We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is ... leadership, let him govern diligently.
Romans 12:6,8
# Table of Contents

Chapter.

1. What is Leadership? 4

2. Leadership by Serving – The Jesus Way. 16

3. Principles from Exodus 18. 23

4. Other insights from Moses. 39

5. Successfully Introducing Change. 48

6. Principles of Time Management. 59

Appendix. Conflict Resolution. 69

Bibliography 77
Chapter 1. What is Leadership?

1.1 Introduction.

When God wants to do something he usually appoints a person to be the leader of that mission. For example, when the time was right for his people to be rescued from slavery in Egypt he chose Moses to be their deliverer. After the death of Moses, he appointed Joshua and then the Judges to lead his people. After their slavery in Babylon, God stepped in again to deliver his people and he chose Sheshbazzer, Ezra, and Nehemiah to be the men who would lead the reconstruction of Jerusalem. Leadership is crucial. None of these great events would have happened without a leader.

We see a similar pattern in the New Testament where Jesus appoints and trains the Twelve to be apostles and to lead the overall growth of his church. In Ephesians 4:11, we read that Christ appointed various leadership position in the church for it is not God’s intend for the local church, or a denomination as a whole, to be without godly effective leadership.

Church history shows that wherever there is a strong move of God there is usually a key leader at the helm. For example, in Australia in the 1930-40’s, Rev. C.J. Tinsely was the man whom God used to cause the Baptist churches to outstrip all others in numerical growth. He provided the model and the zeal which other pastors caught so that the growth was not restricted to his own church but spread across the denomination as a whole. In the 1970’s God raised up John Wimber who began the Vineyard movement in the USA which positively impacted many other churches in that country as well as around the world. A similar situation occurred in Australia around the same time. God used people such as Frank Huston and then his son Brian to develop the Christian Life Centre (Hillsong) and the Assemblies of God movement in Australia and beyond. Clark Taylor with the Christian Outreach Centre plus Phil Pringle of the Christian City Church denominations are other examples of this principle.

One only has to look at the local church level to see what a difference a godly effective senior pastor makes in the life and growth of the church. Good leadership is crucial if the church and the denomination are to grow.

I believe that leadership is the main role that a pastor, who is in charge of a church, has to fulfil. He or she may perform many other functions, including preaching, visiting and counselling, but his main responsibility is to be a godly successful leader.

1.2 What is leadership.

Let me ask a few questions to get you thinking, “What is leadership? What makes a good leader? How can you tell if someone is a leader?”

A leader is someone whom people are willing to follow.

For me the essence of leadership is that people want to follow that person towards a goal. Not only do they want to follow but they are willing to go through hardship in order to achieve the goals of the leader. Jesus is the greatest leader of all time, for people around the world and through every age, have been willing to follow him and to keep following him; even at the cost of their own lives. Jesus’ invitation to Peter, Andrew and the other disciples, was to “Come, follow me” (Matt.4:18-20); this is the essence of leadership.

Do not think you are a leader simply because you have the title of a leader; you can have the title but not have anyone who is willing to follow you. For example, someone can have the title of ‘Pastor’ but be in a church that is declining due to poor leadership. He may be trying to lead the church in a given direction but be ineffective in getting the members to follow him or, maybe, he is not trying to lead at all, with the result that there is nothing to follow. Having a title doesn’t make you a leader; you only
become a leader when people follow you. I like the proverb that says, “He who thinks that he leads but who has no one following him, is only taking a walk.”

You know you are a leader if people willingly follow you and keep doing it, especially if they have to make a sacrifice along the way. It is not uncommon to hear pastors complain that they can’t get their people to get involved in the plans they have for the church. The problem is often with the pastor rather than the people for he doesn’t understand what is involved in being a leader and, as a consequence, he can’t get people to follow him.

Don’t confuse leadership with giving orders. I heard an illustration about a group of people who were having a meal in a restaurant when someone bumped the waiter resulting in the food being spilt over the table and those seated nearby. The response of the people to this accident was supposed to show the various gifts and abilities that they had. The person who started to give orders to others to rectify this mess was supposed to be the leader.

There is no doubt that a leader takes charge of a situation and in so doing gives commands in order to get things done. However, leadership is more than this. For example, I once heard of a small business that was growing and so the Managing Director decided that he needed to promote someone in the Administration Group to take over responsibility for many of the day to day decisions that he had previously made. The person he appointed had no difficulties in giving orders to people under her command; in fact, she organised them to a point where they had to make very few decisions themselves. It was totally excessive and people resented it so much that morale plummeted and the Managing Director was forced to demote the supervisor and return to the structure he had before. This supervisor had no problem in taking charge and issuing orders but she was not a leader because no one was willing to follow her.

A leader takes people to a new and better place.

A friend of mine, who is a manager in the corporate world, described leadership as, “The essential role of leaders is to take people to a new and better place”. I think this is a great definition. This is what Jesus does for us as we follow him and it is what we should do for the people who follow us.

While a good Christian leader should be loving and caring they must be far more than that; they must take people to a new and better place. Let me illustrate what I mean by referring to the captain of a ship. We expect such a person to set a course and to ensure that the ship arrives safely at the designated port. If problems arise en-route we expect him to deal with them in an efficient and caring manner. Imagine how we would feel if we discovered that the ship had no definite course and was going around in circles. Imagine what we might say if people tried to justify this lack of direction by telling us that the captain was a very loving person and that he spent a great deal of time visiting the sick people on board and trying to make people feel good about themselves. Part of our response might be, “Well that is good, but that is not the main reason why we have a captain. We want him to do the job he is supposed to do and make sure that we are heading in the right direction”.

Nelson Mandela is a great example of a leader. Few would disagree with the statement that he took the people of South Africa to a new and better place.

As pastors we are leaders and as leaders we have been called to lead the church forward to a better place as the Holy Spirit guides us. We do not simply keep things going as they have always been. We do not do something because we have always done it. We are to take the church to a new and better place.

A leader is someone who has the appropriate vision and can turn it into reality

As I mentioned above, the role of a leader is to take people to a new and better place but to do this they need a vision. Good leaders have a vision, a dream. They are people who are passionate about it. They know where they want to go; they have a purpose in life and they are committed to it. People
will not follow someone simply because he or she is loving and kind. They want to follow someone who knows where they are going and who has the ability to turn it into reality.

Think of the great leaders of our time and you will see that they are people who have a vision. Nelson Mandela had a dream that South Africa would become a multi-radical democracy and he had sufficient strength of character to get people to follow him; regardless of the colour of their skin. I find emotion welling up within me every time I think about Mandela and how he was able, when released from prison, to lead South Africa to make the transition without throwing the nation into a blood bath. His emphasis on the need to forgive rather than seeking revenge is a testimony to his character and the value of the Christian principles that he espoused.

Rev. Martin Luther King’s efforts to eliminate racial inequity in the USA using peaceful means is another great example of what one man can achieve if he has a vision and pursues it with passion. His dream was that “my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.” In November 2008 that dream took one massive step towards fulfilment when the people elected a black President. Great leaders are people with vision.

However, having a vision with the accompanying passion, doesn’t necessarily make you a leader. A leader is a person who can take his or her vision and turn it into reality. I have met many people who have great plans to do great things for God but they never seem to be able to get started. They can’t take their vision and begin to see it come to fruition.

I have been approached by many people in Africa asking me for money so that they can fulfil their vision but there has only ever been one person for whom I agreed to raise money. I was convinced that his vision was right and that he had the ability to bring his dream to fulfilment. Part of the reason why I supported him was that he had already begun and was doing a fine job and I knew that any money I raised would be used effectively to develop what he had already started.

Most people who approach me have a vision which is too general. I remember one person whose vision was to develop a bible school to train pastors, build a primary and secondary school for children, a home to look after children who had been orphaned by AIDS plus many other worthwhile projects. It was totally impractical. I suggested to him, and those like him, that they narrow their vision to one thing which they are passionate about and then set out to bring that into being.

Another pastor asked me for money during one of my trips so that he could fulfil his vision of improving the quality of life for people in remote villages in Uganda. I felt that he had a good vision and one which was sufficiently focused so that it could become a reality. However, he wanted a huge amount of money so that he could hire an office in Kampala, buy computers, photocopiers, hire a secretary and other related expenses. I told him that no church or individual would give him money when he hadn’t demonstrated that he could turn his vision into reality. I shared with him that he didn’t need an office in Kampala to begin with but needed to develop a program on how to help people, then select a village to implement the program and then set out to lift the standard of those living in that village. When he could show that his efforts had actually improved life among the villagers he could confidently ask people to financially support him so that he could expand his area of influence. People want to financially support worthwhile projects but a leader must demonstrate that he has a worthwhile vision and that he can turn it into reality.

My vision is, “To equip church leaders so that the Body of Christ is built up”. I do not try to evangelise the world, or to improve the health of children in the developing world, or eliminate injustice among the poor and oppressed; although I feel strongly about all of these. I do not even try to train the average church member. I concentrate on church leaders and equipping them. Maybe God will expand the ministry in the years that lie ahead but, for the moment, this is what I have been called to do. This is what I am passionate about, this is what I spend my time thinking about and working towards. What is your vision? What are you passionate about? What can you bring into reality?

There are many attributes that a person needs if they are to turn their vision into reality but I want to highlight one here; the need to be organised. Let me draw your attention to *Turning the Tide*, a survey
INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP

into Baptist Churches in Great Britain which had the aim of determining what factors influenced church growth. A questionnaire was given to each church and they were asked many questions about the life and practice of their church. One of the questions related to the strengths of the Senior Pastor and the church lay officers were asked to list in order of priority the particular strengths of their minister - was his strong point preaching, pastoral care, administration, or vision/leadership? Each church was examined to determine if it was growing or declining and then the main strength of the Pastor was compared to their rate of growth or decline.

The survey found that where the pastor’s greatest strength was administration the church was more likely to grow. Closely behind that was vision then came pastoral care and last of all preaching. The book didn’t elaborate on how it defined administration but I take it to mean that the pastor was organized and could get things done. The authors of the book concluded, "However, there was a bias in favour of churches growing where administration and leadership/vision were recognized as the prime gifts.”

(Let me digress and say I believe that good preaching will no longer grow a church but poor preaching will empty it. Preaching is important but it is not the main factor that causes a church to grow.)

I have since taken the time to talk to church leaders about this survey and they seem to agree that pastors who are disorganized are less likely to have large growing churches but pastors who are organized are more likely to see church growth. Personal organization and time management are crucial to being an effective leader and seeing your vision become reality.

A leader is someone who empowers his people so that they achieve considerably more than they otherwise would have.

This is my favourite concept of leadership. It excites me greatly. I love the following quotation for it captures what leadership is about, “How do you spot a leader? … they come in all sizes, ages, shapes, and conditions. Some are … not overly bright. … (but) the true leader can be recognised because somehow his people consistently demonstrate superior performances.” Here is the secret; a leader empowers his people so that they consistently demonstrate superior performances; that is, they empower their people so that they achieve considerably more than they otherwise would have.

A leader is great, not because of his or her power, but because of his or her ability to empower others. This means that when we look at a church we do not measure the Senior Pastor as a great leader if he is a fine preacher, an effective evangelist, a gifted worship leader, or a wonderful home group leader. He is a great leader if he has empowered and released others to be fine preachers, effective evangelists, gifted worship leaders, and wonderful home group leaders. The more people he has enabled to effectively do ministry, the greater he is as a leader.

As a leader you are called to empower and equip people so that they reach their potential in Christ. This includes their personal life as well as their ministry. In Ephesians 4:11-13 Paul tells us that God gave leaders to the church to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Here we see the concept of the leader empowering others to do the work of the ministry so that we all become mature and reach our potential.

This concept of empowering people so that they achieve their potential in Christ is crucial to biblical leadership. Some pastors and apostles feel threatened if someone under them starts to achieve great things. Instead of encouraging them and providing them with the resources to excel even further they start to suppress them, criticize them, and even take responsibilities away from them. The end result of this suppression is that the talented person invariably leaves and goes somewhere else. Once you suppress gifted people they will leave and you will be impoverished as a result of it. I will devote more space to this issue later but I want to introduce the thought here.

1 Beasley-Murray and Wilkinson, Turning the Tide, 35-36
2 Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You. 9.
An important part of empowering people is to develop a culture of encouragement rather than criticism. The writer to the Hebrews gives us some valuable advice when he writes, “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb.10:24-25). An important component of ‘spurring’ one another on towards love and good deeds is to encourage one another. Pastor, imagine how you would feel if someone came to you during the week to thank you for one of your recent sermons. Imagine how encouraged you would feel when they shared how they had put into practice what you said and God had blessed them as a result of it. This type of feedback, rather than that of negative criticism, would spur you on to greater deeds. A good leader encourages his people and develops a culture of encouragement in the organization.

We as leaders are to train, equip, encourage, empower and release people so that they achieve more than they otherwise would have. I believe that if a group of new believers join a church which has a pastor who is a poor leader they will probably make very limited progress in their Christian life and probably not rise to achieve anything great in ministry. However, if the same group of people were to join a church which had a pastor who was a great leader I believe that the outcome would be totally different. This pastor would encourage and empower them; he would see their potential and train them. He would give them opportunities to develop their ministry. The end result would be that they would achieve great things in the life of the church. The difference in this scenario is the ability of the pastor to be a leader who equips his people so that they achieve more than they otherwise would have.

A leader creates an environment where people want to grow.

This is similar to the last point but it is so important that I want to deal with it separately. The question that I am frequently asked by pastors is, “How can I get my people to change?” The answer to this question is that we need to create an environment where people will want to change. The more we tell people that they must stop sinning and become godly the more they are likely to remain where they are.

Let me give you my personal testimony in this regard. Shortly after we were married, my wife and I emigrated to Canada and joined a church which demonstrated this environment. However, there was one couple, and the wife in particular, who lived such an attractive style of Christianity that I wanted to be like her. She had been a missionary but was forced to return home because of illness. She had a natural intimacy with God that was both highly attractive and challenging at the same time, a genuine love for others, and such an infectious joy for living that I wanted to grow to know God the way she did. She, more than anyone I have ever met, truly lived the motto, “Love God, love people, love life.”

This is what I mean by “create an environment where people want to grow”. Your life as the pastor, and the life of the church which you lead, should have such a positive impact on people who enter your church that they will want to change. You do not have to be perfect, for no one is, but people should see the reality of Christ in your life. I think that deep down most Christians want to be more victorious in their Christian life but they need someone to provide the model and show them how to be the person that God wants them to be.

Growth comes easier when we are in the right environment. Let me give you two secular illustrations. The first applies to life in parts of Africa where beans are a stable crop. What the farmer does to ensure a good crop is to provide the right environment for the bean seed to grow and when he does this, he is usually guaranteed a good crop. The farmer needs to make sure that the soil is well prepared and that the weeds have been removed, that the seeds are planted where they receive adequate sunshine and get the right amount of moisture. As the plants grow the farmer needs to continue to cultivate so that the plants don’t get chocked by weeds. My experience suggests that while some seeds won’t germinate properly regardless of what you do, the majority will grow into healthy plants and produce a good crop if they are given the right environment in which to grow.

The second illustration concerns my own home in Australia. We had our house built for us which meant that when we moved in there was absolutely no landscaping done at all. I was keen to get some trees
planted around the back of the house so that they would grow quickly and provide shade and privacy. However, the soil was mostly clay and because of the heat, the soil was usually hard and dry even though I spent time watering it. The result was that the trees barely grew. In addition, they were attacked by a multitude of insects and succumbed to many diseases. I was regularly spraying to combat this and constantly watering to facilitate growth but it all made little difference.

After a couple of years, I had sufficient time to devote to the back of the house and so I laid down grass, put in mowing strips to keep the grass off the area where the trees were, I installed an inground watering system and I mulched the entire area. The results were amazing. The trees started to grow; so much so that I could easily measure how much they had grown overnight. What was more interesting was that they didn’t succumb to any of the diseases that had previously attacked them. The difference was that I had provided them with an environment where they could grow and this gave them the internal strength to combat the attacks that came from disease carrying insects.

The above is applicable to us as leaders. It is God who transforms us and gives us the strength to resist sin but we, as leaders, are to provide the environment where people want to grow and where God can do his transforming work.

I remember going to a church growth seminar during the early years of my pastoral ministry when the Senior Pastor who had organised the conference made this statement, “Christianity is more easily caught than taught.” This tells us that the best way to get someone to grow to be like Jesus is to surround them with a good Christian environment where people “love God, love people, and love life” and where they rely on the ministry of the Holy Spirit to produce change. When a person is exposed to this, they will probably “catch” the reality of faith and grow to be more like Jesus. However, make sure that you compliment this with good teaching so that they have a solid biblical foundation for what they are experiencing.

Let me give an illustration. Many years ago a man moved into the country town where I was pastoring and started to attend the church. He freely admitted that he was a chameleon; changing colour to suit the setting he was in. When he was with Christians he would act like a Christian but when he was in the world he would act like one of the world and, while he was born again, he was not committed to the life of the church. I started to invite him around for lunch and we would talk about Christian things in general. I didn’t take him through a formal discipling course nor did we do anything in a systematic way; we just sat and talked about life. After a year or so he applied for and obtained a job, back in the area he had originally come from and returned to his previous church. About a year after that, the pastor of the church where this man attended, met me at a conference and asked me, “What did you do with ‘so and so’ (mentioning this man’s name), he is a totally different person; he so enthusiastic and committed to the church, it is amazing?” Why did this happen? It is the Holy Spirit who transforms us but I provided the “soil” where he could grow.

**Develop an environment of “love God, love people and love life”**.

Before I leave the topic of creating an environment where people want to grow, let me return to discuss the motto, “Love God, love people, love life.” I feel that this type of Christianity is very attractive and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, is likely to provide a situation where people grow. My guess is that most Christians would quickly agree with “Love God and love people” but some would have problems with “love life.” They may argue that we are engaged in a war against evil and therefore there is no time to “enjoy life.” By “enjoy life” I am not referring to what the world sometimes describes as “enjoying life;” namely going to parties so that you can get totally drunk. No, I am talking about people who obviously enjoy being alive and take pleasure in all that God has given to them. Let me give three verses to illustrate what I mean.

- Galatians 5:22-23, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.* It is interesting to note that someone who is demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit will have joy; they will not be people who go around complaining about how difficult things are and how we have to endure it as we wait
for the Second Coming. No! Joy, a love of life, is characteristic of someone controlled by the Spirit of God.

- Nehemiah 8:9-10, Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is sacred to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people who had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." Note that as the people listened to the law of God they were overwhelmed by the enormity of their sin and so they began to weep. Once Nehemiah and the other leaders realized that they were truly repentant they told the people to stop crying and to celebrate with choice foods and sweet drinks. This was a day "sacred to the Lord" therefore, the appropriate response was to rejoice and celebrate; eat good food and enjoy life. It is this situation which gives rise to that well known verse, "the joy of the LORD is your strength."

I grew up with the mistaken idea that if a day was “sacred to the Lord” we had to be very serious and solemn and certainly not have any fun. But this is not the case. Once we have repented of our sin it is appropriate to celebrate and enjoy all that God has given to us. For example, I love good coffee, fine gourmet food, travel, and watching football (soccer). I see this as a gift from God and part of the blessing that he has poured into my life.

Note that Nehemiah told the people that they were to send some of their choice food and sweet drinks to those who had nothing. This is an important principle and is opposite to what we sometimes see in the individualistic West where those who have much sometimes ignore those who have nothing.

- 1Timothy 6:17, Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. This verse tells us that God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. We are to enjoy life. As I mentioned above, I enjoy a good cappuccino coffee and good food; I enjoy travel, I enjoy watching football. God has given us all things richly to enjoy.

However, this enjoyment of life is the outcome of repentance and serving God; this comes first. If we try to put enjoyment first, we will find it elusive and even destructive. For example, I would never stay home from church to watch a football match, even if it was the World Cup final. If I did I would change the order of “Love God, love people, love life” to “Love life, love God, love people”. This doesn’t bring lasting fulfilment and happiness.

I didn’t see the final of the 2010 World Cup in South Africa for a number of reasons but, when I was in Mauritius during a stopover en-route to Kigali for ministry, I happened to go to my room in the afternoon and turned on the TV, and to my surprise and delight, I discovered that they were about to show a replay of the final. My timing was perfect. God is good!

A leader surrounds himself with a good team.

I mentioned above that some pastors feel threatened by capable people under them and set out to suppress them. The end result of this action is that the capable person feels that they have no option but to leave and go elsewhere. There are many reasons why a leader acts this way but one of them is a fear that if they are not the best at everything then people will not follow them. If someone rises up who has a gift of prophecy that is greater than that of the senior pastor or if they are a better worship leader or even a better preacher then the leader becomes fearful that his authority is under threat and that people will no longer want to follow him. This way of thinking is destructive for that is not how it works. In fact, it is the opposite; a great leader always surrounds himself with great people.

Let me illustrate what I mean by referring to the President of a country which is governed by a presidential style, such as what we have in Rwanda. Such a leader needs to surround himself with very capable people; people who have greater knowledge in their specialised field than he or she has. No one expects the President to have more academic qualifications than anyone else in the country nor do they require him to be the most knowledgeable in regard to health, education, or IT infrastructure.
People do not despair and stop following him if there is someone in the country who has more doctorates than him or knows more about IT technology than him.

What people do expect of the President is that he surrounds himself with people who are very knowledgeable and competent in their fields so that he can take the nation to a new and better place. This is what they require from him. Furthermore, they want the President to have an appropriate vision for the country and be able to turn it into reality; they expect him or her to empower people under them so that the nation as a whole is able to achieve more than it would have previously. This is what a leader does and he or she can’t achieve this if they try to do everything themself or suppress people around them who are more knowledgeable in a given field than they are. The leader needs to surround him or herself with a capable team so that they can take the people to a new and better place. It is not surprising that Tony Blair, the Prime Minister of the UK from May 1997 to June 2007 wrote, “…one virtue I have is that I don’t mind big people around me.”

1.3 Leaders are developed as well as born.

A number of years ago my eldest son was invited to attend a Youth Leadership Conference, organized by a well known secular organization, that promoted the concept that you are either born a leader or you are not. If you were a “born leader,” and those who attended the conference were told that they had been invited because they displayed those characteristics, then you can learn various skills to enhance that leadership ability. If you weren’t a “born leader,” then the premise was that there was nothing they could do to make you one.

Is this right? I have arrived at the conclusion that it isn’t. There is no doubt that some people are “born leaders” and they seem to naturally gravitate to positions of leadership at an early age. They are often the people who are elected as the School Captain or a sporting team captain from an early age. However, I am equally convinced that people who aspire to leadership can develop that ability over time. I like what John Maxwell says when he writes, “Leadership is developed, not discovered. The truly ‘born leader’ will always emerge but, to stay on top, natural leadership characteristics must be developed. In working with thousands of people desirous of becoming leaders, I have discovered they all fit in one of four categories or levels of leadership.”

He then goes on to describe these categories as:

- **The Leading Leader.** This is the person who is the “born leader” but who develops his natural abilities to become a great leader.
- **The Learned Leader.** This is the person who was not born with leadership qualities but has been exposed to good leadership and who has the self-discipline to become a great leader.
- **The Latent Leader.** This person is similar to the “Learned Leader” but they have only recently seen good leadership modeled by someone.
- **The Limited leader.** This person has had little or no exposure to leadership or leadership training but has a desire to become a leader.

Again and again Maxwell claims that all the qualities that are necessary for leadership can be acquired if you have the desire to become a leader. You are not disqualified from leadership if you are not a “born leader.” The three qualities are:

- Be exposed to good leadership.
- Learn all that you can about leadership.
- Develop the necessary self-discipline to be a leader.

---

3 Blair, *A Journey*, 114
4 Maxwell, *Developing the Leader within You*. Introduction.
I see myself as coming under the “Latent Leader” category as I was not a “born leader” or at least I didn’t demonstrate this characteristic in any way during my years at school. I was a non-achiever during those years but that all changed when my wife and I emigrated to Canada shortly after we were married. We went to live in an executive type area and were exposed to people who were leaders in the church, secular community, and corporate world. This, along with promotions in the business world, caused us to become effective in our church ministries in a way that was foreign to what we had both previously experienced. We both received the call of God to full time pastoral ministry and left the church in Canada and went to Bible School in Germany and then back to Australia, where I completed my theological training. Subsequent years in the pastoral ministry have shown that leadership skills can be developed even when we are not “born leaders.”

The reason I teach Leadership to pastors is because I believe it is important to develop this area if we want to achieve all that God has for us. During my years as a theological student we spent many hours discussing theology, a lot of which was of minimal value, but we devoted little time to the whole area of leadership development. We were supposedly being trained to be leaders in the church but we were given very little exposure to the subject of leadership. God had called us to be leaders but we were not made aware of the importance of this subject.

