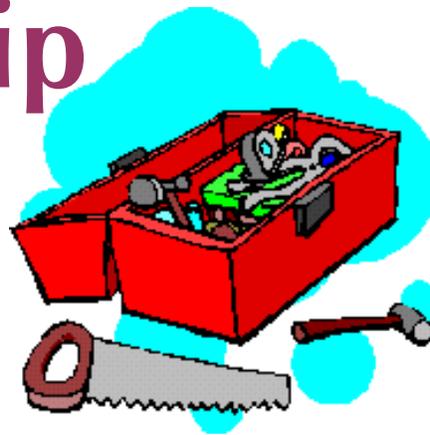


Leadership Toolkit



The pages in this toolkit are designed to be used as an easy reference to a number of key leadership tools. The toolkit can also be used as a ten stage training package.

Session	Session Title	Page	Page Title
1	Leadership Character	2	Why is Leadership vital?
		3 & 4	Leadership Character
2	Integrity and Trust	5	Practising Integrity
		6	Building Trust
3	Developing Vision	7 & 8	Visionary Leadership
4	Sharing Vision	9	Sharing Vision
		10	Writing Down the Vision
		11	Presenting the Vision
		12	Media Tips
5	Building Teams	13	Building Teams
		14	Delegation
		15	Handling Conflict
		16 & 17	Team Health Check
6	Introducing Change	18 & 19	Introducing Change
7	Developing Ministry	20	The Step Plan
		21	Coaching and Mentoring
8	Leadership Styles	22 & 23	Leadership Style Indicator
9	Building Prayer	24	Intercession for Leaders
		25	Encouraging Prayer
10	Spiritual Leadership	26 & 27	Shield of Victory

The pack also includes a copy of “Gifts and Services” – a sheet to help Christians discover their gifts. It can be used as part of Session 7.



Why is Leadership vital?

The term leadership could be used to refer to everything that leaders do, including preaching, pastoral work, evangelism, administration etc. Our definition of leadership is narrower, referring to the process of seeking out God's vision and purpose for a church, or for individuals; sharing that vision, and enabling and encouraging a church to own and reach that vision for themselves. George Barna has been writing on leadership for many years. He writes on the importance of leadership

"After fifteen years of diligent digging into the world around me, I have reached several conclusions about the future of the Christian church in America. The central conclusion is that the American church is dying due to a lack of strong leadership. In this time of unprecedented opportunity and plentiful resources, the church is actually losing influence. The primary reason is the lack of leadership. Nothing is more important than leadership.

Most recently, I have discovered that the current exodus from the church is partially attributable to the flight of the laity who possess the leadership abilities, gifts and experience. These individuals, whom the church so desperately needs, are leaving the Church because they can no longer stomach being part of an alleged movement that lacks strong visionary leadership.

These are people of capacity, people who can make things happen. I have watched with sorrow as they have tried to penetrate the culture of the Church and offer the benefit of their gifts. They have been unable to contribute because their churches are neither led by leaders nor by those who understand leadership.

I have studied modern history to comprehend the dynamics of revolutions, people movements, societal systems and national fortunes. The result is the conviction that there have not been - and are not likely to be - any significant and successful movements, revolutions or other systems in which strong visionary leaders were not at the forefront of those groups, leading the way for change in thought and word and deed. "

Christian Schwarz, in his book "Natural Church Development", based on a study of more than 1000 churches in 32 countries concluded that empowering leadership was one of eight quality characteristics common to healthy churches.

"Leaders of growing churches concentrate on empowering other Christians for ministry. They do not use lay workers as helpers in attaining their own goals and fulfilling their own visions. Rather, they invert the pyramid of authority so that the leader assists Christians to attain the spiritual potential God has for them. These pastors equip, support, motivate and mentor individuals, enabling them to become all that God wants them to be."

Leadership is vital for healthy churches. Leadership is vital for the church to influence the society in which we live. Leadership is vital to encourage church growth. Leadership is vital to enable Christians to grow in ministry. Leadership is vital!

Defining Leadership

For this pack, we define Christian leadership as the discerning and sharing of God's vision for His church, and equipping and enabling the church to reach that vision. This does not mean that preaching, pastoral work, evangelism and administration, are not important. The church needs great communicators to preach God's word. We need pastors with a real heart for those around them and evangelists who can relate to others and bring them to faith in Christ. Many leaders would readily admit that administrators have a vital role within the church, ensuring that good stewardship is exercised, and increasing the impact of the church's mission. As well as all of these, the church certainly needs leaders who can help the church move forwards.

Put another way, our definition of leadership concerns that which is mostly concerned with building the church of tomorrow, rather than maintaining the church of today. This assumes that tomorrow's church will be in some way different from today's church. Where this difference is in line with some kind of intended change, it is likely that some kind of leadership will have been exercised.



Leadership Character

Here we explore seven characteristics of Christian leaders :

- ♦ **Humility in the use of authority and power entrusted to them**
- ♦ **Trustworthiness and integrity**
- ♦ **Willingness to lead out of leadership *gifting* rather than from leadership *position***
- ♦ **A desire to encourage growth and development in others.**
- ♦ **A style of leadership that seeks to love and serve others and God.**
- ♦ **Future vision is earthed in an understanding of God's calling**
- ♦ **An active prayer life.**

Whilst Christian leaders are not the sole practitioners of the first four, and the fifth can be partially found in non-Christian leaders, the final two are likely to be the sole preserve of the Christian leader. It is the combination of the seven, that give a style of leadership that is distinctly Christian. This leadership is in no sense "weak", since the self-awareness and self-giving love required to display these characteristics can only be found in the most mature of personalities. Let's consider each in turn.

Humility in the use of authority and power entrusted to them

Secular leaders often seek to develop their status, power and influence. Position, and the power and status that goes with it is vital - the chairman's large car, privileged parking space, top-floor office with expensive furniture and so on. Such position, power and status is the very opposite of the humility that Jesus modeled. Christian leaders are not immune from such temptation. We need to be able to identify the initial signs of power and status causing improper feelings and actions. This is particularly important in a culture where the pastor or minister may dress differently from everyone else, sit in an honoured position at the front, and occupy a distinct office.

Trustworthiness and integrity

The traditional model of the stipendiary minister as ministry provider yields an organisation able to operate on a low level of trust. People may come to the church, but their involvement with it is limited to carrying out simple tasks. Even 'successful' churches, with many people engaged in ministry, can operate with relatively low levels of trust if they have not allowed people to take responsibility and accountability for the life of the church.

God wants us to operate at a high level of trust - in him, and within the church. God is trustworthy. *'God has said "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid" (Hebrews 13:6)* Our experience of placing our trust in God should increase our capability to trust, and encourage us to build trust within Christian fellowships. However, not only is God himself trustworthy, he chooses to place his trust in us. Tom Marshall writes *'God's trust is real trust. It is a choice He has made, and it is a vulnerability He has accepted.'*

Trustworthy people must live consistent lifestyles. Peter Drucker describes the *"mirror test"*, where leaders make sure that the person they see in the mirror in the morning is the kind of person they want to be, respect and believe in. If there is a lack of consistency between our public and private lives, then sooner or later we will be unable to manage the divide. We read of far too many Christian leaders who have fallen as the truth of their private lives emerges. Many people want to put their leaders on a pedestal and many others enjoy trying to knock them off! Our only remedy is to let the Spirit lead and direct our lives in full measure, to give over to him control of our time, our money and our desires.

Willingness to lead out of leadership gifting and ability rather than from their leadership position

Many leaders covet the power that their position gives them. The enjoyment of wielding influence and making decisions that shapes the lives of others can become an intoxicating drug. This can lead to an improper degree of control, of concentrating authority in the office of leader.

Christian leaders need to develop the necessary personal strength to lead out of their leadership gifting. Since it is may be unlikely that the leader will be the only person in the organisation to have been given the gift of leadership,

Leadership Character (continued)

we need to accept that those gifted with leadership don't have a monopoly on leadership within the organisation. This is particularly likely when we consider that leadership is only one of many attributes considered in selection of candidates for church leadership. As a result, leaders need to actively seek others to adopt leadership roles whenever it is appropriate for them to do so.

A desire to encourage growth and development in others.

Great leaders seek to train their successors, and to do so in such a way that they are able to perform their job even better than they themselves were able to do it. This requires leaders to be able to identify the potential in others, to train and develop the potential of each individual.

One of the hallmarks of such leaders is that they have the maturity to handle diversity and strength in others. Those whom they lead are not people who are weaker carbon copies, but have different and complementary gifts, and are freed to achieve their full potential. David Ogilvy, an Advertising Agency boss said *"If you always hire people who are smaller than you are we shall become a company of dwarfs. If on the other hand, you always hire people who are bigger than you are, we shall become a company of giants."*

A style of leadership that seeks to love and serve others and God.

Servant leadership is at the heart of Christian leadership. Servant leadership is different from servanthood. All Christians are called to be servants, one to another, to follow Jesus' example in washing his disciples' feet, and to love our neighbours as ourselves. Along with that call to servanthood is the need we each have to allow ourselves to receive from Jesus, just as he washed his disciples feet.

Servant leadership goes further to consider the motivation behind our actions as leaders. If personal desire was the sole decision criteria, Jesus would have chosen not to go through the pain and suffering on the cross. In the garden at Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, *'Father if you are willing take this cup from me, yet not my will, but yours, be done.'* (Luke 22:42) The weight of the burden of taking not only our guilt but also our sins themselves, had become too heavy. Even at this point, Jesus could have got up and walked away. Servant leadership will lead us too, to make sacrifices, to put the needs of others above the direction we may prefer for ourselves.

Future vision is earthed in an understanding of God's calling

One of the fundamental tasks of leadership is to ensure that an organisation shares a common vision for its future. However, truly shared vision is vastly different from a leader's personal vision which is then communicated to the organisation. A leader with a charismatic personality may be able to persuade others to follow this vision, but the risk is that the leader is left heading boldly into the future on their own, whilst others simply stand and stare! Thus shared vision becomes the sum of individual visions, expressed in a common way, rather than the lowest common denominator, or only that which all in an organisation have in common. (which may be very little indeed!) A vision which is genuinely shared will weave together common passion, energy and spiritual direction to provide a very significant force within the church.

