



■ CHURCH ■  
ADMINISTRATION  
HANDBOOK

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*Third Edition · Revised and Updated*

BRUCE P. POWERS  
EDITOR



ACADEMIC

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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Printed in the United States of America

978-0-8054-4490-2

Published by B&H Publishing Group  
Nashville, Tennessee

Dewey Decimal Classification: 254  
Subject Heading: CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

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## PREFACE

Preparation for ministry has been gradually changing for more than thirty years. The first shifts came as churches began to insist that their ministers be prepared not only to know and preach the Bible but also to work effectively in the areas of leadership, administration, and education. Change was slow, but many divinity schools and seminaries embraced the disciplines of pastoral care, evangelism, church administration, and discipleship development. Others resisted and insisted that traditional biblical and theological studies were sufficient.

The curriculum in most theological schools today provides a balance between the classical studies that focus on *knowing* the gospel and practical studies that focus on *doing* the gospel. However, the needs of people and of churches have continued to change, with questions now being raised about the quality of congregational life, the nature of leadership, and responsibility for ministry among *all* believers.

Consequently, effective theological education for the future must have an added dimension—preparing congregational leaders who can help disciples live in and engage a culture that is more diverse and demanding than at any previous time in modern history.

The third edition of this book, therefore, has been refocused. It deals more specifically with leading and transforming those within the congregation as well as those who live in or participate in the life of the community or parish. As we have prepared this edition, we have sought to address five primary needs:

1. leadership skills and administrative tools that can be adapted for use in varied contexts from traditional to contemporary, from rural to urban, and from unicultural to multicultural;
2. spiritual formation that relates to all of life (from birth to death);
3. mission consciousness (in the community, regionally, nationally, and globally);
4. ministry of all believers (particularly calling out and equipping vocational, bivocational, and lay ministers); and

## PREFACE

5. leadership competence (the ability to inspire, motivate, and equip the saints for the work of ministry).

The material compiled in this volume is our best effort to guide church leaders and students preparing for ministry into a commitment to the mission of the church in every facet of life and to equip them with theological understanding and administrative skills to develop a *Christ-centered, Bible-based, and ministry-focused* congregation.

The content moves sequentially through three broad categories crucial to administrative leadership: (1) how a minister relates to organizations and to people; (2) how a minister performs administrative functions; and (3) how a minister develops leadership and ministry skills. Each chapter provides basic information, then gives guidelines and procedures related to the topic. At the end of the book is a list of resources for further information.

You can study the material systematically from beginning to end, or you can consult chapters topically, as in a reference book. You will find a survey of foundational information and procedures in all major areas. The contents are not intended to be exhaustive but to give sufficient guidance for administrators who then, if specialized assistance is necessary, can go or refer others to the resources listed.

The authors of this volume are well suited to prepare an administrative handbook for church leaders and a textbook for ministerial students. They have served in churches, in denominational administrative positions, and as teachers in theological schools. They are highly respected writers, speakers, and practitioners who believe that administration must support the church through positive, servant leadership among God's people.

I would like to express appreciation to the authors, especially for their common vision of a biblically based, servant-oriented style of leadership that they are sharing at every opportunity; to our colleagues and students who have helped us refine the concepts, values, and skills presented; and to the many denominational and church leaders who reacted to outlines, previewed this material in conferences, and encouraged the publication of this material for others.

I would like to express personal gratitude to Dr. John Landers of B&H Publishing Group, who shepherded this project; to my wife, Jean Clark Powers, who assisted with the technical preparation of the manuscript; and to my colleagues and students who have supported, encouraged, and assisted me during the preparation of the manuscript.

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SECTION ONE

HOW A MINISTER RELATES  
TO ORGANIZATIONS  
AND TO PEOPLE

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Chapter 1

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP  
IN A TECHNOLOGICAL AGE

*Bruce P. Powers and James T. Roberson Jr.*

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It is surprising, and sometimes puzzling to church leaders, that the New Testament nowhere provides a definitive description of the church. Rather, the Bible speaks profusely on the nature and mission of the church but always in models and illustrations, never in straightforward definitions. The clearest understanding can be gained from three primary images that have informed church leaders over the centuries.

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**Understanding the Nature and Purpose of the Church\***

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**The Church as the People of God**

The church is sometimes pictured as *the people of God*. This concept has its roots in the Old Testament. God made a covenant with the people of Israel, and they became God's own people (Gen 12:1–3; 17:1–8). Israel understood God's expectations of them but had trouble abiding by them, just as Christians sometimes have difficulty living faithfully by the teachings of Christ.