Where are you in Maxwell’s four levels? Do you see yourself as a Born Leader? If so, then develop what God has given you. If you are a Learned Leader or Latent Leader, then acquire the qualities that will make you a truly great leader. If you are a Limited Leader then make sure that you start to develop this area of your life now. Develop a healthy desire to become the leader God wants you to be. Learn from those who are good leaders and expose yourself to good leadership training. Don’t minimize the effectiveness of your ministry by refusing to develop your leadership ability.

1.4 Develop yourself.

It should be obvious after reading the above that the most important aspect of leadership is to develop yourself. It is crucial that we understand principles and techniques of leadership but ultimately you will rise or fall on who you are. If you are ready to become the leader that God wants you to be then the most important thing you can do is to develop yourself, or should I say, cooperate with God in this process. You must grow as a person if you want to become a great leader. Leadership is about getting others to follow you and people will follow a person of substance; someone who has the right vision and who has the ability to achieve his goals. Nelson Mandela, one of the world’s greatest leaders in the twentieth century, is an example of this truth.

I believe that there are four main areas that we need to develop. They are:

- **Natural ability.** For example, if you are a preacher then develop your ability to structure a sermon so that people can understand clearly what you are saying. Learn how to communicate with people, learn how to get their attention and how to finish speaking. These principles are applicable to the pastor as well as to the secular politician and anyone who wants to effectively get their message across. If you are in a position of leadership then learn as much as you can about the principles of leadership; learn as much as you can about everything you are called to do.

I am a person who believes in learning from others and I will ask appropriate questions of people I meet so that I can learn and grow. I do not pretend to know everything but I want to learn. Before I became a pastor I was the manager of the electrical engineering department of the company I worked for and I remember attending a training seminar that related to the introduction of new technology. I vividly remember a poster on the front wall of the conference centre room which read, “He who asks a question may appear to be a fool for five minutes but he who doesn’t ask the question remains a fool for the rest of his life”. How true!

When I started pastoring I would ask senior pastors from other churches who were doing great things if I could meet with them and ask them questions about what they did. I found that these pastors were only too eager to meet with me and help me. If you ever have the opportunity to talk to a notable leader do not waste your time trying to impress him or her with your knowledge but ask them relevant questions. If you try to impress them they will quickly realise that you don’t know as
much as you think you know. On the other hand, they will be more impressed by your desire to learn and the questions you ask.

- **Spiritual anointing and gifting.** I am referring here to the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the associated gifts of the Spirit. A person may be an effective communicator from a secular perspective but if he lacks the anointing of the Holy Spirit then his preaching will be second rate, regardless of how well prepared it is.

  As we read through the New Testament it becomes very obvious how important signs, wonders, and miracles where in helping the church to grow. Paul said in Rom.15:18-19, *I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done-- by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.*

  So much of the evangelism that occurred in the book of Acts came about as a result of signs and wonders. Peter’s sermon at Pentecost wasn’t planned; it came as a result of the believers speaking in tongues and the crowd being amazed at what they heard. The same applied when Peter and John healed the man at the Beautiful Gate; the crowd came running to see what had happened and this gave Peter the opportunity to preach again.

- **Ethical behaviour.** That is, avoid sexual immorality, do not succumb to greed, dishonesty, or other actions that we generally refer to as sin. Hopefully this is so obvious that I don’t have to comment on it, but, unfortunately, it is an area that causes many pastors so many problems. Adultery and inappropriate use of church money are probably the two main sins that cause pastors to fall.

  Let me share how I have set up my ministry in regard to finances. To start with it is registered with the NSW government in Australia and is subject to publicly acceptable rules and regulations. All money that the ministry receives goes into a separate ministry account – Leadership Development Ministries Incorporated – and not into my personal account. I cannot write a cheque or withdraw money from the ministry by myself but I require a second signature from one of the Board members. Furthermore, three of the Board members are related to me so that if I initiate a payment another Board member, who is not related to me, has to be the one who approves the payment. I can’t be seen to be pressuring my relatives to approve the expenditure.

  During each trip I carry a small notebook with me and I record every expense that I incur and if I give large sums of money to people I get the recipient to fill out a receipt for me. I carry a number of blank receipt pages wherever I go in Africa. The treasurer, who is also not one of my relatives, keeps an account of all transactions; money coming in and money going out. A full financial statement of the ministry is presented at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the ministry and anyone is able to get a copy. After the AGM the Secretary submits the appropriate financial statement to the government for approval. All the finances of Leadership Development Ministries Inc. (LDM) are handled in a proper and transparent way so that Satan has no opportunity to stir up suspicion and cause the ministry to come into disrepute.

  Unfortunately, during many of my trips to Africa I hear of some prominent church leader who has been found guilty of inappropriate use of church money - that is, they stole it, they would say borrowed it, for their own personal gain without telling anyone else - and as a consequence, had been stood down from their position.

- **Self Discipline with a good attitude.** This includes attributes such as personal discipline and a positive attitude. It includes: doing what you said you would, structuring your time efficiently, being a positive person rather than a negative one.

  Good use of time is important if you are to succeed as a leader. I read an article recently in the *Rwandair Express In-flight Magazine* about Nelson Mandela. It observed that he always got up at 4:30am every morning regardless of what commitments he had the night before. It also mentioned that he tried never to keep people waiting because he felt that being late for an appointment was an insult to the person he was going to meet. Good use of time is important for a leader.
“Self discipline with a good attitude” also includes the ability to see the opportunities in any given situation rather than only being aware of the problems. Let me give you an illustration of this from the life of John Wesley. When he went to Newcastle on Tyne to preach he was confronted with drunkenness, fighting and cursing but his response was not one of despair but rejoicing, “Praise God” he said, “This town is ready for revival". History shows that he was right but he had to be able to see that the town was ready for the gospel and not be overwhelmed by the opposition and difficulties he saw.

We noted above that one of the characteristics of a leader, whether you are a born leader or a latent leader, is to develop the necessary self-discipline. Self-discipline is essential for anyone who wishes to be successful in life. I once spent a week in Busia, Kenya and travelled past the Busia airstrip Primary School twice a day. I was very impressed with their mission statement which was, “To instil Discipline in our pupils and make them self-reliant for successful life”. No one can be a successful leader without self-discipline; make sure that you develop this.

We noted earlier that a survey of Baptist churches in the UK found that when the main strength of the pastor was administration - which I understood to mean that he or she was organised and could get things done - or vision, then the church was more likely to grow. For me, these two strengths come under the heading of “self-discipline with a good attitude.”

The bigger the ministry you undertake the stronger these characteristics need to be. Consider the following illustration. For a wooden chair to hold my weight it needs to have four strong legs. If two are strong and two are weak, the chair will collapse when I sit on it and I will fall to the floor. Even if it has three strong legs and one very weak leg it will not successfully hold my weight. All four need to have sufficient strength to support me. However, if I only used the chair to support a small book, while I sat elsewhere, then even the chair with one weak leg would probably support the weight of the book. But, if I wanted the chair to support a tonne rather than my 80kg, I would need to strengthen every leg so that they all had that extra strength to successfully carry the increased load.

This principle applies to ministry. If you have a great deal of natural ability, great anointing, and have an ethical character but you have low self-discipline, then you can possibly carry on a small ministry. People will overlook the fact that you are sometimes late for a meeting or that you often forget to do what you said you would do because you are a godly person who is very talented and gifted. However, as the ministry grows it will face the possibility of collapsing because of this personal flaw. I have known very talented people who have failed in ministry because they were weak in either ethical behaviour or lacked self-discipline. The opposite is also true. People can be very ethical and have great personal character but lack any great gifting. These people may be able to maintain small ministries because they are “nice people” but they will rarely grow to have large significant ministries because of this lack of ability.

As your ministry grows you need to ensure that you develop your natural ability, spiritual gifting, ethical behaviour, and personal discipline so that each one of these “legs” has sufficient strength to carry the required load of ministry. What was sufficient to successfully lead a small group needs to be developed to lead a small church and what was sufficient to lead a small church needs to be developed to lead a large church or a group of churches.

Pastors in rural Africa have sometimes commented that they can’t attract rich people because those in the church are poor and the pastor is poor. (By rich people, they are often referring to those who are financially self-sufficient; what we would call “middle class” in the West.) My answer to their concern is to encourage them to develop themselves. In Australia, and in the Western world as a whole, I don’t think too many people expect the pastor to be rich; in fact, they would probably complain that something was wrong if he was getting rich. However, rich people are usually successful because they have natural ability along with self-discipline and a good positive attitude. What they are looking for is a pastor whom they can respect. They want a pastor who has developed his natural ability, who has a spiritual anointing on his life and who is self-disciplined with a good positive attitude. They become dissatisfied with pastors who are incompetent and will look elsewhere.
Let me give you an illustration of the above as it relates to myself. When I was a pastor I was amazed as to how many people with Ph.Ds were attracted to the churches I led; even though they were not previously part of the denomination I was with. Furthermore, I have been pleasantly surprised with the number of very positive comments that they have made about my preaching and leadership even though I only have a Bachelor’s degree. I believe that the reason for this is that I set out to develop myself when I left theological college. I wanted to grow and so I made a deliberate decision to read and study subjects which were related to ministry. The outcome speaks for itself.

I know that in Africa, and in other parts of the world, people seem to be very concerned with their status - far more than we are in Australia. I believe that it is a problem within the African culture that the church has to recognize. However, if the pastor was to develop himself to another level of competence then he would attract another level of people to his church which means a greater level of income into the church. Gradually, as the pastor grows and develops himself, so the church will grow and attract the wealthier people he wants to reach without neglecting the poor. The key is always leadership. Pastors, develop yourself in cooperation with God.

Let me finish this section with a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson, “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.” Make sure that you co-operate with God and develop yourself.

1.5 Be Yourself.

God has given you a specific personality along with a certain combination of spiritual gifts that he expects you to use for his glory. We are to develop what we have and become the person that God wants us to be rather than trying to be someone else. Yes, we should learn from others and adopt what we think is appropriate for us but ultimately we are to be the person that God has created us to be and not an imitation of someone else.

I can remember going through this struggle a number of years ago. I had been ministering in Central and East Africa for a few years when I was invited to speak at a Conference in Kampala, Uganda, with a number of other international speakers from South Africa and the United States. I remember clearly wondering what I should do and was strongly tempted to change what I did and adopt a style similar to Benny Hinn; since I had been watching his ministry on TV. Finally, I realized that God had given me a specific personality with certain talents and a definite combination of spiritual gifts, and to try to be someone else would be an insult to God, for I would be telling him that he had made a mistake and that I needed to be someone else before I could be used. Be yourself. Yes, learn all you can from others, but ultimately you have to be yourself by using what God has given you.

This concept of “being yourself” will mean that you may have a different leadership style to someone else. Our style is often influenced by our personality. However, as I look at the bible I see that God used people with all personality types. Moses, who had a typical melancholy personality, was one of the greatest leaders in the Old Testament while Peter, who was strongly sanguine, was arguably one of the greatest leaders in the early church. Abraham, who was phlegmatic, and Paul who was strongly choleric, were also mighty leaders and had a profound influence on future generations.

Each personality has its strengths and each has its weaknesses but having one particular personality doesn’t disqualify you from being mightily used by God. However, trying to act like someone with a different personality and with different spiritual gifts is a recipe for disaster. What we need to do is to maximise the strengths of our personality and minimise our weaknesses.

1.6 Love your people.

John Maxwell wrote, “You’ve got to love them before you can lead them.” If people know that you love them and that you have their interest at heart, they are more likely to follow you. Some pastors are so goal driven or so concerned about their own prestige, that they give the impression that people are

---

5 Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You. 59
secondary, almost an annoyance, to them achieving their goals. People do not like to be used and while some will initially follow such a pastor because they agree with his vision, the end result is that they often get hurt and damaged and have to go elsewhere. My variation on Maxwell’s saying is, “You have to love your people and not just see them as a way of achieving your personal goals.”

In 1 Peter 4:8 we read, “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins”. We all have strengths and we all have weakness. The more successful among us have developed their strengths and minimised their weakness. If your people know that you love them they will forgive you for many of your faults. This is comforting to know. It certainly makes it easier to lead.

I am not going to list techniques for you to follow, for love can’t be reduced to procedures. If you love your people and are concerned about their well-being, then they will sense that and appreciate you. You need to live by the motto, “People matter Most!”

As we progress through my leadership material I will give advice on practical issues such as Time Management and Goal Setting, and while these are important for effective leadership, they must never be achieved at the expense of the well-being of the people you lead. Yes, “People matter Most!”
Chapter 2.  
Leadership by Serving – The Jesus Way.

2.1 Introduction.

Most Christians would agree that Jesus provides us with a model on how to live the Christian life but we sometimes ignore the leadership style of Jesus. There are many reasons for this but one of the main factors is that the Jesus method of leadership is so contrary to what we see around us in the world. We can summarize Jesus’ style of leadership by saying that he came to do the will of his Father by serving rather than being served. The Jesus style of leadership is ‘leadership by serving’ rather than leadership for personal power and prestige. Note the following verses:

- Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
- Luke 22:27, For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

Jesus did not come for, nor did he seek, prestige and worldly power. He put all that aside and took on “the very nature of a servant.” Refer Philippians 2:7. If this is how our Master lived then we who are his sons and daughters should follow in his footsteps.

2.2 Don’t lord it over people but serve.

Some people think that strong leadership means that you boss others around; issuing orders and expecting them to serve you. They see leadership as a position of prestige and power where they are the king and people under them are their servants. They see others as being there to serve them and to enhance their status. They walk around as if they are superior to others and display an attitude which says, “You can’t even talk with me unless I stoop to give you permission.” I have sometimes heard people refer to others as being strong leaders but my experience suggests that these so-called “strong leaders” are actually “lording it over people” rather than serving them. While this may be the style of many in the secular world it was not the way of Jesus and it shouldn’t be the way we behave. Consider the following verses:

- Luke 22:24-27. Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. 25 Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

In the parallel passage in John 13:3-17 we see Jesus putting his teaching into practice by washing his disciples’ feet. This was considered a menial task and was usually performed by a servant. Anyone of any standing in the community would have considered such an act of service below their dignity and station in life; yet Jesus did it as an illustration of what leadership means in the Kingdom of God. I remember going to a special evening service at Millmead Centre (Guilford Baptist Church) in England where Sir Cliff Richard, who had once attended the church, came back to sing. As the guests walked onto the platform it became obvious that there were not enough chairs and so Cliff Richard quickly went back stage and returned carrying extra chairs for the others. There was no sense of “I am the superstar and getting chairs for others is below my status in life,” just a desire to serve as a member of the body of Christ.

During the first year of my full time theological training, the church I attended gave me a job on Saturday mornings so that I could earn some money to pay my bills. It was a large church and included a kindergarten and pre-school centre with many toilets. My job was to clean the church
and clean the toilets. This was great training if I was to adopt the Jesus style of leadership by serving. I remember one morning after I had finished sweeping and mopping the tiled entrance area, a group of men, who were working outside, came in a walked over my clean floor with their muddy boots. This was another opportunity to grow in Christ likeness.

- Mark 10:41. *When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. 42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.”* Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. This teaching of Jesus follows the request of James and John for one of them to sit on his right and the other to sit on his left. These were considered to be positions of power and prestige in the ancient world and it would have been typical of many leaders of Jesus’ day to seek such a place of prestige.

Jesus is saying that greatness in the Kingdom of God is different to greatness in the world. There is nothing wrong in wanting to be great in the Kingdom of God, if fact it is a good thing. Jesus said that if you have this noble desire then you become great by first being a servant. As I mentioned in the introduction, Jesus came to do the Father’s will by serving others rather than by being served.

As we read through the New Testament we see that the apostles continued to teach the same thing. Refer to the following:

- In Philippians 2:5-8, Paul tells that we should have the same attitude as Jesus and serve others. *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:* Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

- Galatians 5:13, *You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.* Note that we are encouraged to use our freedom to serve others, not to promote our own reputation.

- 1 Peter 4:10, *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.* We also use our gifts to serve others and not to enhance our personal prestige and glory. When we pray for someone and they are healed or delivered from the demonic, we have nothing to boast about. Faith, by its very nature, eliminates any basis for boasting or prestige. Refer Rom.3:27. *Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith.* It was God who healed the sick person, not us; all we did was to ask Jesus to heal them.

- 1 Peter 5:1-3. *To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:* Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. Again we see this concept of a church leader caring for people under his or her care and not lording it over them and bossing them around. Such a leader's motivation will be to serve others for the good of the Kingdom and not to get rich. Elsewhere, Paul tells us that a worker is worthy of his hire; which means that a pastor should expect to get paid by the church, but that is not what drives him forward. He shouldn’t be motivated by greed.

I find it encouraging that Peter goes on to say in verse 6 that as we humble ourselves and serve others for the common good, God will exalt us. *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.* Paul teaches the same principle and applies it to Jesus in Philippians 2:9-11. *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,* that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. This is an important principle to grasp.
I think this concept of using one’s position of leadership to serve others is more difficult for people to put into practice when they come from a culture where corruption is high. Leadership by serving is foreign to what they have grown up with. Corruption tends to produce leaders who are there for their own prestige and financial gain rather than using their power for the common good. This type of society does not provide an example of “Jesus style” leadership and those who live in it need to spend extra time thinking about how Jesus operated.

2.3 Serving others doesn’t mean that we allow people to push us around and become their puppets.

We must not interpret “leadership by serving” to mean that we allow others to push us around and that we become their puppets; only doing what they permit. That is not how Jesus operated nor should it be how we operate. Remember, what we said earlier, “The essential role of leaders is to take people to a new and better place”. We can’t do this if we allow ourselves to be dictated to by others.

My years in pastoral minister confirm that there are often members in a church who feel that it is their role to dictate what happens in the church. This is especially true when the church is controlled by the congregational model of church government. There are also others who try to manipulate the pastor in many ways in order to achieve what they want. Jesus never allowed people to pressure him into doing something which he knew wasn’t right nor did he allow others to manipulate him. Leadership by serving doesn’t mean that we allow these types of people to have their way in the church. Leadership by serving means that we are committed to doing what is right for the church; we are committed to the common good. Allowing these dictatorial and manipulative people to have their way is not serving the body for the good of all.

2.4 Leadership by serving means that we work towards a win/win situation.

The concept of working towards a win/win solution is crucial if we are to follow the example of Jesus and operate on the principle of “leadership by serving.” By win/win I mean that you as the leader benefit from the decision and the people whom you lead also benefit; both parties win. A win/win decision benefits both groups. In Philippians 2:1-14 Paul encourages the church at Philippi to follow the example of Jesus who, “made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.” But Paul is very committed to the principle of win/win - note verse 4: “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” He says that we should look after our own interests but we should also be committed to the well-being of the other person; this is win/win, with each party benefiting.

Stephen Covey, in his best-selling book, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, states that one of the habits of “highly effective people” is to “think win/win.” This principle is as applicable to the CEO of a large organization as it is to a husband and father. No one likes to lose as a result of a decision made by others; it only produces resentment and ongoing negative consequences.

I remember an incident that happened in the Bible School my wife and I attended over 30 years ago that vividly illustrated the benefit of the win/win situation. One of the staff members was setting up the tape recorder and PA system just in front of where I was sitting, when a student from a non-English speaking country wanted to plug his tape recorder in so that he could record the lectures and go over them in his free time. From where I was sitting I thought that it was a physical impossibility and that she would tell the student immediately that it could not be done. She did not do that, rather she said, “What would you like me to do?” He made a suggestion which solved his problem without jeopardising what she was doing. It was the perfect win/win situation. She achieved what she wanted and he achieved what he wanted; something which contributed to harmonious relationships within the Bible School.

Another combination is the Win/Lose situation. Covey writes, “In leadership style, Win/Lose is the authoritarian approach: ‘I get my way; you don’t get yours.’ Win/Lose people are prone to use position, power, credentials, possessions or personality to get their way.” The tragedy is that most people have

---

6 Covey, The 7 Habits, 207
been exposed to this way of thinking all their life. Leaders who operate on the Win/Lose scenario often find that those under them lack motivation and do not achieve great results. No one likes to lose all the time. People who are under a win/lose style of leadership are not empowered to achieve more than they otherwise would have. Productivity goes down as a result of this and the end result isn’t what it could have been if the leader had operated on a Win/Win principle. People often leave and go elsewhere when the leader above them operates on Win/Lose.

Then there is lose/win. This is where I lose but you win. Don’t accept this situation thinking that this is what it means to be a servant; for it is not. Lose/win often happens when one party is very strong and the other is weak or where one party has such low self-esteem that they don’t believe that they are worthy of benefiting from a relationship. This situation can occur in a marriage when one spouse sees themselves as a peacemaker who will do anything for the sake of peace. This is not healthy. If the goal of a leader is to empower people to become mature and to succeed in life, then a lose/win situation is not good. It is not good for the leader to deliberately lose so that the other person can win; nor is the reserve true.

Finally, we have the Lose/Lose combination. About this set of conditions, Covey writes, "When two Win/Lose people get together – that is, when two determined, stubborn, ego-invested individuals interact – the result will be Lose/Lose. Both will lose. Both will become vindictive and want to ‘get back’ or ‘get even,’ blind to the fact that murder is suicide, that revenge is a two-edged sword." He goes on to say, “I know of a divorce in which the husband was directed by the judge to sell the assets and turn over half the proceeds to his ex-wife. In compliance, he sold a car worth over $10,000 for $50 and gave $25 to the wife. When the wife protested, the court clerk checked on the situation and discovered that the husband was proceeding in the same manner systematically through all of the assets. Some people become so centered on an enemy, so totally obsessed with the behavior of another person that they become blind to everything except their desire for that person to lose, even if it means losing themselves.” It is stating the obvious that this behavior is not good for a marriage, a church, or any other situation in which a leader finds himself.

I know that sometimes a situation exists where a decision has to be made immediately and where there doesn’t seem to be an obvious Win/Win solution. Under these conditions the leader has to make a decision which he feels is in the best interest of all and trust that he has done what is right. However, these situations are rare, and we normally have time to arrive at a Win/Win arrangement. The pastor, the husband, or the father, who is continually looking for win/win situations has a far greater chance of seeing his church, his wife, or his family reach their potential and flourishing in life.

2.5 The Jesus style of leadership requires submission by all.

The command to be submissive is throughout the New Testament. It is something which should characterize everyone within the Body of Christ; be they a denominational leader, pastor, or an ordinary church member. Consider the following verses:

- James 3:17, *But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.* James tells us that submission is a sign of godly wisdom.

- Romans 13:1, *Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.* We are to submit to the government. Note that we are not commanded to obey them for they may ask us to do something which is contrary to biblical demands. However, we do have to submit to them. We will discuss the difference shortly.

- Ephesians 5:21. *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.* Paul commands believers to submit to other believers.

---

7 Covey, The 7 Habits. 210
Part of our problem with these verses, and others that talk about submission, is that we often misunderstand what submission means. Many people think that submitting to someone means that we must obey them without any hesitation. Verses such as Ephesians 5:22, which tell a wife to submit to her husband in all things, are frequently interpreted to mean that a wife is to obey her husband in all things. This is not right. Submission is not the same as obedience.

Let us examine Ephesians 5:21-22 first. Our bibles divide verses 21-22 into two but this is unfortunate because it distorts what Paul is saying. I believe that it would be more helpful if verses 21 and 22 were combined to form one verse. The reason for this is that the Greek only has one participle, acting as a verb, which applies to both commands; that is, the word that tells believers to submit to each other is the same one that tells wives to submit to their husbands. It is not even the same word that is used twice – once in verse 21 and once in verse 22 – there is only one participle which acts as a command.

Unfortunately, we read verse 21 as meaning one thing and then we interpret verse 22 to mean something different; especially if our bibles have a paragraph heading between the two. Our understanding of submission usually comes from verse 22, rather than verse 21, and we interpret it to mean “obey.” If we start with verse 21, then it is hopefully obvious that “submit” is not the same as “obey,” because I have never heard anyone teach that a believer in the church has to obey everything that any other believer tells him or her to do. There is no teaching in the New Testament that tells me that I, as a member of the body of Christ, have to obey another believer. I don’t; but I do have to submit to them.

With this background, what does submission mean? Let me remind you that Ephesians 5:21 reads, Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Submission means that we put aside our rights and privileges and serve others for the common good. I love the following quote about this verse from Snodgrass, “What Paul has in mind is that Christians reject self-centeredness and work for the good of others. Submission is nothing more than a decision about the relative worth of others.” Later on in Ephesians 6:1,5, we read that children are to obey their parents and slaves are to obey their earthly masters but we are not called to obey each other, only submit to them; that is, we reject self-centredness so that we can work for the good of others.

