

A simple diagram depicting my own understanding is as follows:



Integrity of heart must be the foundation of fruitfulness, reflecting a wholesome relationship with God. To this foundation are added both ministry and leadership skills. The combined effect of these three qualities (integrity, ministry skills and leadership skills) leads to fruitfulness.

The above diagram does not reflect the impact of important contextual factors. We live in what is called the postmodern world, in which there has been a loss of loyalty to structures and the

Let me try and define the difference between ministry and leadership.

Ministry is any activity which serves the needs of people. It includes such things as preaching, teaching, counsel-ling, praying, visiting, feeding, and cleaning.

Leadership is any activity which directs, influences, or facilitates ministry by others. It includes such things as planning, decision making, personnel selection and vision setting.

The problem is not only that people confuse ministry with leadership. It is also that many organisational structures within churches exist solely for ministry, providing little scope for leadership. For this reason chapter three is devoted primarily to the topic of the formation of leadership teams.

In many churches the senior pastor is called the senior minister, not the senior leader. Confusion in relation to his/her role begins with the title that is used and then filters right through the organisation.

All of Frank's training was designed to prepare him for ministry. Little wonder that he struggled with the roles in the church which required leadership skills.

II Diagnosis: Understanding where you fit

All this point on reading the book, whenever you see a pastor or a lay leader, you might like to do the following exercise. Take out a piece of paper and make a similar list to the one that Frank produced, as described at the beginning of this chapter. Then ask yourself what leadership training you have had. The next step for you may be to read as much as you can about leadership and attend leadership-oriented seminars. Hopefully they will not just be about ministry!

questioning of traditional ministries. Peter Kaldor, in his book *Winds of Change*, makes the following observation:

Denominational switching is helping change the face of church life in this country. That four out of ten of those who change congregations also change denominations, highlights the extent to which denominational barriers are losing their importance . . . In contemporary society, loyalty has to be earned.¹

The building of loyalty now depends more on local church leadership than on denominational labels.

Carl George, the American church growth writer, makes an important distinction between a church growth pastor and the pastor of a growing church. The first kind of pastor is committed to and uses a specific approach to church leadership. The second may best be described as the right person in the right place at the right time. This means that even when integrity, ministry skills and leadership skills are present, contextual factors come into play.

MARY VANCE OF ILLINOIS WROTE FOR LANCER BOOKS, THE FOUNDER OF YOUTH WITH A MISSION, ON THE SUBJECT OF LEADERSHIP. I ONCE MADE A STATEMENT I HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN. THE SAID: "A TRUE LEADER IS A LEADER OF LEADERS. IN TERMS OF PURE LOGIC, THE STATEMENT MAKES NO SENSE, BECAUSE EVENTUALLY YOU RUN OUT OF LEADERS TO BE LED BY LEADERS TO BE LED BY LEADERS. BUT THE TRUTH OF THE STATEMENT IS NONE THE LESS SIGNIFICANT."

Some people who are called leaders have such a strong preaching gift that they easily attract followers. But when you look at their ministry team, you see that there are no strong leaders following them. By my definition they are ministers but not leaders.

Another person may not possess a dynamic ministry gift but builds a large church because other strong leaders, with powerful ministry gifts, find it easy to follow his or her leadership. This person is more than a minister. He or she is a true leader.

¹ P Kaldor, *Winds of Change*, Lancer books, 1996, p 237.

Understanding Frank's problem

In a nutshell, Frank's situation was that he had built a good church on the strength of his and his wife's ministry gifts, so that, effectively, they were the only leaders in the church. Many others were called leaders of various departments, but all the power for decision making remained with Frank. Frank had delegated ministry but not leadership. All significant ministry coordinators (I can't call them leaders) reported directly to Frank. Nothing happened in the church without his endorsement. In fact, little was initiated in the church other than by Frank.

I have read a lot of church growth books and have attended Dr Peter Wagner's 'Breaking the 200 Barrier' seminar. Nowhere, however, do I recall seeing or hearing this distinction between leadership and ministry clearly articulated. Dr Wagner talks of the shift from shepherd to rancher, which describes in general terms the shift which is needed. But in his terms the cowboys led by the rancher are ministers, not other leaders. In other words, Dr Wagner rightly advocates the sharing of ministry, but I am speaking about the need to share leadership.