Upon the faithfulness of Jesus, early Christians declared, God made a new covenant in fulfillment of that foretold by Jeremiah (Rom 11:27) and Joel (Acts 2:16–21). God had not called a new people but transacted a new covenant with his people. They were to be no longer Israel “after the flesh” but Israel “after the spirit” (Rom 9:6–13). Thus the followers of Jesus Christ, like Israel of the Old Testament, became the people of God—a people charged with the responsibility of sharing the Word that can restore the broken relationship between sinful humanity and a just, loving God.

## The Church as the Body of Christ

Another image of the church, frequently employed in Paul's letters, is *body of Christ*. This image or model of the church portrays Christ as the head and individual believers, grafted into the body through the redemptive love of Christ, as other parts of the body. As members of the body, different persons are given different gifts, abilities, and functions. Together the members accomplish the work of the body under the direction of Christ, the head. Though the body is characterized by diversity of function, it is unified in purpose and mission.

## The Church as the New Humanity

Sometimes the image of the church as the *body of Christ* is combined with the image of the church as the *new humanity*. Both images are frequently found in the writings of Paul, and *new humanity* is especially present in Ephesians and Galatians. God has brought the new humanity into being through the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ. The old humanity consisted of persons who were dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1). But Christ has raised them up and made them alive. "For we are what he made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life" (Eph 2:10 NRSV).

As the *new humanity*, the church is the evidence of God's continuing creative activity. It consists of people who have been made new and gifted with the ability to do what the old humanity could not accomplish. Whereas the old humanity was self-centered and rooted in law and judgment, *new humanity* would be God-centered and focused on grace and reconciliation. *New humanity* is God's new creation, made capable of righteousness and love through Jesus Christ.

These images clearly emerge from the New Testament. But take care not to overinterpret them. For example, the *body of Christ* (the church) does not always do the will of the divine head, and it would be inaccurate for some to think that whatever the church did was clearly the same action that Christ himself would undertake if he were present in person.

Similarly, the church as the new humanity does not always show love and righteousness, and it would be disastrous to think of some of the acts of church people as God's will. Sometimes the actions of the *new humanity* are nothing more than sin expressed in its most sinister form—the garb of piety. So each of us must be careful to seek faithfully to follow Christ and to serve one another in love. We must also be quick to recognize our shortcomings with one another and seek forgiveness and reconciliation.

Although the church seldom lives up to everything each image suggests, these models clearly suggest what God intended when the church was brought into being. Once we understand what the church is to be, then we must agree on the purpose of the church and what it is to do.

## The Purpose of the Church

Before dealing with the practical issues of congregational leadership, it is important to clarify the purpose of the church. Without clarity in biblical and theological foundations for ministry, techniques and methods can become detached from the very vision that birthed them. A church can drift away from its reason for existence and become a religious country club.

The church is to be a community of persons who are wholeheartedly committed to doing what God wants to be accomplished on earth. This most certainly includes the great commandments, loving God supremely and loving our neighbor as ourselves (Matt 22:37–39). If the church accomplishes its purpose, the result will be more love for God and for humanity. Love of God should result in prayer, devotion, commitment, a sense of piety, and growth in one's spiritual life. Love of neighbor should result in caring, giving, confronting, admonishing, seeking justice, and working for the common good.

Jesus added another commandment at the Last Supper, asking followers to love one another in order to be a positive witness to unbelievers (John 13:34–35). Put together, these commandments suggest that the purpose of the church is to engage in activities consistently described in Scripture that increase the love of God, neighbor, and brothers and sisters in Christ. These activities are often referred to as the functions, or tasks, of the church: *worship, proclamation, education, ministry, and fellowship*.

The church brings individuals into community where they contribute to the common good and give encouragement, support, and discipline to one another. This is the *koinonia*, the spiritual fellowship that inspires and enables believers to perform the functions of the church, thereby giving witness to the world. Through and with the help of this community, the church, we share with the world our belief in Jesus Christ, our trust of Scripture, and our best interpretation of how we have experienced and must serve God. It is this message—what we know, believe, and do—that becomes the dominant force as we seek to nurture believers, minister to those in need, and evangelize those who need a Savior.

Each function, or task, of the church is crucial, and none is superior to the others. A church that does mostly worship is no more what God intended than the church that does mostly evangelism. The church that engages in worship and evangelism but does not take seriously the community of fellowship is only doing part of what God intended. All tasks are necessary for the church to fulfill its purpose and claim its identity as the *people of God*, the *new humanity*, and the *body of Christ*.

## The Mission of the Church

The *mission* of the church is to achieve the *purpose* of the church—to *be, do, and tell the gospel*. From a biblical viewpoint there generally are two

dimensions for evaluating our effectiveness: how individuals respond and how the church responds.