When a senior pastor submits to a youth leader it doesn’t mean that he has to obey the youth leader and do what he demands but rather, the pastor puts aside any desire for prestige and power and works for the good of the youth leader so that he and the church can be built up. This is opposite to “lording it over people” because when I “lord it over others” I am interested in my position and prestige and am not necessarily committed to the growth of others. When I “lord it over others” I am concerned primarily about myself and will often settle for win/lose outcomes rather than win/win. When a leader takes on a submissive attitude similar to Jesus, he becomes someone who is committed to empowering his people so that they achieve considerably more than they otherwise would have. Isn’t this what a leader does?

What applies to the attitude of the senior pastor to those under him, also applies in reverse. Youth leaders and others with positions of leadership in a church are to submit to their senior pastor. In 1Peter 5:5 Peter tells younger men that they are to submit to those who have pastoral responsibility over them. The NASB translates it well; “You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders”. The NIV seems to miss the point that Peter is making when it translates the Greek as, Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. Since the Greek word is translated “elder” or “pastor” in 1 Peter 5:1, it is best to give it the same meaning in verse 5; that is, it refers to someone who has pastoral oversight rather than someone who is physically older.

Let me elaborate further on this concept that younger men are to submit to those who have pastoral responsibility over them. This issue of submitting to pastoral oversight seems to be more of a problem in some countries of the world than in others; maybe it has something to do with the style of the national leadership which has found its way into the church. I have seen and heard of many young leaders who have felt that they had a call to pastor a church but who didn’t behalf in a submissive way. They set out to undermine the senior pastor so that people would follow them. When they had sufficient people on

---

8 Snodgrass, Ephesians, 311
side they would leave and take those people with them and establish their own church. However, the resultant split with the original church leaves a trail of hurt and destruction.

History shows that these non-submissive younger men reap what they sow because someone usually rises up in their church and undermines them; creating yet another split. In Galatians 6:7, Paul gives us an important spiritual principle; “we reap what we sow.” Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The end result of this type of behaviour is that there are many small churches but few of them are large enough to buy land, erect a suitable building, and pay the pastor; for when they get to a certain size another ambitious person rises up and undermines them; taking half their congregation and leaving them with insufficient resources to continue their growth.

I started this discussion with the need for the senior pastor to be submissive and strive for win/win situations because I think this is the key. If the pastor is committed to “empowering his people so that they achieve more than they otherwise would have,” rather than his own prestige and power, then it is likely that the younger leader will not feel the need to take matters into his own hands and set out to establish his own church. Instead, he will be exposed to the Jesus style of “Leadership by Serving” and operate that way himself.

Brian Houston, the Senior Pastor of Hillsong church in Australia, is a great example of this principle. Hillsong is by far the largest church in Australia. I remember listening to Brian tell pastors that it was essential that they build up the people under them even if these people become more famous than them. He used the example of Darlene Zschech, his worship leader, and shared how he had just finished speaking at a conference in the USA and was standing with Darlene when a lady approached him with a camera. Brian jokingly said that he thought the woman was going to tell him how much his message had blessed her and could she take a photo of him but she didn’t, she asked him if he would take a photo of her with Darlene. One of the reasons why Hillsong is so large is that leaders under Brian are committed to him and his vision because they know that Brian is also committed to building them up.

Let me digress and say that I have known a number of people who are convinced that they have been called to pastor a church and that they have all the gifts and skills that are necessary to do that. Unfortunately, they are the only ones who think so. Some of these people were so convinced that they had been called that they preserved until they found a church who would accept them as their pastor but unfortunately it only resulted in conflict. I believe that it is the body that needs to confirm that God has called a person to ministry and that they have been given all the necessary gifts. When I applied to my denomination to be accepted for training as a pastor, they wrote letters to the last two churches I had attended to see if the people recognized that God had gifted me in this way.
3.1 Poor leadership creates problems.

The incident recorded for us in Exodus 18 shows how important leadership is if we are going to achieve our God given destiny. God had called Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery and into the Promised Land but by the time Jethro came to visit them we find that their progress had effectively come to a halt. Refer Exodus 18:13, The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. Not only were they stationary in the one spot while Moses solved people's problems but they faced the very real danger that Moses would suffer from "burn out," which would have had dire consequences for the future. Exodus 18:17-18, Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out.

Jethro realises that Moses has a problem with his leadership and gives him advice on how to overcome it. As we read further in Exodus 18 we see that the solution was to change his organisational structure, delegate authority, train others to do much of the work that he was doing while maintaining overall responsibility. Moses was operating with a "one-man ministry" style of leadership and this was the source of the problem. He needed to improve his leadership if he was going to be successful in carrying out the task that God had given him.

Note that Jethro didn’t give Moses spiritual advice. He didn’t tell him to pray more or ask for a greater ministry of the Holy Spirit, nor did he tell him to minister more in signs and wonders; for this was not Moses’ weakness. He was a man who operated in the power of God more than most people who have ever lived. His problem was not caused by a lack of anointing but was the result of poor leadership; this is what he needed to change. Some leaders today may need to pray more or move in the gifts of the Spirit in a greater way but this was not Moses’ problem. Being a Christian leader requires us to have strengths in both the spiritual and natural areas, and the latter includes leadership.

We need to note that Moses was able to achieve a great deal up to this point in that God used him to successfully confront Pharaoh, lead the Israelites out of Egypt, take them through the Red Sea and into the desert. He had achieved much already but now it all came to a halt. This is to be expected in some ways. People who have a great anointing on their life and who move in the power of the Holy Spirit are often able to make a great start in ministry. People are initially attracted to them because of what they see God doing through them but if they lack the appropriate leadership skills they may not be able to continue the ministry with the same degree of success.

This doesn’t mean that leadership is more important than spiritual gifting or that it replaces the need for prayer, far from it, but it does mean that we need to develop our leadership skills as well as our spiritual life.

3.2 Problems with the “one-man ministry” style of leadership.

Moses was operating a “one-man ministry” style of leadership in that he was the one who was doing all the ministry. Whenever the people had a problem they came to see Moses and he would endeavour to solve their problem. This style, which is often used by pastors today, has many limitations. They are:

- **It impedes progress.** In the case of Israel, it stopped their forward progress towards the Promised Land; they now spent much of their time standing still while Moses did the ministry. In the case of the local church it minimises growth because a pastor can only do so much.

- **It imposes great strain on the leader and often results in him or her being “burnt out” and leaving the ministry.** Note Jethro’s advice to Moses in Exodus 18:17-18, Moses’ father-in-law...
replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. Trying to be the one who does all the ministry can easily lead to emotional, spiritual, and physical exhaustion; especially if you are very conscientious and the ministry starts to grow.

- **The people will not be satisfied.** This may seem strange for the inexperienced leader to understand. He may argue, "Yes, I can appreciate that a one-man ministry may wear me out but surely it is better for the people; I am the pastor and I am the one with all the training and experience." This is not so. Listen to Jethro’s advice in Exodus 18:18 and 23, *You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out…. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied." Note that the one-man ministry is not good for the people as well; it wears them out and they do not go away satisfied.

- **It is opposed to New Testament teaching.** Ephesians 4:11-12 tells us that the reason Christ appointed leaders in the church wasn’t so that they would do all the ministry but rather to equip the saints so that the saints could be involved in ministry. “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up’’.

- **People are more likely to criticize the pastor.** When the pastor does all the ministry people are often critical of him because he doesn’t meet their needs even though he may be doing the right thing. When people are involved in the ministry they are more likely to see the church as “our church” rather than “the pastor’s church” and, as a result, they tend to be less critical; no one wants to publicly criticise themselves.

With the above in mind let me give reasons why pastors often use the “one-man ministry” style.

- **They don’t know any better.** Why did Moses allow this situation to occur? Why was he the one who did all the judging? My reading of Exodus suggests that he operated this way because he thought this was the right thing to do. Moses, with his melancholy temperament which has a bias towards being self-sacrificing, felt that this was his duty and that he needed to sacrifice himself to serve his people. This may be very noble but it is not very wise.

It also suggests that Moses, with all his training in the courts of Pharaoh, had not received any instruction in leadership. His response to Jethro’s questions tells us that he was ignorant of the basic principles. Traditional theological colleges often fall into this category. They may spend a great of time teaching their students about theology, counselling, and ethics but devote little time to leadership training. The former should not be neglected but the latter needs to be included. Pastors and other leaders, make sure that you set out to learn as much as you can about leadership. You are called to be a leader so equip yourself for the task.

Unfortunately, the KJV – which has translated the Greek in Ephesians 4:11-12 incorrectly – reinforces this concept that it is the leader who is to do the work of the ministry; *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;* 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (KJV). This erroneous translation tells us that Christ gave the positions of apostles, pastors, and other "full time ministry" positions to the church so that they would do the “work of the ministry.” The NIV, and other modern versions, have rectified this mistake and now show that these leaders have been given to the body of Christ so that they can “prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up’’; rather than doing all the ministry themselves.

- **It will naturally happen unless you take steps to change it.** When Jethro asked Moses why he was the only one who was acting as judge he replied, "Because the people come to me to seek God’s will (Ex.18:15). I am sure that Moses didn’t tell the people that they had to come to him with their disputes; they just did it. This is human nature. If people in the church want to see someone about a problem, their first thought is to see the pastor. This is especially true if he happens to be a very gifted person. People want to go to the gifted leader with their problem rather than to his or her associate.
• Some pastors want to control everything and won’t delegate authority. I have met some pastors who deliberately hold onto the “one-man ministry” model because they do not want to let others make decisions. They want to control everything that is said and done and they want to make sure that every last detail is the way they want it. They don’t want to delegate authority and allow others to make decisions. Such a leader acts like a barrier that stops the church from growing.

If this leader has been taught about leadership but does not what to delegate responsibility with the necessary authority, then it usually shows that the leader has an internal problem. As I look back over the years that I have been involved in church life I have seen many a pastor who has had this weakness. We could call them “control fanatics.”

Let me give you an illustration. Many years ago my wife and I went to a church which, because of the situation, should have been growing very quickly but it wasn’t. The pastor insisted that no organisation in the church could hold a meeting unless he attended and was the chairman. His intent was to keep control so that no decision was made which wasn’t in the best interest of the church as he saw it. I am sure that he had the best of intentions but it destroyed initiative, squashed any enthusiasm that anyone may have had, and totally stifled growth. Needless to say it generated a great deal of discontent and division in the church and eventually the pastor left and went to elsewhere.

However, the above story has a happy ending in that a new pastor came who believed in the principles of team leadership and the church grew dramatically. I can remember one of the lay leaders telling me that they didn’t like to be away and miss a worship service during this time because so many exciting things were happening.

We should also note that some “one-man ministries” seem to flourish initially; especially if the leader is very gifted. Moses is a great example of this. He had led the people out of slavery in Egypt, across the Red Sea and into the desert. It was a case of, “So far, so good!” but the tragedy is that it didn’t last for long because he was stuck in the desert, dealing with people’s problems from morning to night, unable to move forward. He was initially successful because people were attracted by his enormous gifting and by a common desire to escape.

However, when the external threat of Pharaoh had disappeared and people wanted their problems dealt with, rather than ignoring them for the short term as they had done when escaping Egypt, the spiritual gifting of Moses was no longer sufficient to get the task done. He needed to move away from the “one-man ministry” model and change his leadership structures. His gifting took him so far but it wasn’t sufficient to complete the task of leading Israel into the Promised Land. I have seen pastors, some of whom I will mention later, who have been very gifted and who were able to get people to follow them initially. Tragically, their lack of leadership skill eventually posed such a problem that people started to leave and go elsewhere.

3.3 Change your structures when necessary.

As leaders, we need to change our organisational structures to remove blockages to growth. Jethro’s advice freed Moses from the overwhelming burden of trying to do the entire ministry himself and gave him the time and energy to devote to the overall task of leadership. Jethro’s solution was to change the organisational structure whereby Moses would appoint officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens to serve as judges while he handled the difficult cases and kept overall responsibility. Refer Exodus 18:21-22, But select capable men from all the people--men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain--and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 22 Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you.

Good structures don’t guarantee that your ministry will grow but they give it the best opportunity to do so. Bad structures will definitely impede growth.
In Acts 6:1-5 we discover how the early church changed their organizational structure in order to overcome a potentially divisive problem. There was dissension within the church because the Grecian Jews were complaining that their widows were missing out on food and probably going hungry. Note how the apostles dealt with the situation. *In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.* So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. *Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them* and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

The answer to this problem was to change the structures of the early church organization. It seems that the apostles had been responsible for preaching and prayer as well as collecting and distributing food to the widows and others in need. It obviously became too much for them to handle everything well and so they had the God given wisdom to change their structure. They had the church as a whole appoint seven spirit filled men to look after the daily distribution of food to the widows and others who were poor and disadvantaged while they concentrated on prayer and the ministry of the word. This problem within the early church had the potential to split it along racial lines but the crisis was averted because of a change to the organizational structure.

It is important to have good organizational structures in local churches if they are to enjoy maximum growth and stability. Yes, we need to teach our people to be more loving and caring but this is never enough; we need to change our structures as well.

Let me also say that we need to be continually changing our structures as the church changes. What may have worked well ten years ago may not be appropriate now. Situations change and the church needs to change so that it can continue to grow.

**3.4 Select the right people.**

Once you have the correct structures in place you need to select the right people to fill them. The importance of selecting the right person for a specific ministry can’t be over emphasised. A church or ministry will rise or fall on the strength of its leadership. Therefore, do not give a leadership position to someone simply because they volunteer or have similar experience in the secular world; make sure they are suitable.

Let me draw your attention to three passages of Scripture.

- Jethro’s advice to Moses in Exodus 18:21, “But select capable men from all the people--men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain”.
- The apostle’s recommendation to the early church in Acts 6:3, *Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them*. 
- Paul’s instructions to Timothy concerning the qualifications of an church leader in 1Timothy 3:1-10, *Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.*
In summary, we can say that people who are appointed to leadership positions need to be:

- Spiritual people who fear God and are filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Possess a godly character.
- Are capable people with the appropriate spiritual gifts.
- Have a good reputation among people; both within and outside of the church.
- Have God given wisdom.

Let us examine the above in more detail.

**Spiritual people who fear God and are filled with the Holy Spirit.**

This seems to be so obvious that one shouldn’t have to state it but, unfortunately, some people are appointed to positions in a church or denomination who do not seem to have any depth to their spiritual life. Too often people are appointed because they have the appropriate experience in the business world but who do not understand spiritual principles. We need people who realise that leadership is more than applying proven techniques from the business world; there is a spiritual dimension that must be foremost in our thinking. I believe that God’s word to Zerubbabel is applicable to all who are involved in church ministry. Zechariah 4:6 reads, *So he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.*

Leaders should be people who fear God. They must live their life on the knowledge that they will stand before God one day and must give an account for everything that they have said and done. One thing which motivates me more than anything else is the truth of Matthew 25:23 and the parable of the talents, “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!’ I want to stand before God and hear him say those words, “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in what I called you to do.” I don’t have to achieve what Billy Graham has accomplished and I will not be judged by what he has done; I only have to do what God has called me to do. We need leaders who fear God and live with eternal values in mind.

**Possess a godly character.**

It is essential that leaders have a godly character. Jethro advised Moses to select people who were trustworthy and who hated dishonest gain while Paul gave a much longer list of strengths that the church leader should display. Character is so important. It is interesting to note how much space Paul devotes to the moral standing of the person; in fact, he spends far more time on this than he does on a person’s gifting.

There are three main areas that cause pastors to stumble and fall. In English we refer to them as the GGs; Gold, Girls and Glory. I mentioned these in chapter 1 when we talked about the need to develop our ethical behaviour but let me discuss them again.

- Gold refers to inappropriate use of finances. It is significant that both Jethro in Exodus 18:21 and Paul in 1 Timothy 3:3 mention this. Leaders should be ‘trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain’, ‘not a lover of money’, and ‘not pursuing dishonest gain’. You can have a “love of money” even if you are poor. One of the advantages of tithing is that it helps to free us from being controlled by money. If we willingly and cheerfully give ten percent to God, it shows that we have control over money rather than it having control over us. Inappropriate use of finances seems to be more of a problem among African church leaders than it is in the West.

It is crucial that churches and Christian organisations set up systems that ensure that their use of money is beyond reproach. That is why I discussed earlier, how I have set up my ministry.

- Girls is adultery; usually with the opposite sex although recently it has sometimes been with someone of the same sex. So many great ministries have been ruined by sexual sin. My experience
suggests that this is more prevalent in the Western world than in Africa but some of my African colleagues believe that it is also becoming a problem in their continent.

- Glory refers to pastors and church leaders who become proud of their ministry, acting as if it has all happened because of how great they are. They forget that everything we achieve comes from God.

Let me also mention bitterness for this is another sin that causes pastors to become ineffective. Refer Hebrews 12:15, *See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.* Pastors and their spouses are subject to a great deal of unjust criticism and this can cause a “bitter root” to take hold and destroy them. Be on your guard when people unjustly criticize you; forgive, forgive, and then forgive some more. (We will talk about handling unjust criticism in the next chapter.)

Failure in the area of character will do more harm than anything else. This is why we need leaders who fear God.

**Capable people with the appropriate spiritual gifts.**

Leaders need to be capable people; they must be able to handle the job that has been entrusted to them. They are to be people who can turn a vision into reality. There is little value in appointing someone to a leadership position if they are incompetent; regardless of how godly they may be.

Let me ask the question, “How do we know that someone will prove to be capable?” My answer is, “We look at what they have done in the past, for the best indicator of future performance is their past behaviour.” Did they handle the previous tasks they were given well? If yes, then they will probable handle the responsibilities associated with the next level well. Jesus said something similar in the parable of the Shrewd Manager: *"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much"* (Luke 16:10).

Let me share my own experience with you. When God called me to full time pastoral ministry I was responsible for leading a ministry in the church for boys aged 9 to 12. My team comprised 13 adults and we had about 70-80 boys who attended on a typical evening. In addition to this, I also taught a Sunday School class. When we were farewelled from the church in Canada, where we had lived for five years and were going to a Bible School in Europe for 6 months, the pastor said something which has stayed with me ever since. He reinforced his belief that we were called to ministry and that we had the necessary gifting and ability to succeed because we had shown this by how we had served in the church.

He then went on to say that he had seen many seminary students who wanted to be great conference speakers and pastor large churches but who wouldn’t teach a Sunday School class or get involved in the day to day life of their local church in anyway. These people had great plans but their past life had not shown that they were capable of succeeding at this level; in fact, their past behaviour showed that they were all talk and no action. What they needed to do was to go back to the basics and show that they were capable at that lower level and then, when they had proven themselves there, take on the next level of leadership. When they had succeeded at that level then they were ready for the next.

I would not send someone to plant a church or pastor an existing one until they had shown that they had the capability to lead a ministry in a local church. I have seen too many people fail because they were sent out too early with no proven record behind them. They may have known the right things to say and may have sounded convincing but they hadn’t shown that they had the ability to lead a ministry team.

Be careful of people who want a prominent position in the church but who are not willing to start serving at a low level. I have met a number of people who are convinced that God has called them to have a worldwide ministry but who won’t or can’t run a ministry within the church.
Have a good reputation among people within and outside of the church.

In 1 Timothy 3:7 we read that a church leader “must also have a good reputation with outsiders.” He must be someone whom people respect whether they are within or outside of the church. It is interesting how many times Paul mentions this. For example, in verse 2 we read that an overseer/pastor must be “respectable” and in verse 4 that his children are to obey him out with proper respect. Deacons are also to be “worthy of respect” (verse 8) and the women are also to be “worthy of respect” (verse 11). Being worthy of respect is something which should characterise every leader within the church.

When we appoint people to positions of leadership we need to ask the question, “Do these people have a good reputation among people within and outside of the church? Are these people worthy of respect?” This is crucial, for if they are not, they may bring the church into disrepute. But it is more than that; people will not follow a leader they do not respect; it is as simple as that.

How a person is perceived in their place of work is very important and tells us a great deal about the individual. Do they have a reputation for being lazy or being a good worker? Are they known as someone who is a good team member and easy to work with or are they someone that people have to be careful with because they get angry very quickly? In other words, “Do they have a good reputation at work; do people respect them? I know that some Western denominations, before they accept a person to be trained as a pastor, always get a reference from the person’s secular employer to ascertain if they do have a “good reputation with outsiders.” This is a very wise move and can save a church a great deal of heartache in the future. Remember, the best indicator of future performance is their past behaviour.

I have been involved with a Bible School in Germany on a number of occasions, initially as student and then as a lecturer, and I have a great deal of respect for the man who was the Principal at the time. I can remember having a discussion with him about a student who thought that he had been called to be a full time youth pastor in his home country. The Principal remarked that you learn more about a person by quietly watching how they perform their practical work duties than you do by what they say in the lecture room. By quietly observing someone as they work you can ascertain if they are conscientious, work well with others, have leadership potential, handle conflict well and other issues that are important when determining if someone is worthy of respect and has leadership quality.

Have God given wisdom.

The bible tells us that God given wisdom is a very important attribute if we are to be great leaders. For example:

- Joseph was given wisdom and this was one of the factors that enabled him to become ruler over Egypt. (Refer Acts 6:10.)
- Luke tells us that Jesus grew in wisdom as a child. Refer Luke 2:52. When he started his ministry the people from his home town were amazed at his wisdom and wondered how he obtained it. Refer Matthew 13:54.
- Wisdom was a requirement for those who were selected to wait on tables in Acts 6:3.

What was applicable during biblical times is also right for today. My experience shows that some pastors make stupid decisions which result in very negative consequences; something which could have been avoided if only they had been a little wiser. James tells us that if we lack wisdom we should ask God and he will give it to us. Refer James 1:5, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”

3.5 Don’t appoint “Yes men.”

A “yes man” is someone who will always agree with what the leader says and does and never says anything that is contrary to what the leader wants to hear. This is not helpful for anyone; including the leader. Let me make two comments on this.
• The first is that you want people who are committed to the theology, vision, and philosophy of the church. For example, if you think that all the gifts of the Spirit are available today, you do not want someone on your leadership team who is convinced that they were all withdrawn when the apostles died and that the church shouldn’t expect any of them to be operating today. Furthermore, if you believe that the church should present the timeless truths of the Gospel in a contemporary manner, including contemporary music and worship, then you don’t want someone who is totally committed to traditional forms of church life and worship. If these people are on the leadership team and hold strongly to their views and want to ensure that their ideals are implemented, then you will have unnecessary conflict and probability will experience little in the way of church growth.

• However, while you want people who are committed to the theology, vision, and philosophy of the church, you want them to feel free to offer constructive helpful comments. For example, “Pastor, I don’t think that this idea is the best way to achieve our vision because of XYZ” or “Pastor, I have reservations about what we are doing because some people may interpret it to mean that we are misusing the church money. I would like to suggest that we do something like ABC.” Hopefully, helpful discussion in an atmosphere of love would follow to enable the most appropriate decision to be made.

You do not want a situation where committed leaders on your team do not feel comfortable to say that they disagree with something you are proposing. I have known pastors who have created an atmosphere where anyone who says something different to what they are suggesting is seen as being disloyal to the vision of the church. Later on we will discuss the need for the leader to listen to advice and to evaluate it but people on the team will only offer constructive comments if they feel that the leader is open to receiving their suggestions without making them feel disloyal.

Tony Blair wrote, “I liked … (namely some of the ‘big people’ around him) … precisely because I knew they would tell me what they thought. That is not to say they were disrespectful …, but they spoke their mind. I welcomed it, and drew valuable advice and even confidence from it.”

3.6 Higher standards for those with greater responsibility.

We need to appreciate that the greater the area of responsibility we give a person, the higher the standard that we require of them. We require far more from a pastor in terms of godliness, character, and capability than we do from a car parking assistant. We require far more from a denominational leader than we do from someone who leads a small home group. The greater the area of responsibility the more Christ like a person should be in character and the more capable he should be. When we appoint people to ministry roles we need to appreciate this.

However, we should not wait for a new Christian to develop great spiritual maturity before we get them involved in the life of the church. There is bound to be something for them to do in the children’s ministry or the welcoming team or worship team or a general serving team shortly after they are saved. However, when we are looking for a person to lead any of these ministry teams we should appoint someone with a greater degree of godly character than we expected from the individual team members. Likewise, when we appoint someone to be a pastor we expect an even higher degree of spiritual maturity with the appropriate moral character than we do for others in the church.

I believe that the greater the degree of responsibility that we give someone in the church or denomination, the higher the character that we require of them and the greater the degree of discipline we should exercise over them if they behave inappropriately. We should accept new Christians were they are and get them involved in the life of the church, for that is how God accepts us, but we require increasing levels of maturity, character, capability, and leadership as people take on higher roles of leadership.

---

9 Blair, A Journey, 114
3.7 Don’t give people too much responsibility too quickly.

Paul gives us good advice in 1 Timothy 3:6 concerning a pastor and leaders in general. *He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.* This principle applies to every area of leadership. While we should get new Christians involved in the ministry of the church shortly after they are saved we must be careful not to give them too much responsibility too quickly. They need to gain a certain level of spiritual maturity before they can handle a position of leadership and deal with the problems involved. The greater the level of responsibility the greater the level of maturity required.