An active prayer life.

A large part of the instruction that Jesus gave to his disciples was on prayer. They would be grateful for this teaching in the days following the Ascension as Peter and the others struggled to make sense of their situation. Yet, on the day of Pentecost, Peter was ready and able to speak out according to the words the Spirit gave him. The leadership that he provided to the church on that day provides an example of true Spirit led leadership, that can only originate in prayer.

Without praying, we cannot know God's call and direction, and we are left to our human judgement. Without prayer, any future vision put before the church will be solely human desires. If Jesus needed to spend quality time with his Father each day, then so do we.

The Christian Model

In Jesus, we see each of these seven characteristics displayed to perfection. Trying to isolate Jesus' leadership style from the rest of his ministry is a difficult and perhaps pointless task, for true leadership cannot be easily separated from either the leader's personality and character, or from the totality of activities in which he or she engages.

ACTION POINTER : Re-read the Gospels to find the many pointers to these seven characteristics.



Practising Integrity

This is a Bible study with a difference!! This sheet offers you help to work through how you can maintain integrity when confronted with a difficult decision. You should allow at least an hour to work through this - although it could take much longer - it's up to you!! To work through this Bible Study, you will need to use an example which you are either faced with currently or have experienced recently.

Men of Integrity : Daniel
Read through Daniel Chap 1 to Chap 3. We see Daniel and his friends staying with their principles, despite pressure to the contrary - a theme throughout the whole book of Daniel.

First take a moment to think what integrity means. Here, we shall take "behaviour and decisions which are consistently in line with our (Christian) principles" as our working definition of acting with integrity. One of the important elements of this is **consistency** - if we are unpredictable, if our decisions are dependent upon the day of the week, and the way we are feeling, others are unlikely to see us as maintaining integrity.

Phase One - Setting Down Principles.

When confronted with a situation, the first step is to determine what our Christian principles are. This may not be as easy as it sounds, particularly when faced with a difficult decision!! What are your principles that apply to this situation?? **Write them**

down. This is very important - we may think that we know them - setting it down on paper is a real test of whether that clarity is genuine!! Don't be surprised if you find it difficult - most people need some quality thinking time to get really clear on their principles.

The chances are you may need to expand on what you have written. For example, you may have written "love", or even "love for every individual concerned". But perhaps it needs to go deeper to clarify what maintaining love for each individual means. These principles must include all the relevant principles you are applying, not just those that you think are "Christian".

Phase Two - Developing Solutions

Now list your possible solutions. There may be a solution which meets all of the principles. It may even be a good one!! However, the chances are that there is no easy solution that comfortably fits all the principles. Otherwise you would probably not have selected it as an example of a difficult decision. More often we are faced with four or five possibilities, each with their advantages and drawbacks.

Men of Integrity : Peter & John
Acts 3 and 4 tell of Peter and John acting in accordance with their principles by healing the crippled beggar. They needed to justify their actions to the Sanhedrin, and needed to be fully aware of what their principles were.

Phase Three - Biblical Exploration.

The next phase is to work through each principle in turn, understanding it in depth. This is where the Bible Study comes in. Take some time to think of the biblical examples, models and passages that have led you to adopt this principle. List them, and explore how they may be relevant to your situation. The first time you do this will take time, but as you become used to the approach it will speed up! You may struggle to think of relevant biblical models or passages for some of your principles. This does not mean that your principle is wrong. What it does suggest, is being clear why you hold it as a principle!!

Phase Four - Praying into Action.

As you work through each principle, you may become aware of indicated action that the principle points towards. For instance, the principle of "love for each individual" may point you towards explaining your decision one on one with each person affected by it.

Finally, having worked through all your principles, then spend some time in prayer. God is interested in all of our problems - He's told us so!! This does not guarantee that the decision we take will be the right one! But, finally, we need to take the decision, and act accordingly. Explaining the principles behind our decision can sometimes help others accept the solution we have come to, and can support their view of our integrity - they may not agree with the decision, but can appreciate why you have made it.

ACTION POINTER : Work through this process for the decision you have recently taken, or are about to take. This will help you get used to the approach, and more comfortable with it.



Building Trust

The ability to build a trusting and trustworthy organisation is an essential characteristic of great leaders. Organisations that are prepared to redefine and share leadership and responsibility require a high degree of trust. Trust takes time to establish, and seconds to destroy. If trust is abused in a high trust organisation, then the impact can be serious, and people who misuse the system can expect to face significant penalties. Trust needs to be accompanied by accountability.

God wants us to operate at a high level of trust. God is trustworthy. “God has said “Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid” (Hebrews 13:6) We need to learn to trust completely, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.” (Proverbs 3:5) Our experience of placing our trust in God should encourage us to build trust within Christian fellowships.

Trust is about relationships - between God and church members, between individuals within the church, and between church members and its leadership team. To trust requires us to be vulnerable, and to take risks, giving away control of a situation. Building relationships that contain a high degree of trust are likely to require servanthood and humility. Larry Reynolds identifies four major components of such relationships : **Competence**, **Openness**, **Reliability** and **Equity**. Bennis and Townsend have a slightly different set, adding **Caring** to the list.

COMPETENCE : This first component of a high trust relationship is the ability of the other person to meet our expectations, to do the job we are asking them to perform. For example, when we take a flight, we are placing our trust in the pilot, on the basis that his competence has been proved by achieving his pilot’s licence. When we ask someone to lead a house group, we will not be able to trust them fully in this ministry until we feel confident that they have the necessary skills to lead such a group effectively. This underlines the need to ensure that we have matched roles in the church to the gifts and skills that people have, and to develop a proper process for matching people’s skills and gifts to the ministries they perform within the church. It is not whether or not the job will get done well, it will influence the degree of trust within the relationship.

OPENNESS : Openness is the second component. We encourage others to trust us when we are willing to take people into our confidence, and share our views, thoughts and plans with them. For some church leaders, this is a challenge, as we may need to overcome a desire to hold back from sharing our personal needs and feelings. We may also need to assess the degree that true fellowship has been built up within the church - are members willing to share openly and honestly with one another? Openness requires us to talk about things as they are, and in love. *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is Christ.* (Ephesians 4:15) Openness also suggests that we would do well to give encouragement and feedback to one another. Professionally, many church members will be expected to undergo some form of feedback gathering exercise as part of a development review. High trust fellowships can adopt some of these practices to provide encouragement and opportunity for personal development.

RELIABILITY : Reliability and consistency are vital. People will only trust us if they can depend on us to do what we say we will do, that week in, week out. That we will maintain our commitment to a relationship, and not “blow hot and cold.” Note that to maintain trust, we will need to reliably meet the expectations the other person has of the relationship, rather than the things we believe we have committed to. Clarifying these expectations can be important if we are to avoid misunderstanding and a reduction in the trust level. Even simple things like failing to return phone calls or not answering letters can create a perception of unreliability.

EQUITY : It will be virtually impossible to build trust if we lack integrity in our behaviour, if we favour one person over others, or if we lack fairness in our handling of situations. Within the church, how are decisions taken? Do people believe that they are taken fairly, without prejudice, or do some people feel excluded from the decision making process?

CARING : Without a genuine concern for the welfare of members of the church, trust can only be a shallow and task based. Building relationships with a high degree of trust requires us to go deeper, and to care for each other. For the church, this should not be news!

Finally we need to remember that, if others are to place their trust in us, we need to be trustworthy and we need to be willing to place our trust in others. By and large, trust needs to be earned. Warren Bennis describes trust as the emotional glue of all institutions. This prompts the thought that in using glue one cannot avoid potentially sticky situations - trust involves personal risk, but by taking these risks, we move to a deeper level of trust.

The Trust Effect, Larry Reynolds, 1997, Brearley Publishing Limited, Reinventing Leadership, Bennis & Townsend, 1995, Morrow



Visionary Leadership

Probably the single most important tasks facing a leader is to develop an understanding of where the organisation needs to be at some future point. Without a future vision, organisations are destined to live in the past, and ultimately die. *“Where there is no vision, the people perish”* Proverbs 29:18. For the Christian organisation such vision must come from God.

A Process for Developing Vision

This process combines prayer and reflection on our understanding of where God has already been moving. This process will take time - maybe some months to work through fully - don't feel you need to rush! It can either be used by the leader alone, or preferably with a small leadership group, which may be the formal leadership group of the church, or may be a selected group of people with appropriate skills and gifts. At the end of this process you should have an understanding of what you believe God is calling your church or organisation to do and to be.

1. PREPARATORY PRAYER : This first stage helps us to "tune in", spending time with the Lord. Pray that he will show you clearly over the coming weeks what he is calling the church to do and to be.

2. BUILDING BLOCKS :

God speaks to the church in a number of ways: through experience, through the Bible, through words and pictures and in other ways. This process allows us to reflect on what God may have been saying to the church in four different elements. We suggest you take time to reflect on, and pray through each of four questions, and to compile a flip chart to answer each one. This stage of the process could be done as a retreat or a day away either with the leader alone, or with a small team. :

<p>(A) <i>THE PAST</i> - The first flip chart answers the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What has been our previous understanding of the right direction?</i> • <i>What visions, 5 year plans, strategies etc. have been agreed on previously ?</i> <p>Very often churches do not need to start from scratch, but to dust off previously agreed approaches, update them in prayer, seeing whether they are still relevant, and then re-energising people behind the vision.</p>	<p>(B) <i>OUR EXPERIENCE</i> - The second flip chart looks at the breadth of our Christian experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What has God called other churches to?</i> • <i>What does our reading of the Bible have to say about our current situation as a church?</i> • <i>As we read other books, what insights can we gain?</i> <p>Almost certainly His vision for each place will be different, but there may be some commonality! God's leading for a church does need to be sought afresh in each location, but without rejecting out of hand that which has been found to be appropriate elsewhere. The "Alpha" course is a great example of churches reapplying something which has been found to work elsewhere, in very different situations.</p>
<p>(C) <i>PRAYER</i> - the third chart summarises what God has been speaking through the church in recent times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Look through any prayer diaries to see common themes, pictures or words given.</i> • <i>Talk with other members of the church who pray regularly.</i> • <i>Spend some time with others being open to God.</i> <p>After spending time in prayer, write down whatever is on your minds. This may or may not be from God, but there may be a surprising degree of commonality.</p>	<p>(D) <i>CHURCH/COMMUNITY</i> –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reflect on the church and the community which it serves. Try to see it how God sees it -</i> • <i>Where are the needs, the pressure?</i> <p>Taking a look at previous parish assessment & mission audits can be helpful here.</p>

3. PRAYER : Having compiled the four flip charts, spend some more time in prayer, asking God to speak to you through this reflection, and to give you His direction and vision for your church in the coming years.