The most significant development in our church, when we broke through the 200 barrier, was not the formation of ministry teams (we already had them) but the formation of leadership teams. Let me illustrate this in the area of music and worship. Thankfully, we are privileged to have many skilful musicians and singers in our church. What is the role of the music director, and what skills should she or he possess? Perhaps surprisingly, she or he need not be the most gifted musician, in fact, that may well be a hindrance rather than a help. If the role is simply one of rostering on singers and musicians, he or she is merely a leader of ministers rather than a leader of leaders. What the role requires is for the person to be the contact with the musicians, singers, song writers, drama people or sound personnel. Each of these groups will need leaders, who in turn should relate to the overall music director. It takes time to build such a team. Vision, direction and initiative should come from this leadership team, not just from the music director. In fact, without such a team, the music director will have little energy left for innovative ideas and will probably rely on the ideas developed by the senior pastor.

consequence.

Set out below are the results of a survey I conducted among pastors of various denominations which illustrates the seriousness of this situation.

Survey Results of Foundational Training

Theology	Anglican	Church of Christ	Pente-costal	Uniting	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
Excellent	62	22	17	42	40
Adequate	31	67	83	50	53
Poor	7	11	0	8	7
					<u>100</u>

Without leadership teams, ministry teams drain all the energy of the senior pastor, and burnout occurs.

III Burnout: The cost of getting it wrong

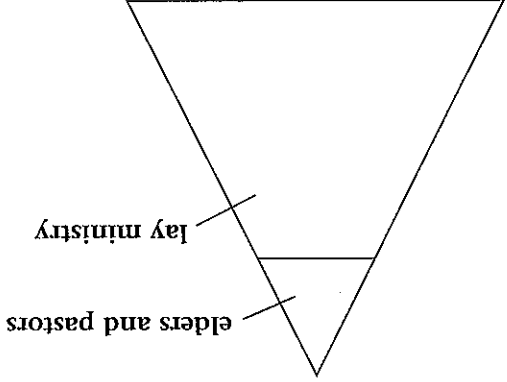
This is also true of people such as Sunday school directors. Why is it that many churches seem to have a constant turnover of teachers, that their ministry load undermines their leadership function. They never get the chance to build a leadership team and rarely have anyone trained to take over when they leave. The same can be said for choir masters and music directors.

Although busyness seems to be the problem, the lack of leadership skills is the real, and hidden, problem. People with developed leadership skills will train other leaders while fulfilling their ministry responsibilities, because they know the personal consequences of failing to do so. But many church leaders have received little or no leadership training, with burnout the eventual

IV Developing Leadership: Skills and structures

In the context of discussing the distinction between leadership and ministry, organisational issues are crucial.

In many churches a typically hierarchical structure develops, like a pyramid, with leadership at the top and ministry below. Only a small percentage of the church membership has a significant leadership role.



And yet, church growth writers maintain that there is a direct relationship between the number of effectively trained and released leaders and the growth capacity of a church: the ratio 1:15 is often quoted. This means that the smaller the number of people in the top triangle of the diagram, the smaller the number who will be in the area below. In fact, a church with only one leader (ie the pastor) will be likely have only fifteen or so adults effectively released in ministry, which severely limits the capacity of the church to grow.

If there are ten leaders, then the capacity for growth of the church is multiplied accordingly. Consequently, the greater the number of leaders who can be identified, trained and released, the greater the capacity of the church to grow.

It is important not to confuse leaders and ministers. If people do not have the authority to direct, influence or facilitate the ministry of others, they do not qualify as leaders. A home-group leader qualifies, because other ministry gifts are involved in the group (eg

Pastoral Duties Anglican Church of Christ Pentecostal Uniting Total

Excellent	0	0	50	34	17
Adequate	46	60	33	33	44
Poor in some areas	54	40	17	33	39
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Leadership Functions Anglican Church of Christ Pentecostal Uniting Total

Excellent	7	0	50	10	13
Adequate	31	40	33	20	31
Poor	62	60	17	70	56
Total	100	100	100	100	100

This survey of significant factors during the last five years, which added to the general attitude in churches towards leadership training, rings alarm bells.