The same applies to people who come from other churches, especially those within your area. Be careful! Why did they leave the church and come to you? Maybe they were wrongly treated in the other church and will be an asset to you but maybe they are self-seeking individuals who create problems wherever they go. Take time to evaluate. Mature people will appreciate your need to evaluate and will respect you for it, providing you do it in an appropriate way.

3.8 Delegate ministry and give the appropriate authority.

Now that Moses had the right structure and the right people to fill the various roles, he had to delegate ministry to them and give them the necessary authority to carry out that ministry. This is probably the key piece of advice that Jethro gave Moses and one which some pastors find the hardest to put into practice. Note Jethro’s advice, *But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.* 22 Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves.

The following verses show that Moses followed Jethro’s recommendations and delegated ministry to the people he selected. Along with the responsibility of judging he also gave them the authority to make decisions on their own; they didn’t have to discuss every decision with him and seek his approval before proceeding. Doing the latter would only have made the situation worse for all concerned. Moses had to delegate appropriate authority to those to whom he had given responsibility. Moses was still involved in that he dealt with the difficult cases and had overall responsibility, but the simple cases he left with “his team.”

Think about your situation. In what areas do you need to delegate authority? Is it pastoral care, worship leading, youth ministry, or administration? Are you trying to keep a weekly centralised bible study and prayer meeting going so that you can keep control on what is taught when you should have a home cell structure with others leading the various groups?

I have been asked the question, “What happens if you are in a small church where people are poor and have no experience of leadership in the business world? What if you don’t have people with previous leadership experience?” My advice was to start with something small. Maybe if you run the weekly prayer meeting or a small home group, you may delegate the opening worship to someone. You meet with that person and tell them what is required, maybe three songs with opening prayer and introduction. You tell them how to select songs, how to introduce them and how to finish the worship time. Let them select the songs but speak with them before the meeting to ensure that they are appropriate. Get together with them after the meeting to discuss what they did. Tell them what they did right and what they could improve on and how to improve. It is important to tell someone what they did right because the person may not know that what they did was right; they may have done it by chance or weren’t certain if they were doing the right thing.

When the person has shown that they can do a good job with the opening worship then delegate more authority to them. Continue with this until you are confident that you can hand over responsibility for the entire meeting to them.
3.9 Tell people what is required of them; a job description.

When we delegate ministry we need to tell people what is required of them. Refer Exodus 18:24-26, *Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves. The leaders were told what was required; they were to handle the easier cases while the harder ones eventually worked their way up to Moses. We are not told all the instructions that Moses gave the leaders but one assumes that it included some idea of when a leader of 10 should pass the problem up to his leader of 50.*

Note also Exodus 18:20, *Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.* Here we read that Moses not only had to teach people the laws of God but he was to show them how to carry out the duties they were to perform. The people who were appointed as leaders not only knew what they were to do but they were also shown how to do it. We will discuss the necessity to train our leaders later but here I want to highlight the need to tell people what they are to do and what is required of them. They should know what authority they have and what decisions they can make without having to refer it to their superior. My experience in the business world shows that people at different levels of management have different degrees of authority. We will discuss this matter more fully later when we talk about making decisions within overall boundaries.

Let us come back to the concept of telling people what is required of them. Let us assume that you decide to implement a home cell structure rather than a centralised weekly prayer and bible study. Those who are chosen to lead a group should be given information about what is expected of them. For example,

- Is there a common starting and finishing time or is each group allowed to select a time and day that best suits them?
- Is there a standard format that they are to follow or are they free to be totally flexible?
- Do they have to discuss a given topic each meeting or are they free to discuss whatever they wish?
- Is anything else expected of them? Are they to provide pastoral care for each member? Do they have to submit a report of what happened each week?

A ministry is more likely to run harmoniously when people know what is expected of them.

3.10 Give your leaders the freedom to make decisions within the overall boundaries that you set.

When you delegate a job you need to give the person the freedom and authority to make decisions within the overall boundaries that you have established. You must keep overall responsibility to ensure that things are done in accordance with your vision and philosophy but you have to enable people to make decisions even if they are not exactly the way you would have done it yourself. Note that Moses gave his leaders the freedom and authority to decide how to handle the easy cases. He didn’t require them to submit their solution to him for approval before he gave them the authority to pass it on to the person with the problem. This would have increased the workload on Moses and everyone else considerably; it would have been easier and safer for Moses to continue making all the decisions himself rather than to adopt this approach.

If you give people responsibility but don’t give them the appropriate authority to make decisions within the overall boundaries, things will become unbearable for those under you. The tension will become so great that they will probably leave and go elsewhere.

Consider the following story. A man shared with me how frustrated he was with the suppressive control that one of the associate pastors of the church he attended exercised over everything. He explained how he was setting up the church for the morning worship service and had placed everything in its normal position when the pastor came to him and told him that the small table on the stage was in the wrong position. The leader then moved the table about 30cm to the right, looked at it and said, “No, it
needs to be back about 15cm”. He then moved the table, looked at it again and said, “Not quite right, it needs to be here”. He then moved it back to its original position. Apparently, this was typical of everything that he did. I am sure you would not be surprised to discover that this couple became so frustrated that they eventually left and went to another church in the area.

The above is a great example because it shows that the problem of delegating authority had very little to do with where the table was placed; it was all to do with the fact that the pastor wanted to control everything; even if it meant putting the table back where it started from.

What should have happened? I believe that the pastor should have met with his Set Up team leader, and maybe with the team members if applicable, and together determined how the building should be arranged for a worship service. (In this situation, I believe that the building was used for other things during the week so everything had to be packed away after each service and then set up again the next Sunday.) He should have determined which direction to face the seating and what arrangement the chairs should be in; semi circle with an aisle down the middle, or three blocks that were eight seats wide with two aisles in the middle or whatever was appropriate for the building. They should have also determined how they wanted other areas to be set up. I believe that the pastor should have come to the meeting with a concept in mind but should have also involved the set up team in the final decision. Getting the team leader and his team to participate in the decision making process would help them to feel that they were part of the ministry; rather than a pawn in a chess game.

Having done the above the pastor should have left the set up team, and the person whom he had appointed leader, to set up the building each week and not interfere. I am sure it wouldn’t matter in the slightest if a table was 30cm to one side. If the pastor thought that the set up leader was doing something wrong that needed correction, he should have spoken with the leader in private rather than correcting him in public.

Another person told me of a similar incident a month after I heard of the above. They shared how they had moved into a new area and started to attend a church which had a newly appointed and very talented pastor. Apparently this man was a great worship leader as well as a good preacher and a caring pastor. As a result of this, the church started to attract new people and the numbers increased to the point where it was considerably larger than the national average. However, he wasn’t a good leader and insisted that everything be done exactly the way he wanted it. He was also a perfectionist and no one was able to do any task to his high standard. Apparently, after the seating had been set up for the morning service he would come along and rearrange everything and straighten the chairs again because they weren’t up to his liking.

The situation became so bad that the set up team would deliberately put the chairs in a crooked line simply to annoy him. I was told that the church has since declined to less than 20 people and is struggling to survive. If this talented man had been willing to give people the authority to make decisions without having to control everything, I am sure the church would have continued to grow substantially.

I will not deal with this topic now but it is crucial that we remember to: “Compliment in public but correct in private.” In 1Thessalonians 5:11, Paul tells us, *Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.* For example, if someone has worked hard to organize an event then thank them in public at the appropriate time or if a group of people have worked hard to prepare a building for a special function then make sure you compliment them publicly. Use wisdom and don’t overdo this, for you don’t want to make it appear to be phony, but, in general, it is good to compliment in public. However, don’t correct a person or a group of people in public because that humiliates them and this is never good. The idea of correction is to help a person do a better job or be a better person and this is best achieved in private and not by being denigrated in public. The manager who singles out an individual for correction in a general meeting or in a public place only humiliates and demotivates that person. The supervisor who shouts out criticism across the office to a worker on the other side of the room does untold damage. The pastor who criticizes a member of the church for their failure to set up the room for worship the way he wanted, only embarrasses them and has negative consequences. This is not how you get people to achieve more than they otherwise would have done. Remember: “Compliment in public but correct in private.”
3.11 Determine boundaries.

I mentioned above that when you delegate a job you need to give the person the authority to make decisions within the overall boundaries that you have established. Let us now discuss the issue of establishing overall boundaries. These boundaries are determined by many factors but allow me to list five of them.

- **An individual’s Job Description.** This helps define what a person is supposed to do. It helps define their responsibilities and areas of authority.

- **Statement of Faith.** Most churches have a Statement of Faith in written form and this influences behaviour in many ways. For example, a church which believes in baptising believers only would not approve of a home group leader conducting an infant baptism service for a friend’s newly born baby during their home group meeting. Similarly, churches who believe that the gifts of the Spirit have been withdrawn would not approve of people speaking in tongues during a home group meeting. Knowing what the Statement of Faith is helps people to operate within acceptable overall boundaries.

- **A church’s values and philosophy.** These are often not written down but they are very important. Let us look at sin as an example.
  - Some churches recognize that sin is wrong but they choose not to preach about it because they want to focus on the goodness of God and they don’t want to offend unbelievers who are looking for the truth.
  - Others, like myself, teach that sin is wrong and is destructive but want to concentrate on the goodness and power of God to transform us. They would say that continually drawing people’s attention to sin doesn’t produce change but only makes us want to sin more. (Refer Rom.7)
  - Still others believe that since sin is a disgrace to any people (Prov.14:34) and the church should be actively and continually preaching against it. This church would see itself as preaching against the sins of the nation so that people can escape the judgment of God.

If you held to the view that I do, you wouldn’t want a home group leader to be the type who sees that their purpose is to be continually preaching against the sins of our society. This would be contrary to your biblical understanding of Romans and contrary to how you believe people are changed. On the other hand, if you believed what I do, the second position, you wouldn’t want your home group leaders to be continually ignoring sin and not talking about it.

The more people understand the values and philosophy of the church the more they will understand the boundaries you want established. When this happens you can give them more and more freedom to make decisions knowing that they will be in line with the direction that the church is taking.

- **Goals and Vision.** I found it helpful to develop goals and objectives for the year; both for the church as a whole and for each organisation within the church. When leaders are aware of these goals and vision it helps them to make decisions within the overall boundaries that you have established. For example, let us assume that you have set the goal of building a larger church structure to accommodate the extra people who are now attending. If your leaders know this, it is easier for them to promote this direction in what they do rather than advocating that the church shouldn’t have its own building but meet in homes.

Let me digress for a moment and talk about what we should do if you, as the pastor, hear that one of your home group leaders is teaching that the church shouldn’t buy land and build because the New Testament teaches that the church only met in homes and didn’t own buildings. During one of
my trips to Africa I actually asked this question. One of the pastors replied, “I would tell him to see
me and demand that he apologise and change what he was doing or I would excommunicate him”.

While there is an element of truth in what the pastor said, I would not be too hasty in dismissing him
from his role. There are a few things that I would try to discover when I met with him in private. For
example:

- Notice that the pastor said that the home group leader should see him in private. This is
  essential; remember the saying, “compliment in public, correct in private”. You are only asking
  for trouble if you try to deal with this issue in a public forum.

- Firstly, I would try to find out if what I had heard was true. Just because someone tells you
  something about someone doesn’t mean that it is true. Rumours can often be wrong. Some
  people, even believers, like to hear negative gossip and then pass it on to others, twisting it
  still further in the process. I would try and draw out a response from the person by asking
  appropriate questions like, “Bob, or whatever his name is, how do you feel about the church’s
  goal to buy land so that we can erect a larger building for our Sunday worship?” I wouldn’t
  initially say that I had been told that he wasn’t teaching that we shouldn’t do this unless I felt that
  he wasn’t telling me what he really thought.

  I was talking with some friends recently who told me of a woman they knew who was turned
  off the church and stopped attending when the pastor called her in

- If the home group leader admitted that he was teaching that the church shouldn’t erect a new
  building I would ask him why he was doing this when the church had a goal to build such a
  building. It is possible that he didn’t understand the implications of what he was doing and was
  willing to change when they had been pointed out to him. Maybe he had a wrong
  understanding of what the New Testament church did and was willing to rethink his position
  once you shared with him why the church wanted to head in that direction.

- If he still believes firmly that the church shouldn’t erect a new building, then you need to
  evaluate the loyalty of this man to you and the leadership. If he demonstrates his loyalty in
  how he acts, then you may not have a problem. There is a huge difference between someone
  who is loyal to you overall but who doesn’t agree with you in one particular issue, compared
  with a person who sets out to undermine your authority and influence. I wouldn’t dismiss the
  group leader from his role if he demonstrated loyalty and overall support for the pastoral
  leadership. However, if he was deliberately trying to undermine the authority of the pastor by
  his opposition to the proposed plan then you may have no other option than to dismiss him
  from his role. My experience suggests that someone who tries to undermine the pastor’s
  authority in this manner is looking for an excuse to do that anyway. I have found that the
  particular problem, such as a new building, is simply an opportunity for these people to
  undermine you; if it wasn’t the new building they would find some other issue. It is usually a
  matter of wanting power in the church.

- However, if you decide that you have no other option than to stand him down from his role as
  home group leader you should expect to have problems as a result. Experience suggests that
  he may try to stir up further trouble and gain a following of people who are now opposed to
  the pastor. Make every effort to solve the problem with a win/win solution before you take such
  drastic action as dismissing him as a home group leader.

- **Why we do things the way we do.** Another factor in establishing boundaries has to do with the
  question of “why we do things the way we do.” It is more than “what we do” but “why we do it.” The
  more our people understand the “why” the more we can be confident that they will make wise
  decisions within the overall boundaries they have been given. Telling people “what to do” without
telling them “why we do it” is fine when everything is working exactly the way it should, but if the situation changes and a person has to make a decision as to what to do next, they are more likely to make the right one if they understand why we do things the way we do.

I remember discussing this with a group of African pastors and I used their choice of music as an example. I told them that leaders within their church needed to know why they sang hymns that the missionaries had brought on some occasions and why they sang African songs with a distinctive African rhythm on others. (They had definite times when they sang missionary hymns and other times when they ventured into singing African music.) I mentioned that if the leaders in their church knew why they only sang African songs on certain occasions then they would be less likely to sing the “wrong music at the wrong time”. The discussion that followed, or the lack of it, showed that they didn’t really know why they did what they did.

It is always helpful to ask, “Why do we do things this way?” When you know why you do things it is easier to convey this to your people. When you know the “why” and convey it to your people, it is easier to establish boundaries so that they are empowered to do great things.

One of the key factors in all of this is to “Communicate, Communicate and then Communicate some more.” This can’t be stressed too much. It is important to share your vision with the people; where you see the church in one year’s time, two years’ time etc. But it is crucial that you share more than the “what we want to do;” you must also share the “why we are going to do it this way.” When people understand the “why” they are more likely to make decisions that are appropriate and within the overall boundaries that you have established.

3.12 Keep overall responsibility

As a pastor and leader you have to keep overall responsibility even though you have to delegate tasks and authority. You must not give someone a task and forget about it. You have the responsibility to ensure that it is completed in accordance with the vision and philosophy of the church. Note Exodus 18:19-20. Even though Moses had to delegate the task of judging the simple cases he still had overall responsibility and dealt with the more difficult ones. In addition to this he had the responsibility of teaching the decrees and laws to these newly appointed judges; he was to show them how to live and what their duties were. Delegating responsibility with the appropriate authority but keeping overall control so that a ministry or project runs successfully, is crucial to good leadership.

I believe that one of the keys to being able to “delegate responsibility with the appropriate authority while keeping overall responsibility” is to concern yourself with the “big picture.” For example, “What are the objectives of this ministry and are we achieving them?” Too many church related programmes have no real goals and things just go on as they always have, or worst still, decline and struggle.

Let me give you an example of how I operated from my secular electrical engineering days. Before I was married I was the leader of a team of electrical designers and draftsmen and one of my responsibilities was to design control circuitry for contracts that varied from the standard. I personally did this part myself. Shortly after I was married we moved to Canada and I eventually took a position as Manager of the Electrical Control (Engineering) Department. Now I had a team who were responsible for designing control circuits and I initially found it difficult not to interfere on minor points that were of no significance. I prided myself at being very good at what I did and there were times when I was sure I could see a slightly better way of doing something but I had to ask myself, “Does it really matter?” If it was “No” then I let them continue without saying anything but if I felt it jeopardised the job then I would discuss it with them.

I quickly learnt to discuss the overall concept of the design with them before they began, as well as at crucial points along the way, so as to ensure they were within the “boundaries” that I expected and that the “big picture” issues were right. When I was satisfied that these issues were correct I left the details up to them. This empowered them to be creative and make the day to day decisions they needed to make without me looking over their shoulder all the time; but kept the overall control in my hands. It enabled me to relax and feel confident that the project would reach a successful conclusion.
INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP

When I entered the ministry and started to pastor a church I adopted a similar practice. As I have mentioned above, at the end of each year I would ask each team leader to develop goals and objectives for the coming year, which gave them a direction to head. I would discuss these goals with them to make sure that they fitted into the vision and philosophy of the church and that they were realistic and helpful. When these were in place I could let them get on with the ministry confident that they were heading in the right direction.

I also set Monday nights aside to spent time with my leaders; discussing their ministry with them, encouraging them, offering advice if needed, providing pastoral care, and generally ensuring that they were doing well and that the ministry was heading in the right direction. I didn't concern myself with the day to day issues unless I felt that a trend was starting to develop which could have long term negative consequences. Let me elaborate further on the four main areas that I dealt with. They were:

- **Pastoral Care.** You must love your people if you are going to lead them effectively over the long term. The personal one-to-one meeting enables you to provide them with pastoral care. When people are going through personal difficulties, be they in the home or even with their job, their effectiveness is likely to be reduced. If this is not dealt with, it can create major problems including people dropping out of ministry. We have to love our people and not just see them as a way to achieve our personal goals. The way we offer them pastoral care provides them with a model on how to offer care and support to those in their team. Refer Galatians 6:2, *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

- **Discuss any current problems.** The one to one meeting enables you to ask them how the ministry is going and to discuss any problems they may have. People are often reluctant to discuss these issues publicly because they don't want to give the impression that they are incompetent and can't cope. However, when they are with someone whom they love and respect, and with whom they feel secure, they will usually open up and discuss such issues. They could be facing many difficulties but the one to one non-threatening environment gives them the security to open up and discuss them.

- **Discuss their plans and vision for the future.** This gives you the opportunity to discuss what they plan to do in the future. Maybe they haven't done anything in this area and so this gives you the opportunity to discuss it. If they have formulated a plan, then you can ascertain if it will be beneficial for the church. When you know that the “big picture” is right you can confidently give them the freedom to develop the details as they see fit.

- **Empowering them.** The one to one meeting gives you the opportunity to encourage and empower the individual so that they achieve more than they would otherwise have done.

The reason I choose Monday nights was that the Board met on that night once a month. It made it logical for me to choose that evening to visit them individually in their homes during the other Mondays. I planned ahead which ensured that I saw every one and didn't miss out on anyone. All of my leaders had secular jobs and were not employed full time by the church so that is why we held our meetings at night. I also made appointments to see them ahead of time. This had many advantages including giving the leader time to work on anything which he knew was outstanding and which he should have done before I arrived.

I believe that it is crucial that pastors spend time developing and caring for their leaders. It is too easy for them to spend all their energy with the problem people who demand their time as Moses did and ignore those who have leadership positions. However, to do this we have to manage our time well and schedule the important tasks into our week. (We will discuss *Time Management* in future sessions but let me say that it is crucial to plan your day, week, and year so that you achieve the things which are important. Without this discipline you may be dictated by the urgent tasks which are often not important but crowd out that which is.)
3.13 Train your leaders so that they can do the ministry well.

Note Jethro’s advice to Moses in Exodus 18:20, *Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.* We see here that the pastor shouldn’t delegate authority and forget about it, nor should he just demand accountability from a distance. He is to get involved in training his leaders who report to him by teaching them principles, by showing them how to live, how to carry out their ministry, and helping them to train those who report to them. In short he is to train them so that they, and the entire church, can excel in life and ministry.

Donald Washewicz, in the article, *The Facts of CEO life,* talks about the necessity for the leader to ensure that people are trained so that they reach their potential. He writes, “I believe people naturally want to do a good job. My responsibility is to show them exactly what that means. That’s what a leader does.” I am sure he is right. The CEO of a large organisation doesn’t individually show every worker how to do their job well but he is responsible to ensure that it happens.

The same applies in the church. The pastor should be able to train people in some areas but will not have the expertise to cover every area. When the latter exists, he needs to bring in people who are gifted in that area to train his people. While I have strengths in many fields I would definitely bring in outside help to train the worship team and those who have a prophetic gift. However, it often helps to bring in outsiders to assist in training your team in areas where you are strong; a different voice, a different approach, can often do wonders.

Note in Exodus 18:20 that Jethro includes both “teaching” and “showing.” Classroom instruction is not enough; we need to have “on the job training” (OJT) as well. This is how Jesus trained his disciples to carry out the Great Commission. Note the following:

- Firstly, they watched what he did.
- He taught them as they went along. Refer Mark 8:31.
- He sent them out to do it by themselves. In Luke 9:1ff he sent out the Twelve (Refer also Matt.10:5-16) and in Luke10:1ff he sent out the Seventy. Notice that he gave them instructions before they left. He didn’t send them out without any guidelines.
- He evaluated what they had done when they had returned. Refer Luke 10:17ff. Note how the evaluation time included the disciples’ comment that even the demons submitted to them in Jesus’ name.
- Eventually they did it by themselves.

This is a great pattern to follow with people you want to train. For example, if you want to train a Home Group leader then proceed as follows:

- Have them join your Home Group, or another if that is more appropriate, and let them observe what is done. (Step 1)
- Meet with them outside of the Home Group and tell them why you do certain things and how to prepare and lead the Group. (Step 2)
- Allow them to lead the Group one night while you observe. (Step 3)
- Meet with them afterwards to evaluate, offer suggestions, and encourage them. (Step 4)
- When you think they are ready, give them their own Small Group to lead but meet regularly with them for a while to encourage and offer suggestions. (Step 5)
- Get them to start the training process with someone else. (Step 6)
- Ensure that you keep meeting with these leaders from time to time to encourage them and to help them develop further. (Step 7)

---

If you have a larger church and you need an extra five home group leaders you may ask the existing group leaders to name people within their group whom they think are ready to be trained as new leaders. Once you have agreed on suitable candidates, and they have agreed to be trained, you would bring them all together and give them the classroom training that they need. This is the equivalent of step 2 above. Step 1 has already been carried out since they have been part of a group and have already shown their potential. Step 3 and 4 would still be carried out by the individual home group leaders until the new recruits are ready to be given a home group of their own.

Eventually, as the church grows, you would hand over the operation of the home groups, complete with the training of leaders, to someone else. Remember, you as pastor, still have to keep overall responsibility and be involved in the “big picture” as it relates to the home group ministry.
4.1 Don’t be fearful of capable people under your leadership.

I touched on this subject briefly in chapter 1 but I want to elaborate on it now because it is so important. This is an area where we can learn a great deal by looking at Moses and how he responded to capable people under him. Unfortunately, some pastors feel insecure and threatened if someone else in their church or movement shows more ability in one area than they do. They want to believe that they are the best preacher, the best prophet, the best counsellor, the best worker of miracles and feel fearful or threatened if someone else shows great potential in any of these areas. They want everyone to come to them for counselling, or at least allow them to redirect them to someone else, and get upset if people start going to another person in the church. They want everyone to believe that they are the most gifted prophet in the church and feel threatened if people prefer to go to another leader for a prophetic word.

I once spent some time with a very capable apostle who had built a church from nothing and had successfully started a number of other churches under his leadership. However, there were obvious problems in his movement and some of his key people told me that he couldn’t stand anyone appearing to be more gifted than him in any area. If someone started to develop an effective ministry he would set out to suppress and ridicule them. One of the largest churches in the town where I heard this story was led by a man who had initially been the pastor of a daughter church under the leadership of this apostle. Because this daughter church started to grow very quickly the apostle became threatened and started to suppress and ridicule the pastor. Needless to say, the situation became impossible for the pastor to bear and he reluctantly left the movement and started his own church. It was such a shame because the apostle had a great anointing on his life and was very gifted in many ways. He could have gone on to achieve great things if he had developed the gifted people in his team rather than suppressing them.

If you squash gifted people you will suffer because of it. Don’t be threatened by capable people under your leadership. Encourage them in what they do. As a pastor you do not have to be the best preacher or the best counsellor or the best worker of miracles; but you are called to be a leader who develops people so that the work of Christ grows. Being a great leader is what you need to concentrate on.