4. DRAFTING A VISION : Now each member of the group should write down what they feel God is calling the group to. Everyone should write something. Try to keep it to a few sentences and stick to the big ideas. Then share amongst the group.

After each person has shared his/her draft, spend some more time in prayer, asking the Lord to confirm which elements of your discussions are his, and which are human desire. Discuss openly, and move on if you have agreement, otherwise repeat step 3. You may find these checks helpful :-

- ♦ *Is it in line with scriptural teaching?* Does the vision that you have received lead to God being glorified, and His church taking a servant role in meeting the needs of His people?
- ♦ *Is there a consensus in the pictures, scriptures and words of knowledge received?* Spend some time going back over this sheet and identify whether any elements point in an opposite direction. (They may point in a different direction if they are related to meeting a specific need, rather than setting God's agenda for His church.)
- ♦ *Do you, and others with you in the process, feel at peace with the vision in prayer?* This does not mean that you feel comfortable about achieving it - merely that you feel it may be "right"!
- ♦ *Does this fit with where God is already moving?* It may not if this is a new wave of God's Spirit at work, but in many cases it may be a continuation of God's prompting in the wider church.
- ♦ *When shared with other mature Christians in the church, does their prayer confirm it?*

5. SHARING THE VISION : Once you are in agreement, it is time to share and develop the vision with the wider community of faith. Encourage people to think, reflect and pray through the vision. It may be necessary to change it over time as the whole community comes to "own" the vision for itself.

6. ACTION : A vision that does not lead to some kind of action is unlikely to be of much help to the church or to God! Yet, turning a vision into reality can be extremely difficult. As a first step, take more time with a small leadership group and begin to explore ways that the vision might be turned into reality. Many of the later sheets in this pack seek to help this process.



Visionary Leaders in the Bible – two biblical models to develop visionary leadership.

Our first biblical model is Nehemiah, the rebuildler of Jerusalem's walls. Read Nehemiah chapters 1 to 6, and reflect on the characteristics of Nehemiah which help his visionary leadership.

Nehemiah is clearly a man of prayer, and his desire to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem comes out of days spent in prayer (1:4ff) He is dependent upon God, and before asking King Artaxerxes' permission to rebuild the walls, spends time with God in prayer. Nehemiah translates the vision into action, and the walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt in 52 days. The people's commitment to the plan resulted from Nehemiah's ability to communicate the vision to them in a compelling and motivating way. Despite much opposition, the Jews remained committed to the vision, and persevered in rebuilding the walls, whilst half of the team provided protection. (4:16).

Nehemiah's leadership was not simply focused on rebuilding the walls - he also had concern for the people and their well-being. In Chapter 5, he reminds the people of the vision for how they should be living, and how far short they are falling. Nehemiah is personally committed to this, and didn't claim the benefits that were due to him on account of his office (5:14,15)

We move on now to Joseph. Read Genesis 39 to 41 and think through the characteristics that Joseph displays.

Joseph displays a number of the characteristics of visionary leaders. Although his prayer life is not specifically mentioned, 41:38 tells us that the Egyptians perceived the Spirit of God to be upon Joseph.

His accurate interpretation of the dreams, both inside prison, and in front of Pharaoh, clarifies his prophetic gifting as he speaks out what God has told him. (41:16) His appointment as principal minister over Egypt, and the degree to which he was able to prepare the land to withstand the famine are testimony to Joseph's ability to communicate God's plan in a compelling way. That the implications of the vision were to last for fourteen years demonstrates the length of commitment involved in carrying out preparations ahead of the famine. Such long term preparation and planning would require a very practical approach to complement the spiritual and prophetic ability that he had displayed earlier

From these studies of Joseph and Nehemiah we can identify some characteristics of visionary leadership. Visionary leaders are prayerful men and women, who are aware of God's prompting, and able to translate vision into action. They need to be able to communicate the vision to others, and be personally committed to it. They will need to persevere through hardship.



Vision Sharing

Communicating and Developing Vision

Although the vision for a church or organization is usually initially discerned by individual leaders or small leadership groups; it will need to be shared and developed by a much larger group of people if it is to become a reality. This sheet offers some thoughts on how that might be achieved.

Step six of the vision process outlined on the previous sheet is to share and develop this vision with others. This is vital if the church or organisation is to truly “own” the vision for themselves. Robert Warren writes *“The Holy Spirit has been at work in society making it more participative. Therefore people will not own a vision unless they have had a part in shaping it.”* Here are three simple checks on whether the members of your church or organisation have really adopted the vision for themselves :

- ❶ They understand it - and can be heard explaining it to others, simply and correctly.
- ❷ They share it - when talking about it, they use “we” rather than “the vicar/pastor”.
- ❸ They are moving towards it - suggestions and activities are consistent with the vision, rather than pointing in a different direction.

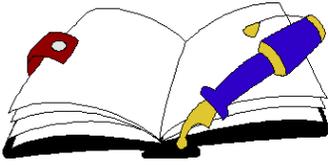
Achieving this level of adoption of vision requires a conscious process of communication and vision development over a period of time. There can be a danger that a vision is simply a statement on a poster on the wall in the minister’s study, developed on some long-gone away day. Clarity of thinking is a prerequisite of clarity of communication. Until you are clear in your own mind what the vision for your church or organisation entails, you cannot hope to be lucid in explaining it to others. Here are some questions to help you think it through in sufficient depth to communicate it to others.

What exactly is the vision? Can you write it down simply and clearly? When shared with someone outside the church, do they understand it? Many visions have a number of themes or elements to them, and it can be helpful to separate these out. Having done this, the clarity of the communication will be improved if the main two or three elements are highlighted, and those parts which are supporting the main elements, or are of secondary importance are identified.

What does achieving the vision mean for people, and for God? If the vision is realised, in what ways is the Kingdom advanced? Will people benefit? If so, who ? Those inside or outside today’s church?

What impact will it have on different members of the church or organisation? A natural reaction to any future change is to want to understand the impact on ourselves. Detail is unnecessary at this stage, but major implications of the vision should not be hidden.

What will people see as positive and what as negative? Don’t oversell the positives and don’t hide the negatives - but be aware of how different points are likely to be perceived by the majority of the congregation.



Writing Down the Vision

The Vision Statement has the potential to be a very powerful piece of communication. Sadly many vision statements don't quite realise that potential. A Vision Statement can paint a picture which creates a sense of desire and builds commitment to reaching the vision.

Vision statements are different to Mission statements. A mission statement explains the main aim or purpose of the church or organisation. It is not surprising if many churches have very similar mission statements. However, the vision statement expresses the desired destination of the church within a certain time-frame. Given the number of different elements to the faith, the many ways of growing the Kingdom, and the diverse ways of serving those in need, vision statements may well differ between churches, as God's specific calling to different churches at any point in time differs. They are likely to be specific without being comprehensive. Let's consider two examples :

By planting a new neighbourhood church at the north end of our town, a number of families will come to faith. Worship in an accessible and informal style and a practical concern for the community, and involvement with it, will encourage people into the church. A programme of nurture and teaching alongside a growing fellowship will lead people into a deeper spiritual experience.

Year 2005 Vision :

Growth in attendance , of 15% per year for the last five years, has allowed us to expand our offering of worship styles on a Sunday morning. This growth seemed to stem from the highly successful ecumenical Millennium celebrations, and the increased prayerfulness of our church, both individually and corporately. It's great to see people enjoy spending time with God. Most of the congregation meet weekly in some form of prayer group.

- Both statements make choices as to what is included and what is left out. It is vital that this is the case if the vision statement is not to become a "catch-all" justifying everything that the church would like to do.
- Both are reasonably specific in outlining one or two key details behind each of the major statements. All vision statements will need further expansion, particularly as a church walks forward into reaching out for such vision. There will be alternative options and choices to be made - the vision statement can be updated if necessary.
- The second statement gives an idea of timing. It's often better to paint a vision between 3 and 10 years out in order for the vision to represent more than next year's project list. You may not yet have a timing, feeling that God has called the church to a specific action, but as yet as not given a time scale. That's His prerogative!
- The second statement describes what the church is like when the vision has been reached. This is powerful way of helping people feel the vision - it doesn't need to be accurate in every degree, - details can be worked later.

MISSION STATEMENTS should be a simple statement of purpose :

An Effective Mission or Statement of Purpose.....

- * Provides a "reason for being"
- * Provides clarity and focus and makes choices.
- * Is clear and concise
- * Is agreed by the wider organisation

Example :

The Mission Appeal team exists to raise funds for the mission work of the church in two thirds world countries. By holding special collections and appeals we will encourage those within and outside the church family to regularly support such work.

VISION STATEMENTS express a desired future state in a way that builds commitment to it.

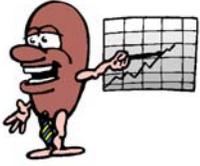
An Effective Vision

- * Arises through prayer & has been bathed in prayer.
- * Creates a sense of desire and builds commitment.
- * Expresses God's challenge to the church.
- * Is an expression of faith and hope.