1. Most pastors have had to cope with significant external changes (of parish, demographics, etc)
2. Most are facing significant change in relation to their own roles.
3. Many are under increasing pressure to perform.
4. Leadership and team issues stand out as the greatest common factors, including more or less lay participation related to the growth or decline of the parish.²

² This data was originally produced in an unpublished paper entitled *Caring for the Over 50's in Ministry*, November 1994.

the song leader). However, the worship leader at the Sunday service does not qualify unless he or she is the leader of a group of worship leaders.

At this point you may find it helpful to identify the number of true leaders in your church and to make a rough estimate of its growth capacity using the 1:15 ratio.

Identifying the number of leaders in your church may help you to focus on where effort is really needed (eg in the identifying, training and releasing of leaders). Unfortunately, having enough leaders is not the end of the problem. These leaders need to be effectively released to exercise their leadership potential. In this regard a bottle is a more helpful illustration than a pyramid.

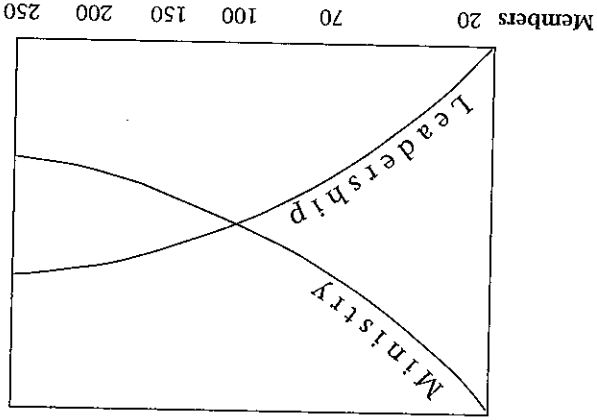
In most bottles the neck is much narrower than the rest of the bottle. I have seen many situations where pastors have given the bottle a good shake (ie stirred up the leadership and ministry gifts within the church) and then firmly put a cork in the top. These are pastors whose leadership style, or personal insecurities, prevent the potential of others from being released. It is one thing to identify and train. Releasing is something else again.

Pastors may release the ministry gifts of people, but an organisational structure is needed which releases the leadership potential of members. In my opinion, this can best be done through the formation of leadership teams and the development of a structure which permits the formation of such teams. Consequently, I have included a separate chapter on organisational structures (chapter four).

At this time you might like to try and depict your present organisational structure in diagrammatic form. Our own experience in drawing organisational diagrams.

V Altering the Mix

It is well recognised in secular books on leadership and management that the role of the chief executive must change as the organisation grows. I have observed the same phenomenon in churches. While I do not have adequate data to be dogmatic about exactly when the changes need to take place, I offer the following diagram for reflection.



When a new church starts, or when a declining small congregation undergoes renewal, the primary roles of the pastor are those involving what I call 'ministry'. However, very quickly leadership becomes more and more important as lay leadership is identified and released. If this does not occur, then the church will grow to the size where it can be sustained on the strength of the pastor's ministry gifting. Australian church attendance data suggests that the average pastor can lead a church to a Sunday attendance of about seventy on the basis of his or her ministry gifting.

Some pastors with very strong evangelistic or teaching gifts may lead a church to an attendance in the hundreds. But for the church to retain its size, it is highly dependent on the pastor being present at the services or being replaced by someone equally outstanding. Evidence suggests that these types of churches are a very small minority. Therefore, when a congregation grows to about seventy the pastor must spend more time on leadership issues and less time on

ministry. There is a crossover point when leadership becomes a greater priority than ministry, though both remain important. This is what I mean by the expression 'altering the mix'. In the church, the pastor is always a minister as well as a leader, although the ministry he or she has will depend on the gifts he or she has received from God.

A word of caution is necessary at this point. Some contexts of ministry (eg rural parishes) may see very little change over extended periods of time, although this is changing as well. Consequently, you may find a church in a country town where the pastor's role remains primarily ministry and not leadership, and the status quo is maintained for many years.