Moses is a great example of a leader who was not fearful of capable people under him but wanted as many of his team as possible to use their spiritual gifting to the fullest. In Numbers 11:24-29 we read, So Moses went out and told the people what the LORD had said. He brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the Tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again. However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the Tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. A young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses’ aide since youth, spoke up and said, “Moses, my lord, stop them!” But Moses replied, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!”

In the above passage, the Spirit came on the seventy elders followed by Eldad and Medad and they began to prophesy. Joshua seems to be concerned that this may weaken Moses’ authority since others were also prophesying and he wants Moses to stop them. But Moses was not threatened by this for he knew that God had called him to lead the people of Israel into the Promised Land and that he needed all the gifted people he could find if he was going to successfully complete this task. He wanted those under him to be as gifted as they could because he knew that this would make his task a great deal easier.
Bill Hybels, Founder and Senior Pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, one of the largest and most influential churches in the USA, is a modern day example of a leader who is not threatened by highly competent people under him but who actually sets out to find such people to be part of his team. He wrote, “I look for the highest level of competence I can find. I ask God to help me find someone whose spiritual gifts have been developed and refined over the years. If we’re looking for someone to join our teaching team, I ask God to help us find a person with extremely strong teaching gifts, certainly someone more gifted than I am... If I’m looking for a Director of Operations, I look for someone with monster administrative gifts and a stellar track record of performance. Years ago I realized that if I didn’t start surrounding myself with some outstanding people I would be overwhelmed by the challenges of leading Willow. Now when I look around the table during our management team meetings I see a Harvard MBA, a Stanford MBA, one Ph.D., two individuals with law degrees, and several with master’s degrees. I am the only one seriously lacking in credentials!”

One of the reasons Willow Creek Community Church has grown so large is that Bill Hybels has pulled together a great team. He has built them up rather than suppressing them when it appeared that they may be more talented than him in a certain area of ministry.

4.2 Listen to advice and evaluate it.

One of the things that we learn from Exodus 18 is the importance of being open to receive advice. Do not think that you know it all and that no one can teach you anything. Do not be so arrogant that you will not listen to others when they have something to tell you. This is a recipe for disaster. Be a person who not only has an openness to receive advice but also has a desire to learn, a desire to improve and a desire to grow. Cultivate this attitude. Take note of Proverbs 13:10, "Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice."

Moses was a man who would listen to advise and accept the parts that were helpful and reject those that weren’t. Numbers 12:3 is an interesting verse for it tells us that Moses was a very humble man and that is one reason why he had the strength of character to listen to advise and make a decision based on its merit. Refer Numbers 12:3, “Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.”

David is another example of a great leader who was able to take advice from those around him. We see this in 2 Samuel 19:1-8 when Joab came to him after his son Absalom had been killed. David had allowed his personal grief to distort his judgment and as a result he had made a bad decision which would have had disastrous consequences. However, he had the strength of character to listen to Joab, to accept that he had made a mistake, and to change his course of action. Refer 2 Samuel 19:4-7, Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, "Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that the commanders and their men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead. Now go out and encourage your men. I swear by the LORD that if you don’t go out, not a man will be left with you by nightfall. This will be worse for you than all the calamities that have come upon you from your youth till now." So the king got up and took his seat in the gateway. When the men were told, "The king is sitting in the gateway," they all came before him.

I saw an interview on Australian TV recently with Sir Richard Branson, the founder and CEO of Virgin Airlines, where he mentioned that he spent a lot of time listening to his staff and writing down their comments so that he could evaluate them. The interviewer then showed a film clip of him talking with some of his flight attendants and writing down what they said. It is not surprising that Sir Richard later said in the program that his staff were very loyal to him.

---

11 Hybels, Courageous Leadership. 83-84
However, while we need to listen to people and evaluate what they say, we must never make decisions based on what will make us popular with those around us. Rather, we must make our choice based on what is right. We will discuss this in more detail later.

4.3 Expect criticism.

Another important lesson that we learn from the life of Moses is that we should expect criticism if we become a leader. Consider the following:

- Exodus 15:24, *So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?"
- Exodus 16:2, *In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron.
- Exodus 17:2-3, *So they quarrelled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?" But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"
- Numbers 14:1-4, *That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."
- Numbers 16:1-2, *Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites--Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth--became insolent and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council.

In all of the above incidents we see that Moses did nothing wrong, he was doing what God had called him to do, but when difficulties arose the people blamed him and complained about him. Each time God vindicated Moses’ leadership by demonstrating his power through miracles, signs and wonders but still the people complained. I find Numbers 14:4 both fascinating and tragically true. Moses had led the Israelites thorough the desert, they had experienced miracle after miracle, but when the opportunity came to actually move in and possess the land they wouldn’t do it but wanted to get rid of Moses and go back to slavery. Unfortunately, this is human nature and anyone who takes on a leadership role can expect criticism in one form or another; much of it will be unjust. Experience suggests that the greater the leadership role the greater the criticism. Do not think that if you do the right thing that people will not criticize you; you will be in for a difficult time as a pastor if you hold to this belief.

Let me relate a personal incident. When I had been accepted into the ministry and was about to start my theological training I received a great revelation from Scripture. I was reading John 11, the raising of Lazarus, when I came to verse 37, *“But some of them said, ‘Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying’*. Here we see the perfect Son of God being criticized by some of the people for something he was not responsible for. Think about this for a moment. He had healed their sick and opened the eyes of the blind but they still complained and were critical. Then the Holy Spirit said to me, “If they criticized Jesus you can be sure they will criticize you.” A good leader knows this to be true.

4.4 How to handle criticism.

Do what is right.

Our response to criticism is important. We must always be people who do what we know is right and not take the easy way out just to please those who are complaining. If you want people to like you and you make decisions based on this reasoning, you will get yourself into difficulty. Always do what you know God is calling you to do. If you are not sure about the right decision then seek advice from wise godly people but do not operate on the basis of wanting to be popular. Paul offers great advice in 1Thessalonians 2:4-6, *On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the*
gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. 5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed--God is our witness. 6 We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else.

Reinhard Bonnke is reported to have said something very profound in regard to handling criticism, “I am immune from criticism by man because I am immune from the praise of man.” If you are looking for praise from people you will not be able to handle the criticism which inevitably comes to those who have a leadership position.

Making decisions based on pleasing people is a recipe for disaster. If you try to please different groups just to be popular you may finish up pleasing nobody and have everyone against you. Consider the following tragic story. Due to a number of factors a crisis developed within a church that I knew which resulted in various factions forming within the congregation; each wanting the church to go in a different direction. Unfortunately, the pastor wanted to please everyone and he told each group what they wanted to hear; ensuring them that what they wanted would happen. He then told them that they would love everyone and, because of this, everything would be fine. The outcome had to end in disaster because what some of the factions wanted was mutually exclusive to what others wanted. It was impossible for him to do what group A were expecting and still do what group B wanted. Needless to say each group felt betrayed when the pastor couldn’t do what he had promised and, as a result, many people started to leave the church. Eventually, the pastor also left and within a couple of years the church, which had previously been very strong, closed down. Winston Churchill said, “An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile – hoping it will eat him last.”

For me, one of the worst examples of leadership in the Bible is found in Exodus 32:21-25 where Aaron listened to the people and did what they wanted even though he must have known that it was wrong: “He [Moses] said to Aaron, ‘What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?’ 22 ‘Do not be angry, my lord,’ Aaron answered. ‘You know how prone these people are to evil. 23 They said to me, “Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.” 24 So I told them, “Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.” Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf! 25 Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies.” This is an example of weak leadership. He did what the people wanted presumably because he wanted to be popular. He couldn’t even admit to Moses that he had made the calf; no one would believe that he threw the gold into the fire and out came a calf all by itself. Do not be weak. Do not do something because it will make you popular when you know that it is wrong. Do not fail to exercise control and discipline people because you are fearful of what people will think of you. Failure to lead and do what is right is a recipe for disaster.

When people criticise us we need to understand that they are often not complaining about us but about God. This was certainly the case with Moses. They didn’t want to trust God and go forward into the Promised Land by faith so they turned on Moses who was God’s visible representative. They were not primarily mad with Moses but mad with God; Moses just happened to be the one on whom they vented their anger. Refer Numbers 16:12-14, Then Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. But they said, "We will not come! 13 Isn't it enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the desert? And now you also want to lord it over us? 14 Moreover, you haven't brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey or given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you gouge out the eyes of these men? No, we will not come!" Moses hadn’t brought them up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill them in the desert; they brought it on themselves because of their disobedience. The reason that they weren’t enjoying life in the Promised Land was because of their own rebellion; it was their fault and not Moses’. However, because Moses was God’s chosen leader he was the one whom they lashed out at. Anyone who leads a ministry within a church needs to understand this.

---

13 Churchill in Quotes, 155
Determine where the criticism is coming from.

It is important to determine who is criticizing you and what their commitment to the church is. I find it helpful to draw a chart of “Criticism of the Pastor” and place people on it from 100 down to 0; 100 being the people that criticize the pastor the most and 0 being those who criticize him the least. Then draw another chart of “Commitment to the Church” and place people on it from 100 down to 0; 100 being the people who are most involved in the ministry of the church and who support it sacrificially with their finances while 0 are those who are least committed to the church in terms of ministry and finances. My experience suggests that those who are at the top of the “Criticism of the Pastor” are usually at the bottom of the “Commitment to the Church” chart; that is, those who criticize the pastor the most are those who are least committed to the church.

How to handle the critical people who are not committed to the church

If you find that the people who are critical of you are those who are not sacrificially committed to the church, then you are dealing with people who are similar to those who criticized Jesus in John 11:37. It doesn’t matter what you do, these people will never be happy and, if you let them, they will take up a great deal of your time and energy. Take the same action as Jesus; ignore their complaints and get on with what you have been called to do. In my early years in ministry I tried to help these people but I found that they were never satisfied with what I did and they never grew as a result of my efforts. These people are “me” centred and they are only concerned about what they can get from the church and are not interested in what they can give. Whatever you give them will never be enough. Don’t waste your time trying to make these people happy. It will not work and it won’t change them. Be polite to these people when you meet them but do not think that you can make them happy by giving them what they ask for.

These people are usually critical people in every aspect of life, and you, as their pastor, are just another target for their critical nature. Giving these people a great deal of your time and effort is not going to be helpful for anyone; certainly not for you, the church, or even them. They need to come to the point where they take responsibility for their actions and stop criticising so that they can start to grow. They will only change when this happens. My experience suggests that these people will often go from church to church and even sound very spiritual at times. Sometimes they will try to flatter the pastor in order to get more of his time; “No one understands me as well as you.” Trying to please these people is impossible and counterproductive. Pray for them - believing that God will change them and give them a desire to grow – but don’t spend too much time with them until that happens.

Let me note that some of these people can even appear to be a friend of the pastor to his face but criticise him behind his back and try to undermine his authority when talking with other people. Furthermore, be aware of those who criticize others when talking to you; they will probably criticize you when they are talking to others.

Handling criticism when the people are committed to the church

However, if the criticism is coming from people who are normally committed to the life and ministry of the church and who are not critical people by nature, then you need to seriously consider what they are saying. There may be some truth in it and you may need to act on it; it could be God’s way of trying to get your attention. You may be at fault. It may be a situation similar to that in 2 Samuel 19:1-8 where Joab confronted David. David was at fault for he allowed his emotions about Absalom to control his actions. When someone like Joab, who had shown over the years that he was loyal to David, suddenly became critical, then David would have been a fool to ignore his advice.

If you suddenly find yourself in a situation where the committed people in the church become critical of you then seriously consider what you are doing. You may have to change your plans. Don’t be afraid to seek advice from godly people that you respect under these circumstances; especially if you are feeling tired or frustrated. Note Proverbs 15:22 again, Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.
If you continue to encounter a great deal of criticism from those who are committed to the church and who are not critical people by nature, then this is a real problem. My advice would be to have a serious discussion with a wise godly leader whom you trust. It may be that you have suddenly changed your way of thinking and this is causing a problem. I heard of a church which had grown steadily and was probably the largest church in its area, and while there was the usual criticism from those who were not committed to the church, the Board and other keys leaders were very enthusiastic and committed to the senior pastor and his vision. However, something happened in the leadership style of the pastor and this developed a great deal of criticism from the key leadership. Unfortunately, many of these people, including a number on the Board, felt that they had no option but to leave the church and go elsewhere. The end result had negative consequences for all concerned.

It is also possible that you may be in the wrong church and that your personality and background doesn’t suit the church or the area in which you find yourself. If this is the case, it would be advisable to consider relocating to another church which is more compatible to you. However, don’t move just because you have problems; you will always face problems; this is part of being a leader. A leader is called to effect change and to take the church to a new and better place; opposition is inevitable. Jesus and Moses faced opposition and so will you.

It is possible that you may not be suited for pastoral ministry. I have met a few people like this and the best course of action for them was to return to secular employment or take up a totally different form of ministry that was more appropriate. These decisions shouldn’t be taken quickly or lightly but they need to be addressed for the sake of all concerned. Make sure you seek wise godly advice before taking any action like this.

4.5 Our response to unjust criticism.

Don't take it personally.

It is important that you do not take unjust criticism personally. Do not take it as a personal insult. Do not get offended. Do not start to doubt your ability or your calling to the ministry. The people who are criticising you are critical by nature and it has nothing to do with whether you are right or wrong or whether you are capable or not. That is just the way they are; their nature is to criticise.

Let me give you an example of this as it relates to the book, *The Shack*. Both my wife Carol and I think this is a great book because it gives its readers a fresh and helpful way of understanding the complexities of the Trinity and the wonder of God’s grace towards us sinners. However, my wife met a lady who is critical by nature and who started to condemn the book not knowing that Carol really liked it. This woman had apparently been given a DVD which criticised the book and painted it in a very negative light. After a while Carol asked this woman if she had read the book herself or was she just relying on what someone else had said. She had to admit that she hadn’t even seen the book and she certainly hadn’t read it; all she did was to accept this negative criticism as truth. Why did she do this? All I can say is that this seems to be her nature. She is very critical of the church in Australia and it doesn’t surprise me that her initial response to anything is to be critical and believe negative gossip. If you hear negative comments about a preacher or a book, do not believe it until you are able to check it out yourself. You may just be listening to a critical person. This is what I mean when I say some people are critical by nature, so don’t take their criticism of you personally.

Now back to Moses. There are few people in history who were more competent than he was. He is one of the greatest leaders in the bible. He was arguably the most holy men who ever lived for he is the only person that God spoke with face to face. Refer Numbers 12:7-8. Furthermore, he operated with an anointing of the Holy Spirit than most leaders could only dream of, yet, in spite of all of this, he was continually criticised. This is what a leader can expect. If you take unjust criticism as a personal insult, or as a reflection upon your ability to carry out ministry, you are going to have a very difficult life as a leader. I doubt whether such a person could continue in leadership for long.
I like what Winston Churchill said about criticism, “You have enemies? Good. That means you’ve stood up for something, sometime in your life.”

**Don’t defend yourself when criticised; let God vindicate you.**

Numbers 12:1-3 is a good illustration on how to handle unjust criticism. In this passage we read how Aaron and Miriam were criticizing Moses, but as we read on, we see that Moses was in the right and Aaron seems to be reacting out of jealousy, as verses 2-3 show. “Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?” they asked. “Hasn’t he also spoken through us?” And the LORD heard this. (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

What happened next is recorded in verses 4-9, “At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, "Come out to the Tent of Meeting, all three of you." So the three of them came out. Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward, he said, "Listen to my words: ... The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he left them”. Notice that Moses didn’t try to vindicate himself but left that to God.

Romans 12:19-20 is applicable in this situation. “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord”. When someone does something wrong to us we are not to repay them with evil nor are we to seek revenge; that is God’s role. Anyone who goes into Christian service of any kind should expect unjust criticism to be levelled against them. This happened to Jesus and it will happen to us. When this occurs we should not set out to defend ourselves but rather leave it to God to vindicate us.

The problem with unjust criticism is that it is usually irrational and the people who are making the accusations are not open to receiving a sensible reply; they certainly are not open to the possibility of changing their mind and repenting of their actions. Note again the criticism levelled against Jesus when he arrived at Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead, “But some of them said, ‘Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying’” (John 11:37). Experience suggests that this wasn’t a serious intellectual question on behalf of the people asking it. They were not open for a sensible rational reply. They really didn’t want to know if Jesus could have prevented Lazarus was dying; they simply wanted to criticize him. This is why we shouldn’t try to defend ourselves when criticized; nothing good will come out of it.

Consider the following from a book I read recently by R.T. Kendall under the heading, **Don’t defend yourself when you are criticised.** He urged his readers not to rob God of what he does best; the job of vindicating those who are wronged. One of the things that God does best, he said, is to clear a person’s name who has been falsely accused, lied about or hurt in any way. He does it in ways that boggles the mind. “Don’t try to help God out” wrote Kendall, “Don’t ever – ever- try to clear your own name. That’s God’s job.” He did this for Moses and he will do it for us. Refer also 1 Peter 5:6, *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*

**Keep doing what God has called you to do.**

One of the problems with unjust criticism is that we feel that we should defend ourselves. However, as we noted above, we are not to do that but are to leave it to God. Your task is to continue to do what God has called you to do. Do not get side-tracked and waste valuable time and energy trying to clear your name. Satan would love you to do that for it will distract you from doing ministry. In John 11:37-39, Jesus provides us with a good model to follow. His response to those around him who criticised him for not stopping Lazarus from dying, was to continue with the ministry that God had given him rather than trying to justify his actions as to why he didn’t come earlier. That is how we should act.

Billy Graham is also a great example of Christ likeness in this regard. Billy has been subjected to more unjust criticism than anyone else that I have known with much of it coming from within the bible

---

14 Churchill in Quotes, 157
15 Kendall, Out of the Comfort Zone. 140.
believing church. It was unrelenting and seemed at times to be very personal. It was certainly unjust. Yet Graham publicly ignored it and refused to defend himself or criticise those who attacked him; he simply continued with the task that God had called him to do; preaching the gospel. I read an article recently where Billy Graham was voted the Christian that church leaders most admired in the twentieth century. Graham never deviated from the task he was called to do and as a result God has vindicated him and lifted him up.

The anointing of Saul as king gives us another insight into how to handle unjust criticism. In 1 Samuel 10:17-27 we read how most of the people accepted him with great enthusiasm but there were some troublemakers who didn’t: But some troublemakers said, "How can this fellow save us?" They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent (1Sam. 10:27). Notice Saul’s reaction; he didn’t try to justify himself but continued to do what God had called him to do. In the next chapter we read how Saul led the Israelites to a great victory over the Ammonites with the result that the people wanted to put the troublemakers to death (1Sam. 11:12). Notice again Saul’s gracious response: But Saul said, "No one shall be put to death today, for this day the LORD has rescued Israel." (1Sam.11:13). God had vindicated Saul; he could afford to be generous.

**Don’t get angry and retaliate.**

I have mentioned this above but it needs repeating because even a godly leader can fall into this trap. Moses certainly did. In Numbers 20:2-12 we read how the people were complaining and unjustly criticizing Moses. Refer verse 4, “Why did you bring the LORD’s community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here?” God instructs Moses to speak to the rock but in frustration and anger Moses strikes the rock, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?” (Num.20:10) We don’t know why Moses had this lapse of disobedience and became angry with the people but we can understand it. Their constant complaining and criticism must have been very difficult to cope with; especially when we consider that they should have been in the Promised Land enjoying its delights by then. It was the people’s lack of faith that resulted in their predicament but they choose to blame Moses rather than accepting responsibility for their actions.

It is likely that physical tiredness was a contributing factor to Moses’ emotional outburst. When we get tired it can distort our perspective and we can make decisions and take steps that we wouldn’t have done had we been physically and emotional fresh. The Law called for a Sabbath day of rest and this is a good principle for us who live under the New Covenant. It helps us to cope with criticism better. Let me also add that it is good advice not to make a major decision when you are feeling sick or very tired. Both of these factors can distort your judgment and faith.

**Pray and expect the Holy Spirit to change the situation.**

Prayer is a wonderful tool that allows God to bring change into a situation. Pray for those who criticise you. You may be surprised what God will do.

4.6 Make sure your leaders are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Moses’ restructuring of Israel as suggested by Jethro was very successful and enabled the people to move forward towards the Promised Land. However, we note in Numbers 11 that the constant complaining of the people was becoming too much for Moses and he said to God, “I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now--if I have found favor in your eyes--and do not let me face my own ruin.” (Num.11:14-15)

God’s response is interesting, The LORD said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you
will not have to carry it alone. (Num.11:16-17) Later in verse 25 we read that “When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again.

This tells me that while it is necessary to have an organisational structure which will facilitate growth and while it is crucial to have godly, capable leaders as part of your team, it is important that these leaders are filled with the Holy Spirit, for without this, you will find that it will make your task harder and impede the growth of the church.

In Acts 6:2-3 we see this principle being put into practice by the apostles when they proposed that the church appoint seven men to look after the daily distribution of the food, So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them. Note the requirement that they be full of the Spirit; that is, they were to be men who could operate powerfully in the gifts of the Spirit.

I like to start any church business meeting with a time of prayer and worship rather than a short opening prayer for this emphasises the spiritual dimension of what we are doing. We are not simply making business type decisions but we are trying to discover the will of God in the situation. This is especially relevant for churches, such as Baptist and Evangelical Friends, who operate under the "congregational government" model. It is important to stress that these churches are not meant to operate under a democratic system where anyone has the right to say what they think. The church is not democratic but theocratic and Christocratic; that is, it is governed by God and Christ. The congregational model is based on the biblical principle that every believer has the mind of Christ and therefore the church, when it comes together, can determine what God is saying. The purpose of the church meeting is to discover the mind of Christ rather than letting anyone say what they want to say.
Starting a business type meeting with an extended time of worship and prayer helps us to appreciate this principle.
Chapter 5.
Successfully Introducing Change.

5.1 The leader must effect change.

I mentioned earlier that a friend of mine described leadership as: “The essential role of leaders is to take people to a new and better place”. In order to do this he must be able to effect change at the appropriate time in the appropriate way. This ability to effect change is what distinguishes a leader from a manager. A manager can keep a program running in an efficient manner and may even be able to make it more efficient but he is keeping it moving in the same direction. Leaders are able to effect change at the appropriate time and in a beneficial way, so that the organization heads in a different direction; one which is advantageous and appropriate for the circumstances.

Churches and other religious organizations are not exempt from this principle and they must be led by people with leadership ability and not just managerial ability if they are to survive and grow in the long term. All organizations must change from time to time; I do not know of any exceptions. Before the introduction of computers every office had at least one typewriter while the larger organisations had a whole room of typewriters full of typists producing typewritten documents. Typewriters do not exist in the modern world and have been replaced by computers with the result that companies that manufactured and sold typewriters had to change or cease to exist. Science tells us that the dinosaurs didn’t adapt to the changing conditions in the world around them and hence they became extinct. The same future faces any organization which refuses to change.

5.2 Change the methods but not the message.

Let me make it clear from the outset that I am not advocating that we change the message of the bible so that it becomes more acceptable to modern man. No, the teaching of Jesus and the apostles is as relevant now as it was in the first century and it doesn’t change. What does change are the methods we use to communicate that message. The type of music we use, the style of language that we employ, where and when we meet for worship and how we dress are some of the more basic issues that must be continually changing so that the church can effectively communicate the gospel in a relevant way.

It is interesting to note that when the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to write the books of the New Testament, they choose Koine (Common) Greek rather than the more polished intellectual Classical Greek. Koine Greek was the language of the masses and so the early church chose to present the Gospel in a culturally relevant way right from the beginning. They could have chosen to write in Hebrew arguing that this was the language that God used to give Israel the Ten Commandments and therefore it was a holy language. They could have even chosen to use Classical Greek on the basis that it was more sophisticated and therefore a more suitable vehicle in which to convey profound spiritual truth. But they didn’t; they chose the language of the people. When unbelievers heard the gospel or went to a worship service they were not confronted with something which was culturally different to what they knew in their everyday lives.

I believe that the same principle should apply today. One reason for the growth of the Christian Life Centre (Hillsong) churches in Australia is that they have set out to change their music, their worship, standards of dress and the like so that they are contemporary. The message they preach is the message of the Bible, and this is timeless, but it is presented in a way that is culturally relevant to the community around them.

Unfortunately, some church groups, in their desire to be relevant, change the message first. For example, many in the West find the concept of hell unacceptable and so these churches teach that there is no hell. They explain away the miraculous in the bible in order to make it more acceptable to the rational mind. They appoint practicing homosexual priests as bishops or fail to discipline pastors who have committed adultery. They dismiss the concept that the bible is the infallible Word of God and
is our supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice. They wrongly think that changing the message of the Bible will make them more relevant. A survey of church growth shows that the opposite is true. It is the message of the Bible that is relevant and we deviate from it at our peril.