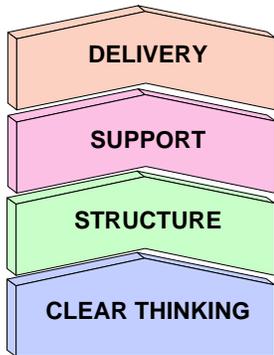
Example :

By planting a new neighbourhood church at the north end of our town, a number of families will come to faith. Worship in an accessible and informal style and a practical concern for, and involvement with, the community will encourage people into the church. A program of nurture and teaching alongside a growing fellowship will lead people into deeper spiritual experience.

ACTION POINTER : Review any vision or mission statements you have against these checklists..



Presenting the Vision



Sometimes preaching can seem easy compared with presenting other ideas or proposals to groups in a different setting. Yet the planning of any form of verbal communication should have four basic elements irrespective of how long it will last.

Stage 1 : Clear Thinking.

We've already covered the need to think carefully and clearly about the vision before starting to communicate it. The second component of this stage is to think about the purpose of your presentation. What are you hoping to achieve ? Try to write this down in a single sentence.

Stage 2 : Structure.

The next step is to write down an outline of your presentation using bullet points. (This is very similar to writing a sermon outline.) Presentations usually have an introduction, a conclusion, with two or three main elements. These main elements may sub-divide further, although we recommend you have no more than three main elements to avoid over complicating your presentation.

Consider who will be listening to your presentation. What do they know, and how do they feel, about the content of the presentation? In planning the structure, help them hear what they need to know, rather than tell them what you want to say!

You will also need to choose the length of the presentation and your style - how formal or informal do you want to be? Remember, informal presentations require no less preparation, only a different presentation style. Once you've fixed on a length - stick to it!

Stage 3 : Support Materials

Now is the time to add illustrations, materials, visual aids or anecdotes to support your main points. The key point here is to ensure that your material does indeed support your arguments. No matter how good the visual, or how funny the anecdote, unless it supports the flow of the presentation, it should be removed.

Any visuals should be kept simple - far too often overhead slides can be cluttered with too much text. One main message per slide is sufficient, with up to four bullet points. Try to build in some colour or some other visual aid to retain attention.

Stage 4: Delivery

Just as with any important event, a rehearsal can be of immense help. You can check timing, practise using your materials and check the flow of your arguments.

Consider your tone and stance - what message does your body convey? (*Tip : getting someone to watch or even video your rehearsal can pick up unconscious mannerisms!*) Check the practicalities - does the OHP work, and is it in focus? Is there a microphone? Can you be heard?

ACTION POINTER : Work through this process for the decision you have recently taken, or are about to take. This will help you get used to the approach, and more comfortable with it.



Media Tips

Christian leaders are often shy of working with the media – yet used well, they can enhance and amplify our communication. Here are some tips to help you.

Define your audience. - The tighter you can define your target audience, the easier it will be to focus your communication. Are you interested in adults and children? In what area? Churchgoers, non-churchgoers or lapsed Christians? Young or old?

What do you want them to do? - All communication has at least one objective. Whether you want people to come to something, to influence their beliefs or attitudes in a particular way, or simply to make them aware of something, your objective will shape the way that you communicate, and the media choices you make. Writing these down will help you become clear on how your communication can best support what you are trying to achieve.

Understand Your Media Options - The range of options facing a local church is wider than it has ever been before. In addition to local press, local radio, leaflets, parish magazines and notice boards, there are internet options, local tv stations and several commercial advertising opportunities.

Choose your Channels of Communication - Clarity on your target audience, and the outcome you want to achieve make this reasonably easy to achieve. Without such clarity, a rational evaluation of the alternatives is difficult. The size of the available budget will also have an effect, but try to avoid limiting your options on the basis of budget - its amazing what can be achieved for very little cost. You will probably not want to depend on a single channel of communication alone - it can sometimes be much more persuasive to reach people with the same message through several different channels.

Piece together the Media Campaign - Timings are important - if your want to get someone to come to an event, you may need two pieces of communication; the first needs to be early enough to get the event booked in the diary, whilst as the day approaches some further communication will help to build their desire to attend. A communications time chart can help see how the different elements will blend together. Cohesiveness across the different media options being used in the campaign is vital – by using common logos, slogans, typefaces and colour schemes.

Getting in touch with the media

- ♦ use the phone book or local directory to list possible contacts - you may not be aware of all the local newspapers and radio stations.
- ♦ unless you, or a member of your church, has a good contact with someone, your first point of call is likely to be the news desk.
- ♦ give them a call - journalists will welcome possible news stories, and the human touch over the phone is better than sending in a press release.



How do I write a press release?

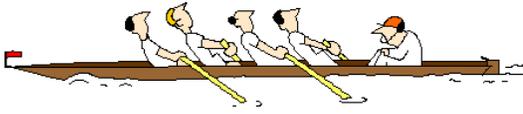
- ♦ Press releases should be typed, double spaced with wide margins and on one side of the paper only. They should be headed "PRESS RELEASE" and it should be clear who they are from.
- ♦ Make it easy for the journalist to use your story by setting it out so that he/she can select a paragraph or two.
- ♦ Your first paragraph should be a short summary of the overall story, with subsequent paragraphs each expanding on one of the key points. Try to make it as interesting as possible to your target audience - including one or two quotes will make it more personal. Avoid jargon, especially "churchy" jargon.
- ♦ End with the names and telephone numbers of one or two people to contact for further information.

There are several ways of using a local paper :

- ♦ The letters page can also give free space - but is restricted to simple messages such as expressing a Christian viewpoint on a topical local issue, or thanking people after an event.
- ♦ A diary page can also give free publicity. Make sure they get plenty of notice of your event
- ♦ If you are prepared to pay, then advertisement within the paper, or inserting a leaflet within the paper allow you to keep control over your message and the way it is presented.

Using the Internet

- ♦ The internet can be a great addition to your publicity - it allows you to offer lots of background information that people can access whenever they want to, and in the privacy of their own home.
- ♦ The best first step is to find an enthusiastic church member who is willing to develop the site.



Building Teams

The Bible describes the church as a Body (Romans 12:5), and in achieving our vision, it is likely that the church will need to operate as a body, or as a team. Whilst in one sense, the whole church will become a team, it is likely that various sub-groups of it will need to work together to carry out the church's mission in a particular area, or to exercise ministry. Teams do not just happen! They need to be carefully built by good team leaders.

During the early stages of a team's formation, the leader may want to introduce some activities or exercises that give opportunity for developing the relationships within the team. Some of these are simply team building, others will have an output of longer term value. A team leader may choose to use a number of the ideas below, or use these as a base for developing ideas of their own.

- ☞ **Allowing the team to develop their Mission / Vision statements together** is an excellent way of building team ownership and responsibility for delivering results.
- ☞ **Work together on a short-term challenge.** This can be completely unrelated to the task, for example undertaking a sponsored walk together, or painting a community building. The process of working together on a task offers chance for the team to talk to each other, and to achieve early success.
- ☞ **Have an early team meeting away from home** - either going away for the day, or even better with an overnight stay. Being away from home base helps to generate team spirit.
- ☞ **Have fun!** A shared social event, party, hike or whatever can be a great way of allowing people to get to know one another without any pressure to get on with the task.
- ☞ **Look together at successful examples of teams,** and understand what they have in common. Broaden the net to consider sporting teams and business teams as well as Christian teams. Think though how their common elements can be reapplied in your team.
- ☞ **Pray together.** Praying together for the success of the team, and for each other is a powerful way of supporting one another. This can either be one as a whole team, or by giving each member of the team two or three other team members to pray for (so each team member gets prayed for by two or three other members of the team.)
- ☞ **Spend a team meeting sharing personal experiences and expectations.** Each person takes between five and ten minutes to outline why they want to be on the team, what they bring that is relevant, and what they are hoping to get out of it. No interruptions whilst they are talking, but questions allowed at the end. (This works best when all members of the group will feel comfortable participating!)
- ☞ **Affirm Each Other.** Each member of the team is given the number of cards as there are team members (less one). Each person then writes the names of another team member on the top of each card, and then briefly writes down one quality, strength or characteristic they particularly appreciate about that person. This is replicated until they have completed one for each other member of the team. All the cards are gathered together and then redistributed to the members concerned. Feedback remains anonymous.
- ☞ **Roles and Tasks.** The team works out the tasks and roles needed to achieve its mission and allocates roles to team members. Then allow an open discussion to develop about what will be done independently and what will be done together.

Given that the church is the body of Christ, we can expect different people to fulfil different functions within it. (Rom 12:5) This is a vital concept if a team is going to combine different giftings, personalities and ministries into a cohesive unit which is able to achieve tasks beyond the individual capabilities of its members.

In order to unlock the power of the diversity within the team, the team leader must first be aware of at least some of that diversity. We need to appreciate and value the different skills and gifts that each person brings to the team. It is very easy to fall into the trap of valuing some gifts more highly than others. In particular, we can often value highly those with skills most similar to ourselves.



Delegation

Delegation is a vital skill for team leaders. Delegation leads to a team owning its success and increasing its capacity for achievement. Yet letting go of control can be hard.

EXERCISE

In *Making a Team Work*, Steve Chalke provides a check list of things to consider delegating :

- Things you are good at
- Things you are bad at
- Work which will provide experience
- Opportunities to reinforce talents
- Routine decisions

Take 10 minutes to think of 5 things you could delegate tomorrow using these categories.

Five Elements of Good Delegation

1. Provide Context

It is essential to be clear about what is required, and why it is important. Setting the delegated work within the broader context energises the recipients of the delegated work. They're clear how it contributes to the overall success of the team.

2. Delegate Authority and Responsibility

Delegating the responsibility to complete a task is relatively easy. Delegating the necessary authority is less so. Delegating authority requires confidence in the individual, since the leader is relinquishing some control over team activities. Yet without the necessary authority and room for decision making, people are not empowered to complete the tasks they have been given. This is particularly vital in a voluntary organisation.