We need to note that the gospel message has always been at odds with a worldly culture and we shouldn’t change our message so that people will accept us more readily. However, we must change the methods that we use to present the gospel so that they do not become the stumbling block. Any stumbling block should come from the gospel message of “Christ crucified” rather than our culturally irrelevant methods. Refer 1 Corinthians 1:23-24, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Compare this with 1 Corinthians 10:32-33, Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—32 even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

We need to make every effort to ensure that culturally irrelevant methods and non-biblical behaviour do not have a negative impact of the growth of the church.

5.3 Why we must change.

There are three main reasons why churches need to change;

- The area around them changes,
- Something is negative within the church,
- Everything is going well but changes have to be made to ensure that growth continues.

Let us look at each of these points in more detail.

- Firstly, the church needs to be relevant to its community but if the community changes then the church needs to change along with it. For example, a church in an intellectual executive area should be different to one in a poor ethnic district and if the area changes from one to the other then the church must change along with it. The methods it employs in a poor ethnic area should be different to those that it would use in a wealthy executive type area.

Sometimes a whole country will change. My father shared with me once that during the 1920s to 1930s respectable people would attend church on a Sunday evening in Australia even if they were not born again. This provided evangelical churches with the opportunity to preach the gospel to a large number of unsaved people; something which resulted in many conversions. However, during the 1950s to 1960s this changed and unsaved people stopped coming to church on a regular basis. Some put the change down to the impact of World War 2 on people’s thinking while others point to the introduction of television and the convenience of staying home and watching a good movie; especially on a cold winter’s night. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the habits of the community changed, and the church should have changed as well. Unfortunately, many churches didn’t and they continued to hold their regular Sunday evening Gospel services for the outsiders who were no longer coming. Getting churches to change their thinking so that they went out into the community to share with the unbeliever was very difficult for many to accept.

- The leader also needs to effect change because of negative things happening within the church. Maybe some activity in the church is operating in a way that brings disgrace to the church or maybe it is simply ineffective and is tying up huge amounts of manpower and money that should be directed elsewhere. The latter is a real problem with many Western churches which have been established for a while. Attempting to cancel an activity that has been going for many years is sometimes treated as blasphemy but it is often necessary if the church is to move forward and effectively evangelize its community.

- Sometimes change needs to be introduced because everything is going well. This was the situation in Acts 6 where the Twelve had to change their organizational structure by appointing seven men to look after the daily distribution of food. Maybe your local church is growing so quickly that it is difficult to fit all the people into the building at the same time. In this situation the leader must decide
what course of action to take and then influence people to follow him in that decision. He has a
number of choices. He can add another service, extend the building, introduce a second
congregation in another location, or plant a number of daughter churches out of his existing
congregation.

Whatever he decides to do it is a change and he has to effect change. If the leader decides to do
nothing, because he is fearful of what people may say or do or because the problem seems so
large, then the situation will probably get worse. Even if change is required for positive reasons he
must still do something otherwise things will turn around and deteriorate.

Let me give you an illustration of the latter point. I knew a church in a country town in Australia that
was expanding rapidly through conversion growth and it was probably the largest church in its
denomination outside of a major regional city. It had the highest ratio of people attending compared
with the population of its area of any church in its State. It had two services on a Sunday, one in the
morning and one in the evening. The church was full on both occasions with chairs frequently placed
in the aisles and around the sides to accommodate all the people. There was much discussion as to
what to do but finally the church, which was controlled by a form of congregational government, made
a decision to do nothing. Within a few years the church had declined dramatically and was often only
half full.

Why did this happen? There were a number of factors.

- Some people stopped coming if they were running a little late because they knew they wouldn’t be
  able to get a seat without causing a disturbance.
- These people often stopped attending completely because it was easier to stay at home rather than
  hassle to find a seat.
- It lost its urgency to evangelize because the people knew that if they invited their friends they may
  not be able to find a seat together.
- This caused it to lose its excitement about seeing new people saved and added to the church.
- Once it lost its excitement about evangelizing and growing it started to look inwards and be critical
  of others in the church and about the church in general.
- Once this happened its numbers dropped off considerably.

I remember talking to a key lay person in the church a couple years after the decision was made not
to do anything and he was understandably sad that the church was declining. He said that he thought
the problem of dwindling numbers started when they had made that fateful decision not to have another
service or to expand the building. He remarked how they initially put the decline in offerings and
attendance down to other factors, including a drought that was affecting the State at that time, but in
hindsight he realized that it was the decision to do nothing that was the cause of the problem.

5.4 The leader must be open to change.

Growth requires change and the leader must be open to change if the church is going to grow. I like
the saying that says, “Some people die at 30 but they aren’t buried until they are 70”. That is, some
people lose the desire to change when they are 30 and without change there can be no growth. Without
growth there can be no vitality and excitement in life. These people shut themselves off from anything
that would require them to go through change and so they miss out on all that God has for them in the
next phase of their life; they have died even though they are physically still alive.

There is another saying which I have also found to be true, “The revolutionaries become the
reactionaries.” This means that people who were zealous for change when they were young often resist
any change as they get older, especially when it involves changing what they fought for in their youth.
This is something that pastors need to guard against. Music is a good example of this. Pastors can
resist any attempt to introduce contemporary music into the regular worship service even though they
advocated the same thing when they were teenagers.
I love this quote from William A. Hewitt, Chairman of Deere and Co., “To be a leader you must preserve all through your life the attitude of being receptive to new ideas.”\(^{16}\) Make sure that you place yourself in the position to receive new ideas. Exposure yourself to people who are doing great things for God, listen to what they have to say, look at what they are doing, think through what you see, adopt or adapt that which is appropriate.

5.5 People resist change so only change when necessary.

People resist change and they resist it for many reasons. Someone has said that humans are creatures of habit and anything that is different to what they have been accustomed to is therefore resisted. It does not matter whether it is for their good or not, they still resist it. Not only do they oppose it but they will often put themselves through greater change in the process. A friend of mine worked for a company that was about to rearrange the layout of its office but before they started his Manager warned him that some people would leave the company as a result of the changes. My friend expressed doubt that people would do that but shortly after they had finished the alterations some people did leave for that very reason.

People not only resist change because they are creatures of habit but because they are fearful of what the changes may mean for them. Will they be better off or worse? People fear the unknown and this is why it is important for the church leader to explain the benefits of the change and why they are doing it. When the church I attended a few years ago decided to add an additional service in the morning to overcome their crowding problem the leadership spent about three months explaining why they were proposing the second service and what the benefits would be. As a result of this, the transition was very successful. Had they suddenly announced on Sunday that, commencing next week, there would be two morning services, each starting at a different time, and that the people had to decide during the week which one they wanted to attend, I am sure the change would not have been as successful as it was.

However, change usually has a negative dimension to it because people naturally oppose change. This means that the leader has to ensure that he does not initiate change just for the sake of change. Change has to be thought through and must be seen to be beneficial for the church before the leadership implement it. Too much change without any resulting benefits will be detrimental to the church because of the negative dimension that always accompanies it. To quote from William A. Hewitt again, "The quality of leadership you will give will depend on your ability to evaluate new ideas, to separate change for the sake of change from change for the sake of men."\(^{17}\)

Let us assume that there is a program in the church that doesn't seem to be working and the leadership realizes that they must decide what to do about it. They have to consider both the cost of stopping or dramatically changing it and the cost of not doing anything. Sometimes church programs, especially those that have been running for years, may need to be replaced or greatly modified because they have lost their effectiveness and are consuming too much time and energy. Sometimes they prevent a better program being commenced in its place. If a program is stopped some people will be hurt and feel rejected and maybe leave the church even if the situation is handled with the greatest of skill by the leadership. This is often the price we have to pay in order to see positive growth in our churches.

Let me return to that country church that decided not to do anything about its overcrowding problem. The need to change and do something different was absolutely critical if the church was going to continue to grow. However, had they changed and introduced additional services I am sure that a small number of people would have resisted the change and left the church. This is an interesting insight into human nature. They opposed the change but in so doing they put themselves through a greater change; one of having to find a new church.

\(^{16}\) Maxwell, Developing the Leader within You. 51  
\(^{17}\) Maxwell, Developing the Leader within You. 51
Change has to occur but the church leadership needs wisdom to know what to change and what not to change. They also need wisdom to know when to change. Timing may be as important as the change itself.

5.6 People must trust you before they will follow you and accept the change.

To implement change in a volunteer organization like the church, people must trust the leader. They need to know that you are a man of integrity who is not making these changes for personal gain but is doing what he thinks is best for the whole church. They need to know that you love them and are committed to them and have their interest at heart. As we mentioned earlier, “You’ve got to love them before you can lead them.”

I can remember reading an article on church growth years ago which found that many churches didn’t grow until the pastor had been there for five to six years. The thrust of the article was to encourage pastors to stay in their church for a longer time and not to move on too early. My own reasoning as to why these churches started to experience significant growth after that period of time and not before, was that the intervening years gave people an opportunity to get to know the pastor and therefore trust him to make changes.

I believe that it is counterproductive to have pastors changing churches every three years; you need more time than that to gain people’s trust and to see the church grow significantly. I remember meeting a pastor years ago who, during the course of the conversation he had with my wife and myself, said that he would retire in another ten years and felt that he would only pastor another three years. I was staggered by what he said because his plans were to stay in a church no longer than three years. When I thought about it I realised that he was a “manager” type of pastor in that he kept the church going but there was never any real growth in the churches he was at; certainly not the ones that I knew. Maybe the reason he only stayed for three years was that he knew he had nothing to offer the people after that time. Instead of planning to leave he should have set out to develop himself so that he could become a leader who effected change, enabling the church to grow.

I know pastors who have gone to churches with great plans but have become frustrated because the people didn’t get behind their vision. Their problem was two fold.

- Firstly, they misunderstood leadership. Leadership is getting people to follow you; it is not just developing goals and issuing orders.
- Secondly, they didn’t set out to develop trust with their people first. Trust rarely, if ever, happens immediately, it takes time, maybe many years. If a church has had a quick turnover of pastors, with each going to a larger church as soon as the position was offered to him, then it may take many years for them to see that you are committed to them rather than using them as a springboard to a bigger wealthier church.

Trust requires us to develop relationships with people, especially the key leaders. When this happens and people see that you are a person of integrity who loves them, they will trust you and be willing to follow you. Then you can present vision and implement change more easily. The key is to develop those relationships.

5.7 People accept change at different rates.

I learnt from my days in Engineering that when a technological product is launched onto the market its acceptance usually follows a Bell-Curve. The “innovators,” who represent a small percentage of the market, will use it immediately. Shortly after that the “early adopters” will start buying it. These people are more numerous than the innovators but are still a small percentage of the market. After this come the “middle adopters” who comprise the majority of the people, then the “late adopters” and finally the “laggards.” Interestingly, the number of people using the product starts to decline while some of the middle adopters are just beginning to use it. The reason for this is that while the late adopters and laggards have not moved across to it yet, the innovators and early adopters have stopped using it and have moved onto the next advance in technology.
Since the acceptance of a product is based on how people think and how they accept change, we note that some people will adopt a new idea quickly while others take an excessively long time before they accept it. What do we learn from this?

- If you decide to proceed with an idea far too early then people, apart from a very small minority, will reject the idea outright.
- If you wait awhile but are still too early, you risk a split because a large number of people are in favour of the idea but a large number are also opposed.
- However, do not think that you have to have everyone accept the change before you implement it. This would be disastrous, because while you are waiting for the laggards to accept it, the innovators, early and middle adopters, will become so impatient that they are likely to leave the church and go to another one that is seen to be moving forward. Your key leaders usually come from this group and you can't afford to have them leave en masse. If you are continually perceived as resisting change and waiting for everyone to accept the idea, these people will probably not join you at all.

What percentage do you need to be in favour of an idea before you try to introduce change? That depends on how passionate people feel about the change. It is not just a question of how many are in favour of the change but also how many are opposed to the change and how strongly those who are against it feel about it. Often there is a group of people, sometimes very substantial, who have no strong opinion one way or the other, and providing they trust you, they will be happy to go along with what you suggest. You need the top influencers, usually about 20%, to be completely in favour of the change. Then it is a matter of gauging how many are opposed to the idea and trying to ascertain what influence they will have on the group who don’t have a strong view one way or the other. Proceed with the change when you and your key advisors think it is the right time to move.

Remember, some people will always criticize the pastor regardless of what he does, so don’t expect everyone to be behind you and in favour of what you are proposing. The key is to understand who is in favour. If it is the key leadership and most of the committed people, then it is probably the right time to proceed but if many of the committed people still have reservations then you should spent more time explaining and/or modifying the concept. Don’t forget that people need time to own an idea so don’t expect them to make a big decision without proper time to absorb it and accept it.

You know people are behind the change when they are using the words, “we,” “our,” “mine,” rather than “they,” “you,” “them,” etc. For example, let us assume that you decide to extend your building to accommodate the extra crowds. You want people to be saying, “We are going to extend” rather than “They want us to extend.” When people say “we” rather than “they,” or “mine,” rather than “yours,” you know they have owned the change and are ready to move with it.

5.8 People always “vote” one way or another.

I was a Baptist pastor at one stage and so I am familiar with the Congregational model of church government where the church business meeting needs to approve various decisions by taking a formal vote. The Baptist and Friends are examples of this type of government. Other forms of church government take formal votes within their Board meeting but not with the congregation, while others pride themselves in not voting at all.

One thing I have discovered throughout my years in churches with various forms of government is that people will always vote one way or the other. In Baptist/Friends churches they vote with their hands when a formal vote is taken but people also vote in other churches; usually with their feet. By this I mean that if they are not in favour of something, and have no formal meeting in which to express their feelings, they will vote with their feet by not supporting what has been proposed. They simply will not attend. I have heard many pastors in churches which do not take formal votes complain that the people are not behind their vision and plans. They do not understand that people will always vote on their proposals and in this case they have voted with their feet by not supporting what the pastor put forward.
I am not suggesting that churches follow the congregational model for it has many flaws but I am saying that pastors need to understand the principles of effecting change so that when people vote, either in a formal business meeting or with their feet, they will support the pastor’s proposals. My main objection to the congregational model is that it is great in theory, and there certainly is sufficient evidence in the New Testament to support it, but in practice it often degenerates to a form of democracy where everyone thinks that they have a right to say whatever they want. As a consequence, the negative, small minded, fearful people in the church often squash any attempt to go forward. It often is not a case of “listening to the Holy Spirit so we can determine the mind of Christ” but an avenue where people can make sure that they get the church to do what they want. However, I must say that I have been to some large Baptist churches which have gone beyond the “giving everyone the opportunity to say whatever they want on every topic” to a community which seeks the mind of Christ.

The challenge for those who operate under a congregational model is to capture the spirit of the New Testament so that the church doesn’t get bogged down in discussing every detail of business but listens to the Holy Spirit and acts on that. Acts 13:1-3 is a great example of what a church meeting can be. It is obvious that large Baptist churches with memberships in the tens of thousands have gone beyond the model of “giving everyone the opportunity to say whatever they want to say on every topic,” for that is physically impossible when the church is so large. Some have reduced the subjects on which they take a vote to the minimum – usually the “big picture” matters such as the yearly budget, appointment of pastors, and the like - while some only vote during the yearly and half yearly meetings. I have been to church meetings in some large Baptist churches where there was no voting at all; the time was spent in sharing the vision of the church, reports on what was happening, and then an extended time of prayer. We must progress past the thinking which says, “I have a right to have my say on everything which is happening.”

5.9 Don’t vote unless you are sure of the outcome.

This applies specially to churches that have a congregational form of government but the principle also applies to other churches, even those with a “from the top down” form of government. I recommend that you do not bring anything to a vote until you are sure of the outcome. If you have doubts, then you need to communicate more with the people involved until you are confident that you have a solution which is going to be accepted by the vast majority. Failure to do this will only result in a destructive win/lose situation.

We need to be people who are committed to a win/win situation. That is, both parties win as a result of the decision. Unfortunately, voting on a subject tends to produce a win/lose situation for those who sided with the majority vote have won, while those who voted against them, have lost. People do not like losing, especially when it happens on a regular basis. The win/loss situation is likely to produce internal conflict which is never good for a church or any organization.

I believe there are things to learn from this:

- Keep voting to a minimum. Only vote on what is absolutely necessary. The more you vote the more win/lose situations you produce and the more conflict that you are likely to produce.
- If you have to vote, do not do it until you are sure that it will pass with a huge majority, and cause the least harm. I prefer to see voting as a formal way of confirming what we have come to agree. Remember, that some people will always be opposed to you and the laggards will rarely get on board with everyone else, but give people time to own the change.

This principle – don’t vote until you are sure of the outcome - also applies to those churches which do not have congregational government. Remember, people always vote one way or another, so don’t introduce a major change until you know that sufficient people have “voted” in their thinking for the change and will support it. For example, if you are a church which operates with a “from the top down” form of government and you want to relocate and erect a new building complex, then you need to have your people owning the vision and being totally committed to it, otherwise they will not give sacrificially and the results could be disastrous. Later, under “5.11 Practical example of getting people onside,” I
will elaborate on this concept even further and share how a church I attended successfully moved from one morning service to two; each held at a new time.

5.10 A Major key to effecting change: “Get the key influencers to support you first”.

One of the most important keys that I ever learnt about effecting change as a pastor was to get the key influencer onside with you first. I read a book many years ago that helped me understand the reasons behind this. It compared the small church with a tribe and described three positions of which I can only remember two; the tribal chief (king) and the medicine man. The tribal chief (king) is the person who is the leader of the tribe and who expects to have overall control of the tribe. The medicine man is not seen by the tribe as the leader but the one who fixes their problems when something goes wrong.

In the small church the tribal chief is usually the key lay person who has been in the church a long time and is very influential. He usually holds the position of the senior lay person such as “chairman of the board of elders/deacons/monthly meeting,” “Church Secretary” and the like. The pastor in this analogy is seen as the medicine man, the one who looks after them and fixes their problems. Sometimes this arrangement is not openly stated while other times it is. I remember an interview I had with the pastoral committee of a relatively large church, who told me that if I accepted the position as Senior Pastor they wanted me to spend my time ministering in the community while they ran the church. Needless to say, I didn’t accept the position.

Stop and reflect on your own church. Does it have a tribal chief who wields a great deal of influence with the people? Who is this person?

This scenario doesn’t exist in the mega church for it is too big for any one lay person to wield that type of influence. The Senior Pastor of this type of church is seen as both tribal chief and medicine man. Likewise, the tribal chief situation usually doesn’t exist in a church that was started by the present pastor nor is it likely to be there if the pastor has been at the church for a long time; for these situations do not enable a lay person to acquire this influence. This may also be one of the reasons why many large churches didn’t grow until the pastor had been there for five to six years. Not only did his people start to trust him after that time, but this increased level of trust may have coincided with a decrease in the influence of the tribal chief.

One of the advantages of planting a new church is that you do not inherit a Tribal Chief. The longer you stay at the church, the more your influence increases. It is only when you leave that your key lay person can move into the position of Tribal Chief, for he will have the respect of the people while the new pastor has to regain that respect. The situation is compounded if the new pastor leaves within a few years and the Tribal Chief still has his position of leadership.

Sometimes there are very good reasons why the key lay person rises to a position of influence. Some churches have had pastors who have been immature, made silly decisions, or simply not been the person people wanted to follow. The key lay person, on the other hand, has often shown that he is committed to the church and concerned for its well-being with the result that people prefer to follow him.

In the smaller church you ignore this tribal chief/medicine man relationship at your peril. On some occasions you can confront this person and try to become the tribal chief yourself, but if you do, you need to ensure that you have built up sufficient trust with the people so that they will side with you in the ensuing confrontation; rather than with the key lay person. It is usually best to get the tribal chief onside with you so that he starts to suggest your thoughts to others and promotes an agenda that is in keeping with yours.

The key to achieving this is to develop a relationship with him. Meet on a regular basis but let it be informal. Discuss your vision for the future, your thoughts about ministry and listen to what he has to say. Don’t assume that everything you say is the best and everything he says is to further his own power. I am a firm believer that we need to listen to other people’s suggestions because the end product
of a team is usually better than that of one individual. These discussions, when held in an atmosphere of love and trust, give you the opportunity to answer his questions and refine your own vision.

When you are in agreement on a proposed change then it is time to introduce it to the top group of church leaders, such as the deacons, the board, or whatever name your denomination gives to them. If you suggest a change, and the tribal chief is not in favour of it, then your chances of getting the other people behind you are slim. Even if you get them to vote for the change it will do you little good unless they own the change. It is only when they see it as something that “we” are going to do, that it will succeed. If they talk about it as “your” plan then it is highly likely that they will not put their weight behind it.

5.11 Practical example of getting people onside.

I had just finished teaching the above to a group of pastors in Central Africa when one of them stood up and said, “I now see where I went wrong.” He then went on to explain how he tried to introduce Small Groups into his church, which was structured on the congregational government model, but his number one lay person, the tribal chief, was opposed to it. When he brought it to the Elders Meeting, this man influenced them to vote against it. He then brought it to the Church Monthly Business Meeting but this time the whole Elders Board persuaded the church not to proceed with it. Needless to say, it created a negative atmosphere in the church and was counter-productive.

This is a typical example of a pastor not understanding the Tribal Chief phenomenon. The pastor should have spent more time with his top influencer to get him on side and behind the concept, for without this support the outcome was totally predictable. Not only didn’t the pastor get his program approved but his defeat only served to reinforce the power of the Tribal Chief and to make it even more difficult to get anything passed in the future. Some pastors may say, “I don’t have time to wait, I have a vision and it must be implemented immediately for souls are going to hell every day we delay.” Sounds noble but the fact remains that without the support of the Tribal Chief the church will not embrace the vision, it will only delay it further.

Remember, unless people follow you, you are not a leader but simply an individual with great plans.

With the above in mind, let me discuss how the pastor should have proceeded to have the church enthusiastically embrace his vision for Small Groups. Firstly, the Tribal Chief and the church in general must trust you. They must be convinced that you have the interest of the church, and their interest, at heart. Start to meet informally with your key lay person and develop this relationship, for without this your chances of success are slim.

Do your research on small groups and why you think they would be advantageous for your church. Then, during one of your informal meetings with your Tribal Chief, mention that you have been thinking about small groups and why you think they would be positive for the church. Ask him what he thinks. Unless he has been thinking about it himself, it is human nature that he will oppose the idea when it is first presented to him. He may say, “Sounds good for other churches but it would not work here because of XYZ.” Don’t argue but give him a chance to think about the concept. Then do some homework yourself so that you have an answer to his objections.

During your next informal meeting raise the issue of small groups again and share how you had thought about what he said. Mention how you spoke to a pastor in another church about it – assuming you did - and how he thought that it would not be a problem if you did ABC. Discuss it further but don’t push for a commitment until you see that he has started to own the idea. Eventually he will say, or agree, that it is time to introduce small groups into the church.

Once this has happened then it is time for you to plan, with his input, how you will introduce the concept to the next level of leadership, usually the Elders Board or whatever your denomination calls it. This time the introduction of the idea is more formal. You raise it at a meeting and involve the Tribal chief in some way to show the others that he is behind the concept. There are three things you need to do:
INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP

- Share the vision for small groups. Give detail on how they will function, but make sure that you share with them the benefits that small groups will bring the church.
- Give time for people to discuss it and raise objections.
- Answer their objections in an appropriate manner.

Remember, people accept change at different rates so give them some time to digest the idea. I would be surprised if they were all in agreement and ready to approve the concept during the first meeting. If there seems to be some general agreement, then you may mention that you will discuss it further next meeting and then look for approval of the idea. What is more likely is that one or two people are opposed to the vision. In that case arrange to meet these people individually and informally and discuss the issue with them. Don’t try to save time by seeing all the objectors at the same time as they will form a block against you and will not open up and share how they really feel. You must talk with them one by one. Involve the Tribal Chief as you feel appropriate. If people are not opposed to it but are not yet convinced of the benefits, then it may just be a matter of giving them time to think about it and wait to the next meeting. When you sense that everyone is in general agreement and has owned the idea, then look for approval from them to proceed with the implementation of the plan.

Now that you have your key leaders on side it is time to introduce it to the church. Your approach will depend on the way your church is governed. If it has a form of congregational government, where the church body approves these decisions first, then you need to bring it to the Monthly meeting or whatever your denomination calls it. You follow a similar pattern to what you did with the Elders Board. That is, share the vision for small groups, give details on how they will function with an emphasis on the benefits they will bring the church. Give time for people to discuss it and to raise objections. Answer their objections in an appropriate manner. In the case of small groups, I would spend a number of weeks prior to the meeting preaching on how the early church meet together in the Temple as a whole but also met in people’s homes as well. Show them that it is biblical. Help remove any doubts and fears that they may have, so that when it is introduced into the Monthly business meeting it is not something that is totally foreign to them.

Give people time to accept the idea and don’t rush into a vote. If 60% are in favour but 40% are opposed then you do not have unity and it would probably be detrimental to have so many people against the concept. Don’t think that you have to wait until everyone is in total agreement but try to get the highest majority that it possible without hindering the progress. Involve the Tribal Chief and the Elders in the presentation so that everyone knows that they are in favour of it.