3. Support don't Abdicate

Delegation does not mean complete withdrawal. Particularly in the early stages, people need support and encouragement to take on additional responsibility. They may need skill training, or encouraging feedback as they stretch themselves in previously untested areas. Prayer support is equally important.

4. Only Delegate When Appropriate

Check that the recipients of the delegation have the necessary skills, information, authority and capability to carry out the delegated responsibilities. If not, then not only will the work not get done, but the individual concerned may lose motivation.

5. Look at Team and Sub-team Structure.

Map out what is delegate to the various individuals and sub-teams on your team. Check for consistency and overlaps, and ensure that there is clear communication within the team as to who has responsibility for which areas. This is even more important within a team setting than in a traditional one to one manager : subordinate relationship.

ACTION POINTER :Reflect on your leadership – and try to identify five areas where you could delegate more. Make sure that you delegate both the responsibility for the task and the necessary authority.



Handling Conflict

Conflict is inevitable, natural, and even healthy! What is unhealthy is unresolved conflict allowed to fester and become a sore in the side of anotherwise productive team. In Acts 15 we see conflict both within and outside the team, but in both cases it is resolved productively. Here is a five stage process for handling conflict.

1. **P**ray through the subject of the conflict, alone. Ask God to help you discern the reasons behind it, the needs of those involved and how you may have contributed to it.
2. **E**xplore each others positions thoroughly, listening carefully to each others' views on the subject of the conflict. Bear in mind that the conflict may be about personalities and needs, rather than the subject matter.
3. **A**pproach possible solutions together, bringing to the fore the commonality you have. These may include desire to see God glorified, the team goal, concern for each other's happiness.
4. **C**ollaboration is better than compromise. Praying together can be a powerful way of seeking agreement. *'I will listen to what God, the Lord will say, he promises peace to his people, his saints.'* (Ps85:8)
5. **E**xpel any resentment you still hold. Make peace with them! (Mt 5:24)

ACTION POINTER : Use the approach above to try to resolve any conflict that you are aware of within the team. You may find the list of questions and meditations below helpful

APPROACHING CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Five questions to reflect on and pray through, when in conflict with another person :

1. What does the Lord appreciate about this person? Can I see those qualities in them?
2. Why am I taking my position? Is that true, or is there something behind it?
3. What is important in this situation?
4. What alternative solutions are there? Which of them could I live with?
5. How have I contributed to this situation? Do I need to ask the Lord to help me repent of anything?

Five passages for meditation :

'Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord.' (Leviticus 19:18)

'Do not say, 'I'll pay you back for this wrong!' Wait for the Lord, and He will deliver you.' (Proverbs 20:22)

'Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.' (Proverbs 10:12)

'My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.' (James 1:19)

'Tell your people to slander no-one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility to all people.' (Titus 3:2)



Team Health Check

Effective teams pause once in a while to review the health of their teamworking. Teams can often be working well enough to do the job, without really unlocking the potential that they have within the team.

Here is a tool which helps teams review their effectiveness. It's a simple three step process. The process requires a facilitator, which can be either a member of the team, or an external person. It is not necessarily a good idea for the team leader to be the facilitator, as this can limit feedback on team leadership and may constrain discussion on how to improve teamworking.

First, each member of the team uses the Effective Teams Health Check (on the reverse of this sheet) to record their own assessment of how the team is currently operating. These are then collated by the team facilitator, who calculates an average score for all members of the team.

The second stage of the process is for the whole team to meet and develop an overall team score for each statement. The facilitator should guide the process, spending relatively little time on those where the team is pretty much agreed on the score, and it is a reasonably positive score. More time will be required where the team has widely divergent views on how it is performing in a particular area, or if the team feels that it is struggling in a certain aspect.

Next the team develops a list of things that it would like to do differently. The process is completed by the writing of an action plan on how it will tackle the most important three or four things on that list. Realistically three or four things will be plenty to focus on. Don't try and work on all twenty areas at once!!

Target - most effective teams should aim to reach a target score of 4 or more in the longer term. A score of between 3 and 4 indicates that the team is performing fairly well, but that there are still some areas to be tackled. A score of less than 3 suggests that the team is either in its infancy, or that there are some particular issues that need to be addressed.

Repeat the exercise after a year to see whether the desired improvements have been met. (This period could be shortened to six months for a team who are meeting and working together frequently.)

Effective Teams Health Check

This health check is designed to help teams review their effectiveness. It is in three parts :

- i) Use the descriptions below to insert the number in the score column that represents your personal assessment of the way that the team is working right now.
- ii) Your individual assessment will be shared with the other team members to come up with an overall team assessment.
- iii) The team will then reflect on the results and develop an action plan.

SCORING

- 5 Strongly Agree** Fully operational and exceeds the description.
- 4 Agree** Operational and meets all or nearly all aspects of the description, but not ideal.
- 3 Slightly Agree** Operational, but incomplete. Partially meets the description.
- 2 Slightly Disagree** Nearly operational, but some way to go. Doesn't yet really meet the description.
- 1 Disagree** We have started on this, but there is a long way to go. The descriptors do not apply.
- 0 Strongly Disagree** Nothing has been done - this does not apply at all to our team

		Your Score	Avge	Team Score	Avge
	Purpose / Direction				
a.	The team has a clear mission/purpose, known by all team members				
b.	The team has a vision and success criteria which are challenging, meaningful and exciting to the team				
c.	The team understand how the work of the team fits into the larger picture				
	Team Leadership				
d.	Balances appropriate direction with support and openness.				
e.	Discusses key issues with the team				
f.	Delegates responsibility and leadership to individuals in their area of expertise.				
	Understanding Differences				
g.	Team members understand what their roles are, and where these overlap with other members.				
h.	Team members are clear about what is expected of them individually by the rest of the team				
i.	Team members are clear about what individual strengths each member of the team brings.				
	Processes				
j.	Team meetings are effective.				
k.	The team has found and implemented better ways of working				
l.	The team has an efficient process to solve problems and take decisions				
m.	The team has sufficient resources (people, money, time) to do its work.				
	Communication				
n.	Everyone feels their ideas and input is listened to by the rest of the team				
o.	Differences and conflicts are resolved openly and constructively.				
p.	Members interaction is open and honest				
	Relationships				
q.	The team's different experiences, skills and gifts are accepted and used.				
r.	There is trust and openness between team members				
s.	New members feel valued and quickly become productive members of the team				
t.	The team takes responsibility for its successes and failures, and avoids blaming other people or groups.				
	AVERAGE SCORE				

The team's greatest strength is _____

One thing the team can improve is _____



Introducing Change

This gives some practical steps to help successfully introduce change to a church or Christian organisation.

Vision drives Change

Previous sheets in this toolkit have discussed ways of sharing a future vision for a church or organisation. If this has been done successfully, this will create a favourable background to the change. People will understand the rationale behind the vision, and will anticipate change, even if they do not necessarily support the change. The greater extent to which the vision is shared and fully supported, the easier it is to create an environment which seeks to move forwards into the future.

Forming a Change Team

The purpose of a change team is to ensure that the change is introduced as quickly as is appropriate, as smoothly as is possible, and with maximum acceptance by the wider organisation. A team offers a number of advantages over an individual introducing the change:

- ♦ there is greater diversity of experience, gifts and knowledge to help introduce the change
- ♦ it provides a greater base of energy behind the change
- ♦ it forces the organisation to think through the impact of the change.
- ♦ it provides broader base of relationships to handle issues with the change on a personal level.
- ♦ it communicates a sense of importance and purpose about the need to change.

The primary purpose of the team is not to work out what the change should be, but rather to introduce the change to the organisation. The best size for the team will depend upon the scale of the change to be introduced, and the size of the organisation, but will most often be between 3 and 7 members

Reactions to Change

Reactions to change fall into a number of groups. This is not an attempt to pigeon-hole people, since most of us will fall into each of these groupings for different changes. Rather it helps explain the process by which change is adopted.

1. **"Early Risers"** - these people like change, almost for change's sake. They are the first people you see with the new craze - often before you realise that it is a craze. Very often this group are into technology, and have gadgets galore. They are a relatively rare breed!
2. The **"Early Adapters"** - will follow the "Early Risers" once they are comfortable that the change is a good one, or at least that it is likely to be OK. Seeing the logic behind the change helps them accept it. They often accept that there is some element of risk involved.
3. The **"Crowd"** - the majority of the population will follow into a change once it is becoming the accepted norm. With no strong feelings one way or the other beforehand, they are swayed by the way the wind is blowing.
4. The **"Legitimisers"**, - found within the crowd, and often amongst the slowest to be convinced naturally. They are people with two important characteristics. Firstly, they will carefully evaluate new ideas, because they are independent thinkers who need to make up their minds for themselves. Secondly, they are known and respected by the crowd - once their minds are made up, it can help others to reach their decisions.
5. Finally, the **"Resisters"** - people who are against the change from the moment they hear about it. Their resistance may be passive - they will do absolutely nothing to help the change, and may grumble consistently, or it may be active resistance - where they will lobby against the change, trying to prevent it from happening

A change team should be biased towards those who are in favour of the change (Early Risers/Early Adapters) but also include one or two legitimisers, who will lend credibility to the team.

The Strategy for Change

The first job for the change team is to understand what the change involves, and why it is happening. They then need to tackle three areas -

- ❶ The timetable for change - how quickly will the change be introduced? Specifically, will there be a pilot/transition period for people to get used to the change. (nb there is a considerable difference between a trial period to see if a change will work, and a transition period to help people into a change. Both are appropriate, but the change team and the leadership need to be totally clear on the purpose of any trial or transition period.) This decision will be influenced by the degree of resistance anticipated.
- ❷ To what degree will people be involved in the change process? For some changes, the change team should aim for complete transparency - the process of introducing the change is so well managed, that the organisation barely

notices. In this case the organisation should still be told of the change and the reasons for it to avoid feeling manipulated.

- ③ Is there any learning that can be taken from previous experiences within the organisation, or from similar changes introduced elsewhere. Whilst we need to be careful of mapping the issues of one particular situation onto another, there are many more similarities between situations than we often give credit for!