If you have a form of church government that doesn’t require you to get approval from the church body before you introduce the concept of small groups, or any other decision, then it is a little easier. However, you still have to get the people onside and have them follow you. I would still preach on the subject. I would share the vision along with the benefits and give them time to accept the change. When I thought that the time was right then I would introduce the change. People are going to have a vote regardless of your form of government. If it is the congregational model then the vote is a formal one that takes place in an authorized meeting. If you have a “from the top down” model with no formal vote anywhere in the system, people will still vote; but this time it will be with their feet or with their criticism.

Let me describe how a church I attended successfully effected the change of moving from one morning service to two. It had a “from the top down” form of leadership structure and had never held a church meeting where people were asked to vote on proposed changes. The leadership decided that the concept of multiple morning services was the best solution to the overcrowding problem. They shared their thinking during church services, explaining the vision and reassuring people that they were not going to rush into a hasty decision. As people raised questions and concerns so the leadership addressed the issues. After a number of months, when it was obvious that the key influencers were on side, they issued a questionnaire to gauge support and to ask people which service they thought would suit them best. After receiving this feedback, a date was selected to make the transition. To further allay fears the leadership decided to make both morning services different for a period of time so that people could attend both before making their final choice. The whole transition went very smoothly and
growth resulted and people voted with their feet to enthusiastically accept the change. They could have rush into the process and make a quick decision but they didn’t; they waited until they were sure that the majority of the people owned the vision and would vote with their feet to attend one of the new service times.

5.12 Use momentum wisely when implementing change.

Anyone who has ever ridden a push bike knows that it is easier to start on a level surface than on a hill and it is easier to pedal up a hill when you are already moving than it is to begin from a standing start at the bottom of the hill. We also know that if we are pushing a trolley, it is easier to have someone place a heavier load on it once we are going, than it is to start from scratch with the heavier load. Momentum makes all the difference.

Churches and their programs have a momentum which we must understand. Remember the church I mentioned earlier which began to grow but came to the point where it could no longer expand because of lack of seating and then started to decline. The problem was that it lost its momentum and therefore found it impossible to recapture the growth it had previously experienced once seats became available again. Once momentum is lost it is very difficult to regain it, far more difficult than to keep it going in the first place.

Make sure that your church starts to grow before you try to increase the pace. Don’t try to do too much at once for, like the trailer with the heavy load, you may not be able to get it going or keep it going with the resources you have. People will get exhausted and give up or lose their freshness and enthusiasm for the task. Don’t try to do too much too quickly, concentrate on a small number of relevant things and do them well. As you begin to move, others will join you and so you will have more resources and be able to expand. Like the trolley analogy, what you could not move with two people you may easily get rolling with five. Again, be careful how many new activities you begin at any one time or how big any new activity is. Make sure that you can get it moving first, without exhausting the pushers, and then expand as more people get behind to push.

If there are too many pushing the trolley compared with the weight on it, some will withdraw because they will feel that they are not needed. The bigger the church, and the more resources you have, the larger the programs you can and should run. Talented people want to be used and if there is no place for them in your church they will often go to a church where there are openings for them.
Chapter 6. 
Principles of Time Management.

6.1 Introduction.

This chapter will discuss how to use your time effectively, for without this skill you will probably not achieve a great deal. It is easy to waste time, not because you are necessarily lazy, but because you are not using it in a productive manner. A leader has many demands upon their time and their effectiveness will often be determined by how smart they are at using time. Everyone has 24 hours in a day; be they the President of the United States or the poorest beggar. We can’t buy more time; we can only use it more productively.

I am assuming for the purposes of this material that you are not lazy. I believe that a pastor who is paid full time by his church should work at least as many hours as his key lay leaders spend in their secular work plus their ministry. Assuming that you are not lazy, the key to greater effectiveness is to work SMARTER rather than HARDER.

Oncken, Jr., and Wass, in their article, Management Time: Who’s Got the Monkey? wrote, “‘Get control over the timing and content of what you do,’ is appropriate advice for managing time.”18 This is sound guidance for anyone wanting to be more competent in managing time. Too many church leaders are pushed around by circumstances and don’t have mastery over how they use their time. Others may appear to have things under control but do not achieve what is important. They are like the man who wanted to get to the top of the wall and was very efficient in climbing the ladder, only to find when he got there that he had placed it against the wrong wall.

I like what Tony Blair wrote about managing time, “one of the keys to doing the job of prime minister or president is to manage your time. Its importance is cardinal. Show me an ineffective leader and I will show you a badly managed schedule. This has nothing to do with the number of hours worked – I came across leaders who worked the most ridiculous hours, eighteen hours a day for frequent stretches of time – but whether time is used properly.”19 What applies to a prime minister or president is also applicable to a pastor or denominational leader.

6.2 Differentiate between the important and the urgent.

The first step in worker smarter is to determine what is important for you? What have you been called to do? What have you been called to do as a parent, spouse, pastor, citizen etc.? There is no end to the demands that are upon you but what is your mission here on earth? What have you been called to do as a parent, spouse, pastor, citizen etc.? There is no end to the demands that are upon you but what is your mission here on earth? What is important as opposed to what is urgent? The “urgent” are the tasks that crowd in upon us and demand our attention. For example, the phone rings and we feel compelled to answer it or someone wants to talk with us even though it may not be at all important. On the other hand, we may say that our children are very important and that we want them to grow up to be successful godly people, but we do not spend the necessary time with them in order for this to happen. We can be too busy doing urgent things, which have little long term impact, that we have little time left to spend on what we know to be really important.

Jesus has set us a fine example in distinguishing between the urgent and the important. Note John 17:4, I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. What a remarkable statement; he did what the Father sent him to do. How could this be true when there were so many people who hadn’t been healed, and so many who still didn’t believe in him? After his ascension he only had 120 followers but yet he was able to say that he had completed the work the Father had given him. There were so many demands on his time, and so many good things that could have distracted

19 Blair, A Journey. 107
him from his mission, but he did what was important rather than what was urgent. In the case of Jesus, he came to accomplish two main tasks. The first was to deal with the problem of sin so that men and women could be forgiven and have new life; the second was to train a group of men to carry the message of his gospel to the ends of the earth.

One way to determine what is important to you is to imagine that you are about to die and your family, some close friends, and maybe some work colleagues have been called to your room to see you for possibly the last time. As your family and friends speak to you what will they say about you? Will they express their love to you that you spent time with them at the crucial stages of their life and helped them through it? Will they thank you for showing them the reality of Jesus by the way you lived? Will all of your children be there or will some be absent because they have rejected you due to the hypocrisy that they saw in your life. A common regret from older parents is that they didn’t spend enough time with their children when they were growing up.

As you lay on the bed you realize that you are about to go to be with the Lord and that on the judgment day you will have to give an account of how you have used your time; what you did and what you didn’t do. Do you know you have done what God has called you to do? Will you hear the “Well done, good and faithful servant” from your heavenly Father? It is said that no one, when they are dying, wished that they had spent more time in the office. This is a sobering truth. So many people spend so much time trying to gain wealth and power only to realize later on that it wasn’t worth it; it wasn’t where they should have placed their priorities.

Let me give you an overall order of priorities. They are:

- God.
- Wife.
- Children.
- Ministry.

For many of us it is difficult to distinguish between God and ministry because we think that we are putting God first when we are working hard doing ministry. This is not necessarily so. Let me give you some illustrations which will hopefully help you to understand the difference.

I know a pastor who had planted a church in East Africa which had grown to a good size. It had reached the point where it was able to pay him a salary so that he could comfortably look after the needs of his family. However, he began to hear the voice of God calling him to leave the church and plant a new church in another area with no base to start with. For those in Australia I need to tell you that there is no free medical care or free education or unemployment benefits in this country; there is nothing. To obey God in this regard would place a heavy financial strain on himself and his wife. He sought advice from people on the national executive of the denomination and they agreed that it was a difficult call but if he was sure that this is what God was saying then he had to be obedient and go. (It was one of the members of this committee who told me this story.) Eventually, he was convinced that this was God and so he moved his whole family to another region and started again. This is putting God first.

Let us now look at putting your wife before ministry. A married pastor has to take care of his wife and develop his relationship with her. It is wrong to ignore her on the basis that he is too busy doing ministry; attending all night prayer meetings, counseling people, and praying for others. Even when he is home, the pastor is sometimes too tired to spend time with his wife and to listen to her as she shares her needs with him. When this happens the wife is likely to resent the church and not be committed to it or to the ministry. I have heard of pastors who claim that their wives are not behind them in the ministry and that they have no enthusiasm for it. This situation not only makes it more difficult to pastor the church but it puts an unnecessary strain on the marriage relationship; sometimes causing it to end in divorce.

One of the things which I am going to suggest in this chapter is that you deliberately allocate time to spend with your wife; have a date, go for a soda and sit and talk, or whatever you both enjoy. Let us assume that you have set aside Tuesday morning at 9:30am to have a date with your wife so that you
can be with each other and enjoy each other’s company. Let us assume that just before you leave you receive a phone call from a church member wanting to see you immediately because of some perceived crisis. My experience suggests that there are very few things which are so important that they can’t wait a couple of hours before you deal with them. Putting your wife before ministry means that you tell this person that you can’t see them straight away because you are occupied but you will be available at 11:30am, or whenever the date with your wife will be over. Maybe you can have a short word of prayer with the person on the phone, offer some very quick counsel, and then go off to spend that valuable time with your wife. Do not cancel the time with your wife so you can meet with this person.

There may be some situations which require your immediate attention. If a child has been hit by a car and has been taken to the hospital and is not expected to live, then this is one of those cases. In that instance I would share the news with my wife and we would probably both go to the hospital immediately. However, in all my years as a pastor, when I have allocated time to be with my wife and with my children, I have never had a situation which couldn’t wait a couple of hours or more before I attended to it. We need to put our wife and children before ministry. If you learn to work smarter you will discover that you can have an effective ministry and still spend good quality time with your wife and children. (The above also applies to a female pastor; she has to develop the relationship with her husband and look after his needs.)

### 6.3 Program the important things into your life first.

I believe that it is crucial to identify the important issues and then program them into your week. If you don’t do this, you will find that they will be pushed to one side and not receive your attention. The problem with the important issues is that they are often not urgent. Having that time with your wife so that you could talk and enjoy each other’s company is not urgent and is likely to be ignored but, if you continue to do this, you may find that your marriage relationship will be in trouble. Tragically, it is often too late at this stage to effectively do anything about it.

Consider the following illustration to highlight the importance of planning the important issues first and then building other things around them.

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly, he picked up a very large and empty glass jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was. The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with an unanimous “yes.” The professor then produced a cup of good coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

“Now” said the professor, as the laughter subsided, “I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things – God, your wife, your family, your health, your favorite passions – things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else – the small stuff. If you put the sand into the jar first,” he continued, “there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your wife out to dinner. There will always be time to clean the house or wash the car. Take care of the golf balls first, the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.”
One of the students raised her hand and asked what the coffee represented. The professor smiled. “I’m glad you asked,” he said. “It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there is always room for a good coffee with a friend.”

This is a brilliant illustration of how we can achieve more if we distinguish between what is important and what is not and give priority to the former. If the professor had poured the sand into the jar first and then the pebbles, he would have found that he didn’t have enough space to fit in all the of the golf balls. He would then have to make a decision as to which of the golf balls to add and which to leave out. Whatever he decided he would not have been able to fit them all into the jar. Some of the important “golf balls” would not have received his attention that week.

What do the “golf balls” represent for you? Maybe:
• Your relationship with God.
• Your relationship with your wife.
• Your relationship with your children.
• Your health.
• Your personal growth and development.

Take time now to list what is important to you as an individual, a spouse, a parent, a pastor etc. What are the important “golf balls” in your life? Do one for your personal life and one for your ministry.

6.4 Plan your standard week first.

Once who have decided what the important “golf balls” are, you then need to allocate time during the week for them. I used an A4 sheet of paper which I divided vertically into seven days and horizontally into three blocks; morning, afternoon and evening. I am aware that there are now many excellent computer programs to enable you to manage your time but very few leaders in the developing countries where I minister have computers. This is why I recommend using an A4 sheet of paper; I know that it works well. Now allocate a day(s) and time for each of the “golf ball” type activities. I know that there will be weeks where this cannot be achieved, such as a week when you have left home for training, but it is crucial to ensure that on a regular week, and this is the norm for most of us, the important things are placed in first. We will look at putting in the “pebbles” and “sand” later on, but at this stage put in the “golf balls;” that is, those important things that should have a priority in your week. This will help ensure that these important tasks receive the attention that they deserve.

When I was pastoring a church I set aside blocks of time each week for the following activities and in this way I was able to give priority to what I thought was important.

• Friday night was set aside as Family night. We didn’t plan any meetings on that night or arrange to see anyone. When we sat down for dinner with the family we turned the telephone answering machine on so that we wouldn’t be distracted by the telephone. We then spent the evening together playing games or other things that we had previously planned and which we knew the children would enjoy.

• We also made every evening meal special. We set the table properly and turned the television off. You can’t have meaningful quality time together if the television is on; even if it is a Christian program. We also turned the telephone off and the answering machine on. (Let me say that this was before mobile phones. Now it would be “turn your mobile phone off.”) The early church survived and grew without having a mobile phone on all the time. Before we ate we would hold hands and I would pray for the food and some other issue. I never prayed for more than 20-25 seconds as children get bored otherwise; you can pack a lot of faith into a short prayer.

After we had finished eating each person had to share two pieces of news; something which happened to them during the day. We had a rule that no one could interrupt while another person was speaking nor could they criticize or make any negative comment about what the person had shared.
People who know our family marvel at how close we are but we laid the foundation for this as the children grew by spending quality time together.

- I took one day a week off from ministry. Initially this was Monday but I latter changed it to Thursday because it was more convenient. Ministry can be so demanding that pastors feel that they have to work every day but this is not good for our health and is counter-productive in the long term. The Bible tells us that we are to only work six days a week.

  I always planned to do something with my wife Carol during the day. We may have gone for a picnic or went out and had a coffee together. Spending this time with my wife developed our relationship and seemed to make everything else easier. Even now we stop around 10:30 am every morning and sit on the back verandah together; drinking cappuccino coffees and talking.

- I spent Monday night every week with leaders, either as a group or as individuals. This enabled me to impart vision to them and to understand where they were as individuals. It helped me to offer them pastoral care when needed and to give them the necessary training and instruction.

- I spent Tuesday morning preparing sermons and Friday morning writing them down in full. I know pastors who are so busy with non-important activities that they often find themselves without a sermon on Saturday night and have to start preparing at ten o’clock that evening. For me as a pastor, sermon preparation is one of the “golf balls” that I put into the jar first.

- Wednesday night was spent training and taking out an Evangelism Explosion team. I consider evangelism to be important and it should be given a priority. If we put the “sand” in the jar first, then we will find that we may not have time for this important task.

These were the important things that I put into my week first. After that I fitted everything else around it. I didn’t have to worry at the end of the week if I had spent sufficient time and energy doing the things which were important; such as time with my wife and family or training church leaders. I knew I had because I had programmed them in first.

I also set out to develop myself once I had completed my theological degree. I remember being advised to do this by a senior pastor of a large church. He related how he had gone to offer counsel to a pastor who was leaving the ministry because of burn out and other related issues. He shared how he had seen his bookshelf and realized that this man hadn’t bought any new books once he had left theological college. In other words, he had stopped growing with the consequence that he had nothing fresh to offer others.

If you live in a developing country, you may not have the money or opportunity to buy books and develop your thinking on certain topics as I did but there are other ways to develop yourself. I know an international bible teacher and conference speaker who told me that he tried to read through the bible once a year. At the beginning of the year he would pick a topic that he wanted to learn more about – for example, “prayer” – and then he would note the verses that dealt with this subject. As he read through he would reflect on these verses and see what new insights he could discover.

### 6.5 Plan your year.

The next step is to program your year and this requires a yearly planner. For without this many of the important things that you should be doing will be squeezed out by the ordinary and the urgent. Look at your goals and now start to allocate time for them. It is possible that when you do this you will discover that you have too many goals for your situation and that you will tire your people if you try to achieve them all. Adjust your goals by deciding which are the most important for your vision and allocate them. Is prayer important? If you think it is then set aside some days of prayer for yourself as an individual and then some for the church. Think of other activities and determine their suitability based on how important they are for your vision/purpose. If you don’t do this, it is very likely that you will never get around to achieving these goals.

I remember being on staff at a Bible School in Europe for six months and the Principal told the students at the beginning of the year that they would visit a famous tourist attraction in the region and would
enjoy it very much. However, no date was ever scheduled and it was always something that we were going to do in the future. Towards the middle of the last term I asked him when we were going to visit the tourist venue, as I knew the students would enjoy it? I am sure you know what the answer was, “We have run out of time, there are no spare days left for this.” All it required was a calendar of events to be agreed upon at the beginning of the school year and for it to have been followed. This person also promised to take me on a tour of significant church history sites in the region but it never eventuated because I could never pin him down to a definite date. If you want important things to happen then you need to spend time developing a yearly church calendar of events.

Spend some time in prayer before you do this so that you can hear any “rhema words” that the Lord may be trying to give you.

6.6 Give yourself sufficient time to get the best.

Let me illustrate what I mean with the following illustration. When I went to pastor a church in a country town in Australia I was invited to join the local Minister’s Fraternal, which I did. I found that others were reluctant to take positions of leadership and so I very quickly became either the Secretary or President for the time I was there. The Fraternal held regular Combined Churches events and would decide, as the time approached, who they would invite to be the guest speaker. The practice was to make this decision a month or two before the event and then the Secretary would issue a formal invitation. Unfortunately, because we left it so late, all the good speakers were usually booked and it became a very time consuming process to find someone who was available on that date. Needless to say, they usually were not the best person for the occasion.

It only took me two events as Secretary to realize that I was spending an enormous amount of unnecessary time trying to find a suitable speaker because of this lack of forward planning. I then ensured that when we started to discuss the nitty-gritty arrangements for this year’s event that we decided on a speaker for next year, booking over a year in advance. The result of this forward planning was that it usually only took me one phone call and a follow up letter to get the best possible speaker rather than the 20 to 30 calls I had to make to get an inferior one. A yearly planner, done sufficiently ahead of time, will enable you to achieve what is important and will give you superior events with less time and hassle. This will then give you more time to spend doing what is important; including time with your wife and family.

This example shows the importance of planning for it minimizes stress and enables you to achieve better results. Remember what I said earlier, “Work SMARTER, not necessarily HARDER.”

6.7 Develop a specific weekly planner.

If you have followed these steps you will now have your Standard Weekly Planner ready and the yearly church planning calendar complete. Now decide when you are going to begin work on each activity. Often you will delegate the oversight of the day to day activities of a special event to someone else but you need to spend time sharing vision with these people and ensuring that their planning is within the boundaries of what you expect.

Now allocate time for them on your Weekly Planner for that week. For example, you may decide to visit the Team Leader for this project on Thursday but spent a few hours on Tuesday planning for this meeting. Write this into your weekly sheet. Now write down other things you must attend to during the week and schedule them to a block within the week. Allow time for the interruptions that you know will always come.

My weekly planning sheet was an A4 sheet of paper which I had divided into seven days, each with three blocks; morning, afternoon and evening. On the back I wrote down everything that I knew I had to do and then gave them a number starting from 1. On the front of the sheet I then allocated these numbers to a block within a day. Now I had a plan for the week which would enable me to work more efficiently and minimize stress.
6.8 Prepare a daily “To Do” list.

You will note that preparing a daily "To Do" list is the last thing that you do. If you do this first you may discover that you are very efficient at getting things done but, sadly, you may not be doing the important things that count. Or to use another analogy, you may put your ladder against a wall and be very efficient at climbing it, only to discover when you get to the top, that you have put it against the wrong wall.

List what you have to do in the day and note any fixed appointments. Then rank them in order of importance with No.1 being the most important. Also allocate how much time you want to spend on each item. For example, “Write letter to Fred” will be something that you will do in one sitting but “Start on training manual for Leadership Conference” may be something which you will only devote two hours to and leave the rest for next week. I know that authors will tell you to write next to each item on your “To Do” list the amount of time you have allocated to it. I must admit that I have never done this but where a task can’t be finished in a short period of time, I have mentally made a note on how much time I want to devote to it. Maybe this is an area where I can improve. The advantage of allocating time to each item is to enable you to be ruthless with time. There is a saying that goes, "The time taken to complete any job will expand to fill the time available." This is very true and something that we need to be aware of.

Once you have prioritized your work, then start on item 1, complete it and then move onto item 2, and so forth down the list. Sometimes you will not finish everything on the list but don’t worry about that. At the end of the day you will prepare a new list for the next day and you may find that your priorities have changed. What was next on the list may have moved down the order and other things may have become more important.

These are skills which can be learnt. I am not an organized person by nature but I have disciplined myself to use time wisely. The main advantage of time management planning for me is that it stops me from becoming unnecessarily stressed; wondering if I am going to get everything done in time or whether I will forget something important. Having my day, week, and year planned reduces stress and enables me to calmly work through what I have to do. The end result is that I achieve more of importance than I otherwise would.

6.9 Don’t assume; communicate and organize.

Once you have done the necessary planning you need to ensure that the various projects will come to fruition. Don’t assume that things will happen without action on your part. During one trip to Africa, I enquired how we were going to travel to the Conference site which was being held outside of the capital city where I was staying. I was told that they were going to use the denominational car and driver to take us there. When the time for departure arrived, the person who was organizing the trip telephoned the denominational office to ask the driver to collect us and drive us to the town. However, he hadn't booked the car ahead of time and someone else was using it and it wasn't available. This person assumed that the car would be available and hadn’t taken the effort to reserve it for the trip.

Leadership requires you to communicate your plans with others so that they know what is going to happen and can ensure that things work smoothly. Don’t assume that people will know what you want. Talk to them, send them emails and expect an answer. Don’t just assume that it will work smoothly simply because you hope it will. You need to take steps to communicate what you want and do sufficient organizing to ensure that it happens. You don’t have to do everything – as I have mentioned several times during this study – but you do have to take responsibility and ensure that things are being planned and organized. This usually requires a good deal of discussion with various people; things don’t happen by themselves.

6.10 Getting maximum benefit from meetings.

Let me now move on and discuss another topic, getting maximum benefit from a business type meeting. Meetings can be either a very valuable tool to ensure that your vision is implemented or a
great waste of time. There are a number of points that you need to bear in mind if they are to become the former.

Prepare for the meeting.

If you are to gain maximum benefit from a meeting you must plan for it. You should ask yourself two questions:

- What is the purpose of this meeting?
- What outcome do I hope to achieve?

When you have developed satisfactory answers to the above, make sure that an agenda is prepared for the meeting which reflects these goals. If you do not have an agenda you may wander aimlessly discussing issues which are not relevant.

It is usually productive to advise people beforehand of the agenda and to give them relevant material to read and think over. If people have to make a submission or give a progress report they should also be informed beforehand to ensure that they come adequately prepared otherwise discussion can go on and on and, even then, a satisfactory conclusion may not be reached.

I experienced this exact scenario some time ago when an African colleague, who was on the National Executive of his denomination, had arranged to meet me after a breakfast/executive meeting he had to attend. The meeting was expected to last for two hours but at the end of that time the meeting was nowhere near finished. He then excused himself and came to tell me that he would be at least another hour or maybe two. Three hours later, the meeting came to an end and we were able to talk. He apologized for the length of the meeting and told me that there was a great deal of new business that people had not been advised of beforehand. As a result of this it took them a long time to think through the issues. Unfortunately, this is what happens when people are not given prior notice so that they can think about the issues and get all the necessary facts before they have to make a decision.

If possible have an item on the agenda that looks forward and talks about vision. Too many meetings only deal with the “day to day” decisions and leave the aspect of vision off the agenda. If you raise the latter without calling on people to make a decision immediately, you give them the opportunity to digest what you are saying; enabling them to own the decision by the time you want to do something about it.

Keep a record of what was decided and who is responsible for it.

Ensure that a succinct record of the meeting is kept; especially note all decisions that have been reached. This document is usually referred to as “the minutes.” Once you have reached a decision do not proceed to the next item of business until you have given someone in the meeting the responsibility to ensure that the decision is carried out. Also give them a time frame. Always have an “Action by and Date” column in the minutes or put it immediately after the record of the discussion. For example, if you have decided to build a small project then the “Action by and Date” column should have something like, “Joseph Blow to get three quotes by next meeting.” My experience has shown that unless someone is allocated to take responsibility for the decision nothing is likely to get done.

This is probably the single most important piece of advice I can give concerning “getting the maximum benefit from meetings.” I can remember being assigned to a church after I had finished my theological training and reading the minutes of the Church Board meetings to get an idea of what was happening. I noted that at the beginning of the previous year they had agreed to make certain minor structural changes to the building but no one was given the responsibility to implement them. When I read the minutes of the following Board meeting I discovered that the matter was raised again under “Business Arising” and that everyone felt that the changes were necessary. The same happened in the next meeting and the next and the next. If I remember correctly, it took over six months to make these relatively minor changes. Had someone been assigned the responsibility of carrying out the changes and given a time frame in which to do it, it would have been done very quickly. No one likes to be asked
at the next meeting why they haven’t done something unless there is a good reason for inaction. The prospect of being embarrassed in this way often causes people to do what they had been asked to do.

I saw a poster of a hippopotamus with his mouth wide open which read, “When all is said and done, more is always said than done.” This is unfortunately true, especially of meetings, but if you plan ahead and ensure that someone takes responsibility to implement the decisions that have been made, you will see more done than you would have otherwise experienced.

**Run a successful meeting.**

As a chairperson it is your responsibility to guide the meeting to a successful conclusion without letting it wander aimlessly. Earlier on in this study we discussed how a church can attract successful people. You may recall that I wrote, “However, rich people are usually successful because they have natural ability along with self-discipline, and a good positive attitude. What they are looking for is a pastor whom they can respect. They want a pastor who has developed his natural ability, who has a spiritual anointing on his life, and who is self-disciplined with a good positive attitude. They become dissatisfied with pastors who are incompetent and will look elsewhere.” Running a successful meeting that doesn’t wander all over the place and waste people’s time will help keep successful people in your church.

**6.11 Concluding statement.**

Consider the following saying from an anonymous author. It sums up leadership well:

- **Bad leaders:** People say they hate them.
- **Good leaders:** People say they love them.
- **Great leaders:** People say, “We did it ourselves.”

Being called by God to be a leader within the Body of Christ is a great privilege. God bless you as you set out to be the leader that God has called you to be.
Appendix
Conflict Resolution

This appendix is a direct “copy and paste” of chapter 9 from Developing Your Gift of Leadership. I thought it advantageous to paste it here so that you can peruse it now.

1 Introduction.

This chapter will deal with resolving conflict between people in the church who are committed to the life and ministry of the church but who hold different ideas concerning a certain issue. Sometimes, the conflict is between the pastor and another leader or between two people or groups of people in the church. I will not be discussing how to handle criticism from those who are not committed to the life and ministry of the church and who are continually critical of it. I dealt with that subject in Principles of Leadership and noted that there is little that the pastor can do except pray that God will change these people. Spending a great deal of time with them, hoping that they will stop being critical, is generally ineffective or even counterproductive. Conflict resolution, on the other hand, involves people who are committed to the life of the church but who have a serious difference of opinion which is detrimental to the church.

Do not think that conflict is always negative. Conflict can often be a positive thing because it causes us to look at something from a different perspective. The dialogue that follows often results in a better outcome for both parties. It forces us to re-evaluate what we have done.

2 Developing win/win outcomes is important.

Before I commence to discuss "Conflict Resolution" in more detail, allow me to lay a foundation by reminding you of some basic building blocks that we discussed in Principles of Leadership. They are:

- Your people must trust you and know that you love them. If you are to be successful as a mediator in a dispute between two people or groups within your church, then the people have to trust you and know that you have their best interests at heart. The same applies when you are in conflict with others - they need to trust you before they will make changes and compromise their position.

- We must understand how to effect change; especially if people are in conflict with our ideas. I spent a chapter discussing this in Principles of Leadership and I will not try to summarise it here but the concepts are important to grasp.

- We must be committed to achieving win/win situations. This is crucial in any attempt to resolve conflict. Allow me to restate what I wrote on the topic:

  The concept of working towards a win/win solution is crucial if we are to follow the example of Jesus and operate on the principle of “leadership by serving.” By win/win I mean that you as the leader benefit from the decision and the people whom you lead also benefit; both parties win. A win/win decision benefits both groups. In Philippians 2:1-14 Paul encourages the church at Philippi to follow the example of Jesus who: “made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.” Verse 4 shows that Paul is very committed to the principle of win/win: Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. He tells his readers that they should look after their own interests but they should also be committed to the well-being of the other person; this is win/win, with each party benefiting.

Stephen Covey, in his best-selling book, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, states that one of the habits of highly effective people is to think win/win. This principle is as applicable to the CEO of a large organization as it is to a husband or father. No one likes to lose as a
result of a decision made by others; it only produces resentment and ongoing negative consequences.

Another combination is the Win/Lose situation. Covey writes, “In leadership style, Win/Lose is the authoritarian approach: ‘I get my way; you don’t get yours.’ Win/Lose people are prone to use position, power, credentials, possessions or personality to get their way.” The tragedy is that most people have been exposed to this way of thinking all their life. Leaders who operate on the Win/Lose scenario often find that those under them lack motivation and do not achieve great results. No one likes to lose all the time. People who are under a win/lose style of leadership are not empowered to achieve more than they otherwise would have done. Productivity goes down as a result of this and the end result isn’t what it could have been if the leader had operated on a Win/Win principle. People often leave and go elsewhere when the leader above them operates on Win/Lose.

Conflict resolution is rarely solved in a volunteer organization like the church by adopting a win/lose approach; that is, ”You do what I tell you to do; whether you like it or not.”

3 Summary of the “Five Steps in Conflict Resolution.”

During one of my trips to the Democratic Republic of Congo I remember looking at a poster which outlined steps to be followed in order to achieve conflict resolution. It had been issued by one of the United Nations organisations and I was impressed by its content. When I started to write this chapter I commenced an internet search for the above document but wasn't able to uncover it but I did discover another chart which had similar steps. They are:

- Be willing to fix the problem.
- Say what the problem is for you.
- Listen to what the problem is for them.
- Attack the problem not the person.
- Look for answers so that everyone gets what they need.

Let me refer back to an illustration I used in Principles of Leadership to highlight the value of working towards a win/win solution.

I remember an incident that happened in the Bible School my wife and I attended over 30 years ago that vividly illustrated the benefit of the win/win situation. One of the staff members was setting up the tape recorder and PA system just in front of where I was sitting, when a student from a non-English speaking country wanted to plug his tape recorder in so that he could record the lectures and go over them in his free time. From where I was sitting I thought that was a physical impossibility and that she would tell the student immediately that it could not be done. She did not do that, rather she said, “What would you like me to do?” He made a suggestion which solved his problem without jeopardising what she was doing. It was the perfect win/win situation. She achieved what she wanted and he achieved what he wanted; something which contributed to harmonious relationships within the Bible School.

Let’s examine these ”Five Steps” one at a time:

- The first thing to notice is that the staff member had a win/win attitude which meant that she was willing to fix the problem. She didn't have a closed mind which said, ”I am a staff member and you are only a student, therefore you will do what I want. I am not going to waste my time trying to make you happy.” It would have been very easy for her to take that approach but that would not have contributed to the godly environment that existed within the school - win/lose situations rarely do.

---

20 Covey, 7 Habits. 207
21 Conflict Resolution Network. Sydney, Australia. www.crnhq.org
I remember her telling the student what she needed to do and why she had to do it. He, and everyone nearby, was in no doubt as to what she had to do and why the solution to the problem was not immediately obvious. She did follow step 2: "Say what the problem is for you."

The foreign student, who was from an Arabic speaking Muslim country, explained why he wanted to record the lessons - his English was poor and he needed to listen to the lecture again and again during his free time; hoping he would eventually understand what had been taught. Without the tape he would have failed the course. He explained his dilemma and she certainly did follow step 3: "Listen to what the problem is for them."

Neither the staff member nor the student attacked each other. They didn't resort to insults, name calling or respond with personal criticism of any kind (Step 4).

The staff member looked for answers by asking the student, "What would you like me to do to?" He made a suggestion which solved the problem and enabled them both to achieve what they needed. It was a true win/win situation. Both of them followed step 5: "Look for answers so that everyone gets what they need."

I have to admit that sometimes it is better to reverse steps 2 and 3; that is, try to understand what the other person's problem is before you try to explain the problem from your perspective. It can be wise to start with the principle of "Seek first to understand and then be understood." People may be more open to hear our side of the problem if they feel that we have really listened and understood their side first.

4 Further elaboration of the “Five Steps in Conflict Resolution”

Consider the following:

- **Be willing to fix the problem.** This is not always easy. Sometimes it requires a great deal of energy; energy which we may feel that we don't have; "I have had enough! Why don't they just do what I want?" We can sometimes offer excuses as to why we are unwilling to look for a solution, and some of them may have considerable validity, but we must be willing to fix the problem, otherwise it may become worse.

- **Say what the problem is for you.** I find it helpful to write down the problem as this helps to bring clarity to my thinking. Writing something down helps us to be more precise in our thinking.

I also find it helpful to make sure that both sides discuss what their underlying needs are rather than simply discussing what they want. For example, let us assume that two people are in the kitchen and both want an orange but only one is available. Each side may concentrate on the solution of obtaining the orange and feel it necessary to settle on a compromise; each person getting a half. Let's assume that one person takes his or her half of the orange to the bench and starts to squeeze the juice into a cup so that they can have a drink. The other person takes their half and begins to grate the rind of the orange to flavour the cake they are making. Each person had to compromise and as a result the solution wasn't totally satisfactory for either side. Had they discussed their needs first, the outcome would have been totally different and each person would have had the equivalent of a full orange. Discussing our needs can help us to arrive at a win/win situation more easily.

Let me go back to the incident in the Bible School where both parties wanted to connect their tape recorders so that they could record the session. Let's assume that it was physically impossible for more than one tape recorder to be connected. When both parties understood clearly what each other's needs were, they may have been able to arrive at another solution which was satisfactory for both. Maybe, the staff member could tell the student that it was crucial for her to connect her tape recorder but if he wanted to take his blank tape to the office after the lecture, one of the office staff would arrange to run a copy for him from their duplicating machine. Understanding each other's needs is very important for successful conflict resolution.

- **Listen to what the problem is for them.** This requires us to really listen and not to assume that we know what they are going to say. Too often we hear the beginning of what a person is saying and then jump to a certain conclusion because others who started with this introduction finished with
a certain viewpoint. We must not do this. Don't jump to conclusions based on what others have said.

It is often helpful to repeat the problem back to the other person using different words. For example, "If I understand you correctly, you are saying 'such and such.'" This helps you to know what the problem is and it helps them to articulate more clearly what their problem really is. People can feel vague about a problem and be upset by it without really understand what it is that is causing them to be upset. Listening and defining the problem from their point of view is essential if you are going to find a solution. It is important that we not only understand the problem but that the other person feels that we understand. Until they feel that you understand you will be facing a difficult task. Remember the principle: Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

- **Attack the problem not the person.** This is very important. It is very difficult to find a solution if either party feel that they are being belittled or treated as irrelevant. Feelings are so important. We can attack people in ways which may not be intentional but are, nevertheless, just as insulting. For example, "Anyone who believes the bible can't hold to that view. That is the problem; you don't respect the word of God." It is highly possible that the view the other person is expressing can be consistent with a high view of Scripture - it may just be different to what you have previously believed. There are other emotive words, such as "always" and "never," which should be avoided. For example, "You never help in setting up the room for the meeting!" Maybe there was an occasion when the person did happen to arrive early and help set up. What often happens is that the argument then shifts away from the problem and centres on the one time this person did get involved. The discussion has to move away from this emotional argument and move back to the problem as it was agreed upon.

Also avoid using the word, "You" as this tends to be more confrontation. Try using "I" instead; "I feel that ..."

- **Look for answers so that everyone gets what they need.** This often requires creative thinking on the part of both parties and a willingness to explore various possibilities.

Rehoboam is an example of someone who didn't follow the five steps to conflict resolution. The outcome was disastrous; the kingdom became divided with ten tribes following Jeroboam and only two remaining with Rehoboam. As we read the story in 1 Kings 12:1-16 we note that Rehoboam may have followed step 1 and seems to have been willing to fix the problem: Rehoboam answered, "Go away for three days and then come back to me." So the people went away. 6 Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked (1 Kings 12:5-6).

Unfortunately, Rehoboam listened to the wrong advisors and refused to "look for an answer so that everyone gets what they need." He made it very clear that he was not interested in conflict resolution but only in a blind obedience to his will regardless of the pain it inflicted on those who were following him. He was after a win/lose situation; I win but you lose.

The results were disastrous for everyone concerned; it was a lose/lose outcome. Rehoboam lost because the ten tribes rebelled and established Jeroboam as their king (1 Kings 12:20). It was also a "lose" for the ten northern tribes because they separated themselves from the blessings associated with the worship of God in Jerusalem and established two golden calves at Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:28-30). The end result of this distortion of the faith was that the northern tribes were eventually destroyed in B.C. 721 and taken into captivity never to return.

The elders initially gave Rehoboam wise advice: They replied, "If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants" (1 Kings 12:7). This was a good recommendation and reflects the leadership style of Jesus - leadership by serving (Refer Mark 10:41). Unfortunately, the king wasn't willing to listen or find a win/win resolution.
I personally believe that the advice of the elders is applicable to secular governments today. People want to follow a President or Prime Minister who is committed to serving the people for the common good of the country. When they have such a leader they will gladly follow him or her. They do not respect a leader whom they perceive to be in office primarily to increase his or her own wealth and power. My experience in various countries in Africa, as well as Australia, tells me that the above advice of the elders is applicable to all generations and to all cultures - it is definitely applicable to church leaders.

I know that the outcome of the Rehoboam incident was to fulfil the word of the Lord given to Jeroboam by Ahijah the prophet in 1 Kings 11:29-33 but it is interesting to note that it came to pass because Rehoboam didn't follow the “five steps to conflict resolution.”

Timing is also another critical factor in resolving conflict. Some minor problems will disappear by themselves if we do nothing about them whereas other conflicts need to be dealt with immediately otherwise they will escalate. Some problems can be so imposing that an extended period of time may be needed before both parties are willing to find a solution. In the case of a long standing problem within a church, the people involved may need time to develop trust in the pastor before they are willing to follow him and look for a resolution. In the case of Rehoboam it is interesting to note that he asked for three days to seek advice. The tragedy is that he didn't come back to the ten tribes after that period and look for ways to work towards a win/win solution.

5 Practical illustration of conflict resolution

Let me share a personal incident to illustrate the above five steps.

When I graduated from Theological College I was assigned to pastor a Baptist church in a rural town in the State. It had been in existence for 12 years prior to my arrival but had never been able to grow to the point where it was financially self-sufficient or to become a recognized Baptist church. It was formally a Baptist fellowship; a situation which is meant to be temporary until the body of believers, who comprise the fellowship, can appoint leadership, adopt a constitution which is acceptable to the Baptist Churches of NSW, and generally be able to conduct themselves as a Baptist Church. The problem centred on adopting a constitution that was acceptable to the Baptist denomination; namely that membership is restricted to those who have been born again and baptised as believers. In other words, the church is the gathered community of believers who have confessed their faith by water baptism and are committed to their Lord and to each other.

However, a number of key people in the church had come from evangelical infant baptism churches and didn't see the need to be baptised "again;" as they put it. I remember one lady sharing how she felt that to be baptized again would be adding a "work" to her salvation and denying the full sufficiency of faith in Christ to save her. "It would be faith plus works" she said, and then she paraphrased Galatians 3:1-4 to press home her point; replacing "the Law" with baptism. She was convinced that if she allowed herself to be baptised it would show that she no longer believed in salvation by "faith alone" but by faith and the "good work of baptism."

I believe that the New Testament teaches that people are to be baptised at the beginning of their Christian life and not decades later. However, I have to confess that telling a retired Salvation Army officer that he has to be baptised before he can join a Baptist church when he has served God faithfully for 30 or more years, is not the ideal.

I believe that the New Testament teaches that water baptism is more than a symbol but actually does something within the person being baptised. Romans 6:1-10 ascribes a new victory over sin to the believer when he or she is baptised. However, I was regularly challenged to explain how the late Rev. John Stott, Rector Emeritus of All Souls Anglican church in London and international author and bible teacher - a man for whom I have profound respect - could grow in Christian maturity since he had never been baptised as a believer. This is not an easy question to answer except to say that Paul does refer to baptism in Romans 6 and not to the moment that we believe in Jesus - which is what these people were saying that Paul really meant.
The situation was further complicated by the fact that a number of other people in the church - those who had been baptised as believers - didn't want to proceed to being a full Baptist church if that meant that those who hadn't been baptised as believers were going to be excluded from membership. They were sure that this wasn't showing Christian love to their brothers and sisters in Christ.

However, there were others who were sure that we had an obligation to become a full Baptist church. After all, the Baptist denomination had given the church substantial financial support for many years so that they could pay a pastor and meet their other obligations. They felt, and rightly so, that it was a matter of integrity; the fellowship had taken money from the Baptist denomination knowing that the latter was giving them this support so that they could proceed to grow a Baptist church that was affiliated with the denomination. This required a constitution which stated that members should be born again believers who had subsequently been baptised as believers and, where at all possible, by immersion.

Incidentally, this position is known as "closed membership." "Open membership" is when a church accepts members who have not been baptised. Let me say that Anglican and Catholic churches also practice "closed membership:" you cannot be a member of these churches unless you are baptised. The difference between these churches and the Baptist church is that the latter believes that the person has to personally "repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" before they can be baptised rather than being baptised as an infant; relying on the faith of the parents or of the church. I don't believe that the Baptist position is unreasonable but in countries like Australia or Germany, where there is a State church, or something similar, it does present problems.

So, there is the problem - different groups each holding passionately to their position and each convinced that they are right and that the bible supported their view. This wasn't a recent issue which might disappear if we waited a while - it had been present for 12 years and showed no sign of abating. What did I do?

This first point to note is that I wanted to solve the problem. I also believed that it was a matter of integrity in that the fellowship had applied for and received substantial ongoing financial support for many years so that it could move towards being a fully accredited Baptist church. When the General Superintendent asked me if I would go to this church he told me that I was the "last hope." If the church couldn't become financially self-sufficient after three years then they were going to withdraw support and let the fellowship "sink or swim." Fortunately, the church did grow and we became financially self-sufficient within two years but the issue of being a formal Baptist church still remained unsolved.

I then set out to speak to those who were most affected and who had strong views on the subject; actually, I think I spoke to everyone about the issue. I wanted to know their thoughts on the subject. I wanted to know why they believed what they believed and what they thought was the way forward for the fellowship. I read as much as I could on infant baptism and the relationship between baptism and church membership. I even bought books from the other denominations to discover what they believed concerning baptism. I also remember reading an article on the Church of South India. I arrived at the conclusion that there was no easy way to resolve the issue and that no one had been able to discover a compromise that was in line with New Testament teaching. If we accepted "open membership" it would be contrary to the requirements of the Baptist denomination and different to the teaching of the New Testament. Besides, it would seem strange that a Baptist church, with its emphasis on water baptism, would be the only church in town not to practice "closed membership."

We had to adopt the position of the Baptist denomination that membership was restricted to people who had been born again and had been baptised as believers, preferably by immersion: a position that I still believe is correct. In one sense there was no room for a compromise for the position we had to adopt was very clear. However, we didn't want to create a "church split" because this is usually destructive. Even if we could have achieved a result were 60 percent were in favour and only 40 percent against the move, it would not have been a win/win situation; it would have had negative consequences.
Let me digress to say that the method of baptism – that is, baptism by immersion - had never been an issue and never became an issue. The problem was, "Is Christian baptism only for those who have personally repented of their sin and put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, or is the baptism of a baby both biblical and acceptable when the parents were born again believers?" Interestingly, I have never had anyone who had been baptised as a baby in a Catholic Church object to being baptised as a believer after they had repented and were born again.

My reading and empathetic talking and listening to those concerned, enabled me to work through steps 2, 3, and 4 of the "Five steps" but, and this is a huge "but," this didn't automatically achieve step 5; "provide an answer so that everyone gets what they need."

The answer that we eventually adopted was to accept the requirements of the Baptist denomination - a position which I still feel is correct - but allow the people who were actively involved in the church at that time, but who had been baptised as infants, to attend business meetings and contribute to any discussion. However, we decided to draw the line at voting; only members could vote. To understand this "compromise" one needs to understand that the main concern of the "infant baptism" people was that they feared they would be treated as "second class citizens" for holding a position which they thought was biblically correct. Allowing them to be involved in any formal discussion helped them to feel a part of the church family.

I believe that this arrangement was crucial to achieving a successful outcome. I noted earlier that the final step in conflict resolution is to "Look for answers so that everyone gets what they need." This solution helped the "infant baptism" people to overcome their fear that they would be rejected and treated as second class citizens. Let me say that I could only suggest this arrangement because I had listened to their concerns and was able to ascertain what the real issues were. This is important because the "real issues" may not necessarily be the ones which people are outwardly advocating. Had I tried to force my opinion upon the church without an attempt to "Look for answers so that everyone gets what they need" we would have probably failed; we needed to find a solution which overcame the fears of the various groups. The final outcome was a true win/win solution. Those who felt that the church should adopt a constitution which required that members be baptised as believers had an outcome which they felt was right. Those who believed in infant baptism accepted the outcome because they came to see that they wouldn't be rejected and treated as second class citizens. Finally, those who believed in believer baptism but who didn't want to see the infant baptism people leave the fellowship, were also happy with the final outcome. It really was a win/win situation.

Being a Baptist Fellowship, which operated under the principle of congregation government, we had to hold a business meeting to approve this type of decision. I remember the meeting very clearly. It was a hot Sunday afternoon and everyone seemed to be present. In Principles of Leadership under, "Don't vote unless you are sure of the outcome," I wrote the following:

If you have to vote, do not do it until you are sure that it will pass with a huge majority, and cause the least harm. I prefer to see voting as a formal way of confirming what we have come to agree. Remember, that some people will always be opposed to you and the laggards will rarely get on board with everyone else, but give people time to own the change.

I have to admit that I wasn't sure what the outcome would be as I chaired the meeting but the time was right. We had to do it; it was "now or never." The time for talking about the issue and praying about the issue had past, now it was time for a vote. I remember raising the motion and giving a summary as to why I felt it was important to proceed to officially become a Baptist Church and to accept the constitution which called for members to be born again believers who had subsequently been baptised as believers. I then opened the meeting for discussion. As you can imagine there was a great deal of talk and there was no evidence that anyone had changed their mind and that the motion would be passed. All seemed lost. After a while, when we were going over the same ground again, I called for a vote and, to my surprise and great relief, it was passed unanimously. Then, on 17 September 1984 at the 116th Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union of NSW, the church was officially recognised and accepted as part of the Baptist Churches of NSW.
Before moving on let me draw your attention to other points.

- I believe that the motion was successful because the people had come to trust me and knew that I was committed to them. After the initial assignment of three years my wife and I agreed to continue at the church as (senior) pastors; no previous pastor had stayed longer than the three year period. It is not surprising that the breakthrough came in my fourth year. People need time to trust their pastor; especially if there has been a succession of short term ministries before him.

It is appropriate for me to mention again that short term ministries of one, two, or even three years are rarely effective. In *Turning the Tide* the authors discovered that the average church didn't have a bias towards growth until the pastor has been in that church for five or more years. I firmly believe that denominations which have a policy of rotating pastors after they have been in a church for two or three years need to seriously reconsider their practice. Experience shows, either in the UK or the USA, that this is usually detrimental to growth.

- Let me discuss step 4 again, "Attack the problem not the person". As a result of my research into infant baptism, especially books written by paedo-baptist (infant-baptism) authors, I am more convinced than ever that the covenant of grace doctrine for infant baptism - that practiced by evangelical Anglican and Presbyterian churches - is based on flawed reasoning and is not in accordance with apostolic teaching and practice.

However, I fully respect people who believe that it does. Billy Graham wasn't raised in a Baptist church but became Baptist by conviction and was for many years a member of First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas. However, his wife Ruth Bell-Graham, who was raised as a Presbyterian, also researched the subject and decided to hold onto her belief in infant baptism. One has to admire the godliness and devotion of Ruth and to see her as being a second class Christian because she genuinely holds to a view which I can't see as being apostolic, would be absurd and unloving. I respect Ruth's decision and admire her as a person.

I am sure that we would never have achieved a resolution to our church membership problem if I had conveyed a feeling of criticism towards those who held to the infant baptism view. Our attitudes, probably more than what we say, are crucial to resolving conflict and achieving a win/win outcome.

Two very interesting things happened after this momentous event. The first was that the church went through a period of sustained growth, mainly from conversions, and, as a result, we extended the church building considerably to accommodate the extra people. All this happened fairly quickly, for the official opening of the extensions to the building was held on Saturday 13 September 1986; two years after the church was accepted by the Baptist Union. The other interesting incident was that the people who had not been baptised as believers became convinced that God was calling them to be baptised. This also happened in a short period of time.

---

22 Beasley- Murray and Wilkinson, *Turning the Tide*. 33
Bibliography