Implementing The Change

It is vital at this stage to be clear on the purpose of the change team. They are responsible for introducing the change, and not for the change itself (although this is unlikely to be perceived clearly by the wider organisation!) Thus any issues and decisions involved in the process for introducing the change e.g. running of a transition period, the communication involved, or the other issues that will arise alongside the change are their responsibility. Any desired amendments to what is introduced (the change itself) should be passed back to the individual or group who are responsible for the change itself. This is likely to occur during the planning process for implementing the change, and the introduction itself, almost however well the planning group has tried to anticipate the change.

Two tools that can help introduce the change are :

- ♦ A timetable for change - either published to the wider organisation, or kept as a tracking document by the change team.
- ♦ A task list, with a member of the change team nominated as being responsible for ensuring that each task gets done, someone nominated to do the task itself, and a date by which the change needs to be completed. An example of such a task list is given in the box on the right.

TASK LIST - SWITCHING VENUE FOR YOUTH GROUP

WHAT	WHO Responsible	WHO DO	BY WHEN
Book new hall	Jim	Jim	Sept 3 rd
Design Posters	Helen	Helen	Oct 15 th
Print Posters	Helen	Print Shop	Oct 22 nd
Letter to parents	Julie	Youth Leaders	Oct 22 nd

Handling Resistance

One of the largest pieces of work to be done in introducing change is to help those who will naturally want to resist the change come to terms with it. One of the distinctive features of a Christian organisation should be that it handles resistance with a loving approach to members, and a clear separation of the people from the issue.

Brian Pearson, in an excellent Administry "How to" guide on change, wrote this *"It is both an unachievable aim, and an inappropriate one to eliminate resistance completely. There will always be a residue, even if it remains well concealed. Its presence (in moderation) is a valuable leaven which can be a productive agent in the overall process."*

The change team needs to group its actions into two elements. There are some actions which can be handled with the whole organisation or in large groups, by clearly communicating how the change will NOT see people's worst fears realised. This will require the change team to talk with people to sensitively understand what their worst fears are!

The second group of actions is to identify those individuals who are likely to resist the change and to talk with them. Very often the process of empathetic listening and careful explanation can help to encourage those whose resistance is based on misunderstanding or on personal fears. Where there is room for flexibility within the change, it should be accommodated. Indeed, the whole process of handling resistance to the change can make a significant contribution to the change itself, by forcing a critical appraisal of the change, and by allowing an organisation to vigorously debate the issues associated with it.

Review

It is important to review the introduction of a major change a while after it has been implemented to check that the desired outcome has been reached, and that the organisation is happy with it. The change team are the ideal group to conduct the review, although the results of the review may need to be presented to the sponsoring group or to the leadership. Four areas are suggested for a review :

1. **Has it happened?** : Take the vision statement for the change - has it been accomplished? Where are there gaps?
2. **How has the change been received?** How are people feeling?
3. **What are the problems?** How can these be resolved ?
4. **What can be learned from the process of introducing the change ?** What would you do differently next time?

SUMMARY

Using a structured approach for change will not guarantee success, and does not in any way replace a need to pray through the work at each stage. Flexibility and common sense will be needed to determine the degree to which this approach needs to be followed. This approach is designed for major changes associated with a church or Christian organisation stepping out to reach its vision - smaller changes will not need to go through each stage in detail, although the principles outlined should normally be followed! Whilst we need to carefully consider all aspects of introducing change, and to be sensitive to people's needs, perhaps most of all we need to have the confidence to step out prayerfully and in faith.



The Step Plan

Jesus knew His ministry on earth had a time limit. He knew the disciples would have to learn fast to be able to build His church when He had left them. As we look through the Gospels we see examples of His training and teaching. His stated aim was that their ministry should be as fruitful as His, and that the disciples would do even greater things than He had done. (Jn 14:12)

We also need to train our members quickly so that they may be released into fuller ministries. The 'Step Plan' helps leaders encourage individuals to grow in faith and ministry. As a start point, select three of your regular and committed church members. Working together with them individually go through the following three steps.

1. Looking back, jot down their church 'CV'. What experiences have they had? What gifts have they been given? How has God used them so far? You should consider the complete range of spiritual growth, mission and ministry. There is a range of gift sheets available which may help with this.

2. Think and pray through what the next step or steps for each of them might be, making sure that you don't constrain your thinking by current church structures. What might God be calling them to do? What opportunities are there for them to broaden their Christian experience?

3. Write down a specific and individual plan that will provide the training and support necessary to move forwards to take that next step. This may well mean that they need to move on from their current roles, and will require a plan to replace them. (This in turn may be an excellent next step for another member of the church!) One of the reasons for starting with just three members is that it is absolutely vital that they receive the necessary support and encouragement they need to make the change.



Releasing just three church members into deeper ministries can have untold effect. They may be able to take on work that previously had consumed your time, or work which had been neglected. This may spark others into coming forward to seek new ways to serve the Lord. Taking the time to work with people individually is both affirming for them and is often greatly appreciated.



Review the action plan developed after six months. At that meeting, check progress and identify any further training or support that is required. After a further six months, they may be ready to go through the whole three-stage process again.

Finally, think about how you might expand this to involve a greater number of church members. But start small! Remember that Jesus sent out the twelve on a training mission before sending out another seventy-two disciples

Some may argue that the step plan is too formal, and too structured a plan. The formality and structure are simply there to help ensure that there is a process that moves through all the necessary stages. Only completing the first stage of a process of identifying the gifts without moving onto offer ministries and training can frustrate individuals, like a child who has been given a wonderful new toy for Christmas, but will need to wait for the batteries to enable him to use it.

ACTION POINTER :Identify four or five people who you perceive to be the most appropriate to start the plan with. If you don't already review their ministry, fix up some dates with them to begin the process...



Coaching & Mentoring

Just as we can see ourselves as being spirit, mind and body, so we can see personal development as being spiritual growth, development of Christian understanding and values, and the working out of this in practical ministry. In each case, the leader has the opportunity to play a role enabling interaction between the individual and the Holy Spirit.

Area	Christian development	Leaders Role
Spirit	Spiritual growth	Encourages, provides opportunities to experience different traditions
Mind	Understanding and Values	Preaching and teaching, mentoring
Body	Ministry experience	Help understanding gifts, provision of ministry opportunity, coaching,

In this area we focus on two skills, Coaching and Mentoring. To some, the terms may sound alien to the Christian context, yet as we explore their definition, we see that they are entirely biblical.

Mentoring

Mentoring is the process of gaining wisdom from, and tapping into the experience of, others. We all have mentors, whether we call them that or not - heroes, people we seek to emulate, people we've learned from. Viv Thomas writes of the importance of mentors in his book, Future Leader,

"When I was leading a church it was deeply frustrating to have so little effect on the people I was called to influence and help. The thirty minutes they spent listening to me preach was quickly forgotten. The thoughts triggered in the message did not even seem to reach the car park. It seemed the greatest influence over most of my congregation was held by my family and friends, not their pastor. Their spiritual formation took place primarily in interaction with those close to them; people who helped, understood and listened over a long period of time, or who entered their lives at crucial moments.

As it is with congregations, so it is with leaders. The conditions needed to grown Christians are the same as those needed to grow leaders of Christians. Leaders are in desperate need of friends and mentors, people who will direct us towards God and show us the way. One good and able mentor is worth a hundred consultants, a thousand motivational or "how to" seminars and only God knows how many sermons. Soul drought, which is the experience of many leaders, is often related to a lack of mentoring."

As leaders we may become mentors to church members or team members. We also need to recognise our need for our own mentors. For it is in the experience of relating to those who give us their time and wise counsel, that we can best relate to others as mentors..

Coaching

Whilst mentoring focuses on the values and whole person growth, coaching is much more task oriented. Coaching is the provision of the one to one help necessary for an individual to use their gifts and talents in the ministry of the church. This one to one help, or coaching, is best provided as part of a structured plan, such as the Step Plan. In this way there is an expectation that coaching will happen, there is a discussion between coach and church member on where the coaching is required, and a proactive identification of possible ways that the coaching can be delivered. Here are five characteristics of successful coaching.

- ~ Ask questions rather than tell. There is a clear role for showing people clearly what to do, particularly with very simple clerical or repetitive tasks, but there is also a role for asking pointed questions. It is the latter part that most people neglect, yet it can increase the understanding of the person being coached, is more motivating,
- ~ Coaching requires giving feedback, but is more than that. People often learn more from being asked how well/badly they did than being told, being asked for opinions or solutions than being told.
- ~ Becoming a good coach takes time and effort. You need to slowly build close, open relationships with those you are coaching. You will only develop the skills through practice and experience.
- ~ Coaching is in large part to do with listening. Too often people assume that others are the same as them, and therefore that their solutions will work for them. This clearly isn't the case.
- ~ See your role as creating an environment where THAT individual can flourish. For example, two plants are one metre apart. One grows to 60cm, the other to 150cm. One is inside the greenhouse, the other is outside. The job of the coach is to create the greenhouse environment around every person they are coaching.



Leadership Styles

Is your leadership like Paul, Moses, Peter, or Nehemiah ???

Thinking about your leadership, please give each of the statements below a score using the following 1 to 5 scale. A "5" represents "strongly agree", through to a "1" representing "strongly disagree". Try to benchmark it for yourself so that you use the whole range of scores.

1	I spend quality time thinking about future possibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I see myself as well organised.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Others have said how much they appreciated my encouragement.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I try to avoid taking risks.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I am particularly good at sensing how people are feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I believe I can recognise gifts and potential in people.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I see myself as much more of a people person than a task person.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I tend to overcome barriers to reach goals.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I delegate well to others in the church / organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I am good at finding practical solutions to problems.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Others see me as an energetic person.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I place a high degree of trust in others in my church/organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I go out of my way to give people feedback on their work/ministry.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Others have commented positively on my listening skills.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I'm often behind schedule because I have so much to do.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I have a clear focus on what we need to do as a church/organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Having a number of activities under way gives me real satisfaction.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I can assess what resources are required to complete a project.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I seem to have the knack of finding the right words to motivate people.	1	2	3	4	5
20	I am nearly always clear on the long term direction we should take.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I would rather focus on what we need to do, than how we should do it.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I seem to build fruitful long term relationships easily.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I prefer to work alone than to work in teams.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I am often able to help the church/organisation work more efficiently.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I enjoy reconciling different points of view.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I have the faith to aim for things others think are impossible.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I'm at my best spearheading a particular task or ministry.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I'm able to break down projects into the steps that need to be achieved.	1	2	3	4	5
29	I pray regularly for those around me.	1	2	3	4	5
30	When I join a group, others tend to look to me for a lead.	1	2	3	4	5

This summary uses your responses to the questions to examine how you relate to six different styles of leadership. **No one of these aspects of leadership is any more or less important than any of the others**, - they complement and balance each other. Clearly too, this report is based only on your answers. For each area your answers are combined to give a rating between 5 and 25, where a score of 25 would suggest that you see yourself as very strong in this area, and a score of 5 indicates that you do not see this as your area of strength. The important thing is to look at the relative scores between the areas. Do take time to appreciate, and thank God for the strengths you have in leadership. You may also like to think and pray about who else in your church or organisation has leadership strengths in the areas where you score less well. If this feedback summary gives you any surprises, do talk it through with someone who knows you well - it may be that one or two particular questions or your interpretation of them have unduly impacted your scores.



Leadership Styles (cont)

Transfer your scores from the indicator to the table below, taking care to subtract the score you awarded to the questions given in the final row of the table. This will give scores for each of the areas. For some people they will be clustered quite closely together, others will have more variation - this is a function of how closely you grouped your scoring.

Pioneering Leadership	Strategic Leadership	Management / Administration	Team Leadership	Pastoral Leadership	Encouraging Leadership
Q1	Q8	Q2	Q6	Q7	Q3
Q11	Q10	Q9	Q12	Q14	Q5
Q20	Q16	Q18	Q25	Q22	Q13
Q26	Q28	Q24	Q30	Q29	Q19
Add 6	Add 6	Add 6	Add 6	Add 6	Add 6
Subtotal	Subtotal	Subtotal	Subtotal	Subtotal	Subtotal
- Q4	- Q21	- Q15	- Q23	- Q17	- Q27

Pioneering leaders are those who are willing to push themselves, and take appropriate risks in striving to move forwards to discover and reach long term goals, "forgetting what is behind, and straining for what lies ahead" (Ph3). *Pioneering leaders* are passionate about the vision, and are committed to it. Paul is a great example of a pioneering leader focussed on extending the boundaries of the church, despite personal risk. *Pioneering leaders* are at their strongest in the early stages of a project, excited by seeking out where God is calling. As time passes they may lose interest in the implementation of a vision, eager to be looking ahead to the next challenge.

Leaders who can break down visions and large aims into manageable chunks are vital for the church. **Strategic leaders** have the insight and focus to work out ways of achieving the vision, and are able to persuade the rest of the church to accept this plan. When Nehemiah led the Jews in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, he demonstrated great *strategic leadership* in dividing the work up, and in keeping the task manageable. His plan was so good, the walls were rebuilt in 52 days. *Strategic leaders* bring a common sense perspective. However, like pioneers, they can be less engaged with the implementation of a task, preferring to leave this to others.

All churches require good **stewards and managers**, people with gifts of administration (Acts 6). Any vision or change will require people able to plan and problem solve, delegate and organise. Without this gift, the best plans may well not get implemented! The apostles delegated the practical tasks of sharing food and taking care of the widows to those gifted with the necessary skills, including Stephen and Philip. *Managers* are often under appreciated, having a leadership style which is less "up-front" than some of the other styles. However, much of the work simply would not get done without them. They may struggle to relate to the visionary pioneers - dreaming of achieving the impossible is not their home ground!

The key strengths of **team leaders** are a desire to work with others, and an ability to trust them. *Team leaders* need great humility and servanthood - their sole aim is that the team achieves its goals. What they as individuals achieve is secondary. The greatest contribution Silas made to the church was probably training and developing Paul's ministry so he could go on to achieve greater things later. *Team leaders* are invaluable - if the church is truly to function as a body, *team leaders* are needed to ensure harmony and effectiveness in the way the team works.

Many church leaders feel they ought to have **pastoral leadership** as their primary leadership style. This does not mean that they are not supportive pastors, but rather that their natural leadership style is in a different area of the leadership arena. *Pastoral leaders* are real "people people", who have an important role in supporting the pioneers, strategists, team leaders and the rest of the church, particularly when times are hard. Vision and moving into vision seem less important to *pastoral leaders*. Peter was a *pastoral leader*, a complete contrast to Paul's energetic church planting and exhortation. *Pastoral leadership* is often unseen, and often unappreciated publically, yet hugely important. Those who are pastoral leaders can sometimes be threatened by the pioneers and strategists - and at times are irritated by the attention to detail shown by the managers. Yet their contribution to a team is invaluable - take time for a moment to think of a *pastoral leader* - and you will probably find that they command huge respect and support.

Paul was a great encourager - his letters to the early churches contained exhortation and encouragement as well as teaching. **Encouraging leaders** are able to motivate whole churches, teams and individuals. They have great discernment into peoples gifts, their feelings and what motivates them, able to release them into fulfilling their ministries. Who doesn't need encouragement !! *Encouraging leaders* have the knack of knowing when a quiet word can spur people on, when to challenge and when to support, when to coach and when to give space. Occasionally they may irritate people by appearing less "hands on" than other leadership styles - sometimes people want more than just encouragement.



Intercession for Leaders

Recognising the Need

As a first step, leaders need to acknowledge their need for prayer support, to ask the Lord to provide them with intercessors who can "stand in the gap" on their behalf, (see Ezekiel 22:30) to present their needs and ministry before the Lord. There are several reasons why this may not be as easy as it sounds

- ☞ *Leaders may not realise how much they need prayer support.* Things may be going OK - but how much better could they be? There has never been as much pressure on our leaders as there is today, and many Christian leaders need greater prayer support than they are able to provide for themselves.
- ☞ *Leaders don't ask for prayer support!* After all, there are far more urgent needs out there - people in need of healing, a world torn apart by violence and war, those who are bereaved. Even if the need for greater intercessory support for leaders is recognised, humility can often be a barrier to the ministries and work of leaders being presented as a need for prayer. Yet it is a very healthy and positive Christian practice for others to engage in intercession for leaders.

- ☞ *Our use of prayer often tends towards situations where there is a problem, or healing is required.* Receiving regular prayer support may make the leaders feel that their ministry is inadequate, or riven with issues.

Paul's Requests for Prayer

Paul knew his need for prayer support, for particular crisis situations and for his ongoing ministry. He asked for prayer from the churches in Ephesus (Eph 6:19), Rome (Rom 15:30), Corinth (2 Cor 1:11), Thessalonica (1 Thess 5:25), Philippi (Phil 1:19) and Colossae (Col 4:3). Paul's request to the Philippians for prayer highlights the high importance he places on intercession in deliverance from his imprisonment. In his letter to Philemon he is so confident that the prayers for his release will be successful that he asks Philemon to prepare a room for him! His requests in Ephesians and Colossians are for prayer for his ministry of proclaiming the gospel.

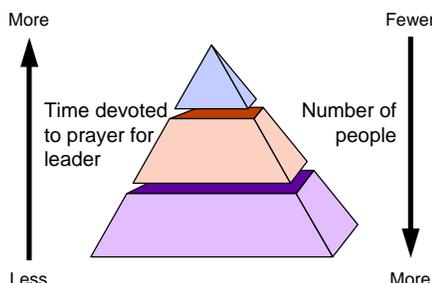
Asking for prayer support, and building up effective relationships with intercessors is not easy.

A pyramid of Prayer Support

Here's a three level model of prayer support, based on one presented by C. Peter Wagner, in his book "Prayer Shield".

At the base of the pyramid is general prayer support - often that provided by a congregation for their minister, or by regular supporters of an organisation for its leadership. It can be difficult knowing how much effective support is being provided at any point in time. Omar Cabera, the Argentinean pastor, simply asks church members to pray for him and his wife when they say grace at meals. The size of his church means this could lead to around 20,000 prayers a day!

The second level on the pyramid represents those who will undertake to pray regularly for specific leaders. Their commitment to this specific prayer need is greater than that of the base level, and they will be fewer in number. There will need to be regular two-way communication with these people. A New Zealand Anglican church planter who visited us recently has 15 intercessors who sign up for a year's commitment, which may be renewed, to pray for him daily. In return he and his wife pray for them once each week. Once a month he writes a very open and specific letter to these intercessors, giving answers to prayer, and some topics for prayer for the coming month.



The top level of the pyramid represents the one or two people who are prepared to undertake intercession for a specific leader as a significant part of their ministry. This may be as a response to a call from God, whether felt as a definite calling, or presented as a desire to pray for a particular leader and

his/her ministry. Peter Wagner suggests that it is unlikely that a leader will have more than a couple of these intercessors at any point in time, and most often a single person fulfils this role. This kind of intercessor will very much need the faith to follow God's agenda, rather than solely presenting their view of the needs of the leader. It is clearly important that an open and trusting relationship is built between leader and intercessor.



Encouraging Prayer

This sheet aims to help leaders develop the prayer lives of their churches as they discern and move into the vision and direction that God may be setting before them.

Teaching on Prayer

Take a moment to review your teaching programme on prayer. You may have prayer groups, and house groups which pray along with other things. But what teaching and input is provided on prayer? There is a danger we rely on Christians working out for themselves how to pray. Here are some suggestions :

- If the church has a **lending library or bookstall**, offer books on prayer and books of prayers. Recommend them regularly, either via notice sheet or personal commendation from “the front”.
- Running a series of **groups on prayer** to give a taste of different approaches to prayer that people may not have previously experienced. These also offer people the chance to pray with others.
- Ensuring that **Sunday morning teaching** provides teaching on prayer at regular intervals. All too often, the only model of prayer a church demonstrates is that of one person at the front “doing the prayers”.
- Either as a church, or as a group of churches, consider running a **day on prayer** - this can combine a range of elements - teaching, silent reflection, praying in groups.
- Have a regular series on prayer in the **church magazine** - alongside topics for people to pray for. This can be a very non-threatening way of giving people chance to think about different approaches.

Developing a Prayer Strategy

Leaders have a critical role in developing the capacity of the church for prayer. This may be in an un-structured way, which is fine, as long as unstructured doesn't mean non-existent! Just as prayer itself can benefit from some structure, so too can the development of the prayer life of a church through a prayer strategy. A Prayer Strategy is typically a short document, possibly only with a few bullet points, that outlines how a church plans to develop its prayer life, and ensure that prayer needs are adequately covered. It is best formed by a church council or leadership team, arising from a review of the prayer life of the church. Like any strategy, it will need to have people identified who will be responsible for ensuring that required action happens. An example of a prayer strategy is on the right.

St.Ethelburga's Prayer Plan

To increase our prayer time - by holding a weekly prayer group, by encouraging all our housegroups to include some time in prayer at each meeting, and by encouraging people to have a daily personal quiet time with God.
To pray for our leaders, our mission and ministry by giving prayer needs in each Sunday's newsletter and by holding quarterly half day prayer meetings.
To provide regular teaching on prayer on Sunday mornings.
To respond quickly to urgent prayer requests from church members via a prayer team co-ordinator, available 24 hrs a day, who will pass such requests onto our prayer network.
To prayer walk a different part of our neighbourhood each month so that we cover the entire area each year.

Encouraging People to Pray Together

Church prayer meetings often need nurture and encouragement if they are not to lose their direction. There can be a danger that those outside “the prayer group” feel let off the hook - left to themselves, the need to pray for the church never gets urgent enough as a group is already meeting to do this. A number of different approaches may be needed...

Prayer groups need not meet in perpetuity. Groups which are formed to pray for a special event or campaign, or for a particular area can meet for a season, and then disband. For example, a group which meets to pray for a particular activity may meet beforehand, may pray during the event itself, may give thanks afterwards and then disband.

Try varying the format of prayer meetings - involving praise, silence, praying in twos, or fours, or all together as a church, praying on a theme, listening, ministering to those with needs etc.

Consider providing a variety of times and locations of prayer groups - some people prefer meeting in larger groups, others with three or four. Some prefer evening prayer meetings, others are unable to get out of the house in the evenings. What about a prayer breakfast??

Prayer walking gives another slant on praying for a neighbourhood. This can take a range of approaches from individuals praying as they walk around the parish, to structured prayer campaigns for particular streets and homes.



Shield of Victory

Any Christian who plays his or her part in the mission and ministry of the church is liable at times to come under attack from the devil. Those in the front line of Christian ministry should expect to face spiritual attack at periods in their ministry. Yet the vast majority of Christians, and possibly also many Christian leaders, are inadequately trained in defending themselves against such attack.

Our first difficulty in handling spiritual attack is distinguishing it. Spiritual attack can be confused with both the consequences of disobedience to God's rules for holy living or with a difficult period in our lives as a result of our interaction with the rest of (fallen) humanity. Some people can be accused of seeing a demon under every bush, whilst others have never been willing to admit to the possibility of the devil attacking them, if they are even prepared to admit to the reality of his existence.

Yet Satan does exist, and he wants to thwart the plans of the Kingdom. He is not pleased to have his territory threatened, or to see leaders with vision for growing God's kingdom. When God's people start getting serious about being obedient to Him, then Satan is provoked. Although Christ has won the final victory over Satan on the cross, we are in a period of "mopping up" where skirmishes around the edge will continue until the battle is completed when Jesus Christ comes again.

In particular, leaders are likely to come under spiritual oppression and attack. Some have argued that once we have accepted Jesus Christ as our saviour then we are immune from attack. However, if we were immune from attack, then we would not need passages such as Paul's teaching on the armour of Christ.

Recognising Attacks

Satan's attacks are sneaky. That's his hallmark. His trait is to capitalise on human weakness by planting doubts, fear and anxiety in the hearts of Christians. He is the deceiver. His ultimate aim is to convince Christians that the security of their faith in Christ is a lie. Attacks seem to come in a number of different ways :

- ♦ anxiety - Satan plays on our fears, bringing back into our minds things that are from the past, and belong in the past.
- ♦ on church life. Division, disunity and personal attacks on church members.
- ♦ on relationships. Satan loves division between Christians. We should remember that people are never the enemy, although the attack may often come through people. That is part of the devil's game. Ultimately temptation can lead Christians into improper relationships.
- ♦ through illness, especially those which are easy to pass off - back pains, headaches, tiredness. This is not to say that all back pain, headaches and tiredness are spiritual attack - we need to discern carefully what is what!
- ♦ Satan often uses the darkness - nightmares, insomnia, and other night related concerns.

Four Defences

Before moving onto four defences that God has given us, first note an important fact. Our defences must be in place all the time. An army who waits until they are under attack to take up a defensive position is likely to have insufficient time to fully take up their positions. The advantage of surprise attack has been proved many times throughout military history. It is so for spiritual attack, and our defences need to be in place at all times.

History has also shown on many occasions that a small defensive force can withstand attack from much larger number if it has strong defences. Consider Nehemiah, who positioned half of his men as guards whilst the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, ready and prepared to ward off such attack. So strong were their defences that the enemy did not attack. (Neh 4:16ff). The means of defence that God has provided us with are more than enough.

1. Knowing that we are IN CHRIST.

Our first defence is knowing that as Christians, we are fully covered by the protection offered by our Lord. Here are some scriptures which tell us where we stand as Christians : Psalm 91, Psalm 18:2, 1 John 4:4, Col 3:1-3. Read them now.

The amazing thing about coming to faith is that God places us by his sovereign power in Jesus. Lance Lambert writes "That is your position if you are a child of God. Your position in the sight of God is in Christ. He is not a child of God who is not in Christ. For to be a Christian is to be in Christ, and Christ to be in you." (Understanding Spiritual Protection, L. Lambert p9)

It is not enough to read it, it is not even enough to believe it when we read it. We must believe it fully with our lives, that we can enter into confidence that we are in Christ. Satan's strategy is to con us into believing that this is not true, to allow us to become uncovered.

Yet at times we allow ourselves to become uncovered. Sin can remove us from God's protection, especially deliberate and repetitive sin. The first step is to know that we have moved out from under that protection, through doubt and disbelief, through sin or through a lack of trust in God. From there, it is a simple, although not easy, step to confessing our weakness, doubt and sin and allowing God's mercy and grace to cover us again.

2. The armour of God

Ephesians 6 (11-18) is a classic passage on the armour that God provides. Note that Paul says "put on" the armour. For many years I knew that God's armour existed, but I did not know how to put it on. I've had to learn how, for example, to buckle on the belt of truth, or what it means to use the shield of faith.

Sometimes we can leave part of the armour off. Soldiers in partial armour may find it easier to move, but are leaving themselves partially uncovered, and are an easy target for enemy archers. We need to learn to "put on" the whole armour, we need to learn to use the shield of faith, bringing it between ourselves and the "fiery darts" of the devil and we need to learn to use the sword of the spirit.

This is true both for individual Christians and for the church. Reading this passage in the context of the whole letter to the Ephesians, we see it as a vital component of Paul's teaching on living out the gospel as a community of faith. He addresses the corporate church, rather than singular Christian scouts on a mission of spiritual warfare against demons. Lone soldiers make easy targets.

3. Praise and worship

Psalms 149 describes the praise of God as a double edged sword (v6). Singing God's praise was a powerful weapon for Jehoshaphat (Chronicles 20:21,22) Just as praise helped Jehoshaphat defeat the armies of Edom, Moab and Ammon, so praise is important in our resistance to the attacks of Satan. Praise creates an environment which the devil cannot tolerate. He cannot tolerate it for three reasons :

- ♦ Praise proclaims the name of the Lord Jesus,
- ♦ Praise is the result of the Holy Spirit working in us. (Hebrews 13:15)
- ♦ God inhabits our praise (Psalm 22:3)

Do not underestimate the power of praise to help us in difficult situations. In Acts 16 we read of Paul and Silas locked in prison. Instead of being downcast at their suffering and misfortune, they praised and worshipped God. Their praise unlocked the power of God, and secured their release. (Acts 16:25,26) Playing praise and worship tapes or CDs when we feel under attack creates an atmosphere of praise around us. This not only adds to our defences, but also can help the Spirit minister to us in times of need.

4. The Body of Christ

Praise God that He seldom places us in situations where we are ministering in total isolation from other Christians. We should praise Him too that he creates us with sufficient weaknesses to need each other. I have yet to meet the completely equipped Christian who is able to minister effectively as a one person church! God's plan for the church is that we need each other. (Romans 12:4-8, 1 Cor. 12)

Part of the devil's attack is to use our inadequacy against us so that we feel embarrassed or anxious about asking for help. Yet it is precisely when we are struggling that we most need to turn to others. One of the motivations for writing this booklet is an experience from the week leading up to planting a new church when I felt totally isolated from God and from others. A two day sudden depression came over me. Whilst I realised that it could well be spiritual attack, I felt unprepared, and quickly felt isolated from God and from friends. It was like being trapped in the open air, miles from help. Turning to friends who could pray for me, and with me, helped me to restore my place with God.

In Understanding Spiritual Warfare, Tom Marshall highlights the importance of Christians having relationships they can depend on - "People living in fellowship and covenant with you are those that you should be able to ring up at any time of the day or night and ask them to pray with or for you" This is important for all Christians. It's vital for leaders!

ACTION POINTER :Spend some time reviewing your defences. .Take each one in turn, and reflect on it. How well are you equipped to use it?