### Individual Response

Our effectiveness in relating to individuals must focus on the mandate (1) that belief in Jesus is the only way to God and (2) that believers will keep Christ's commandments. According to John 14:6–17, Jesus described individual responsibility as the essence of faith and practice. One way to evaluate our effectiveness is to look at how those under our influence are responding individually.

This raises two questions: *Are persons expressing belief in Jesus? Is their living consistent with Jesus' teachings?* The degree to which you and the congregation can respond positively to *both* these questions illustrates your or my effectiveness in influencing individuals.

### Church Response

Individuals who have responded to the call of God in Christ must then focus on an added dimension to the Christian life: that those who profess Jesus as Lord unite themselves in a body—the church—to carry out God's will. The New Testament knows nothing of a Lone Ranger approach to Christianity. Where the gospel is preached and the lost come to Jesus, it is always as a part of the life and ministry of the church.

Individuals usually profess Christ as Savior after hearing the gospel message and becoming acquainted with believers in a local church. It is in this environment that we relate to others and through which they come to know us. We are saved and come to understand church in this relationship with believers, and we become a part of the church so that we might share personally in its life and work.

But what is the life and work of the church? It is the same as God's call to all Christians: *to be his people and to continue the earthly ministry of Jesus.* The church must be the means through which the eternal purpose of God is declared.

You can evaluate your effectiveness in this area by determining the extent to which those under your influence become involved in the life and work of the church.

### What Are the Results?

Our influence, then, cannot be evaluated apart from tangible results—as individuals respond to God and as they involve themselves in a church. Naturally, we would all want to interpret the specific meaning given to the type and quality of tangible results. But the fact remains, as we seek to influence the faith of others, there is a response. And that response must be judged by criteria such as those described above.

The question now comes back: *How successful are we in fulfilling the purpose and mission of the church?*

### Evaluating Your Witness

How do you and the congregation evaluate your influence as Christian witnesses? If your response is typical, there are some ways in which you have been effective, but there also are areas of shortcoming or, perhaps, areas that had not previously been considered.

The important thing is to recognize the discrepancies that exist between the witness we *want* to share and the witness we *are* sharing with the world. Ideally, these are the same. If they are not, the points of difference represent areas in which the minister(s) and the congregation need to discuss expectations and clarify hopes and dreams for the church's future.

What are we trying to do to people? The bottom line is that we want people to come to faith, grow in faith, serve in faith, and live in faith—just as Jesus taught. The primary job of ministers and of the congregation is to (1) *bring people to Jesus Christ*, and (2) *help them grow in his likeness*. As described in Eph 4:11–13, the task of church leaders is to equip, or prepare, God's people for the work of Christian service. It is the duty of every believer to seek to understand, develop, and use in Christian service the gifts God has provided. It is the job of the church to perform the functions that will enable believers to have a positive witness to the world. *Reaching, teaching, and developing* are the key words for what we are trying to do. The *purpose* of the church, ultimately, is to make disciples and lead them to live and serve under the lordship of Christ (v. 15).

### Working Together in the Church

One of the primary expectations for ministerial and lay leaders is to provide leadership. This requires being clear about the biblical nature and mission of the church as well as the vision and direction for the life of your congregation. A church's ministerial leadership team and the lay leaders of the church share responsibility for (1) maintaining clarity of purpose and vision for the church and (2) interpreting and assisting the congregation in understanding and supporting the church's purpose and vision.

### Developing Productive Partnerships

For ministers and congregations to have long and productive partnerships, there must be consensus about the approach to and style of leadership. This requires ministers and congregational leaders to clarify their commitments during the call and start-up phases as new ministers begin

their work and continue to monitor faithfulness among all key leaders to the agreed-upon leadership principles that are central to the life and ministry of the church.

This chapter provides principles on which ministers and congregations must agree. Discussions should be held and covenants made concerning these principles, and these will become the guidelines for working together. Applying the principles will then be entrusted to the ministers and various lay leaders as they work through the church's organizational structure.

Church members have every right to expect that ministers and lay leaders will agree on the purpose, vision, and principles by which their congregation will be led. The leaders also have a corresponding right to expect trust and support as they carry out day-to-day duties and develop and recommend policies and programs to fulfill God's plan for the church. Being clear and together on theological principles—especially purpose, vision, and leadership style—keeps church ministry under the lordship of Christ; being clear also frees ministers and lay leaders to fulfill their duties without reprisal as long as their actions are strongly rooted in the agreed-upon theological principles.

The definition of leadership implies that we are seeking to develop unity in the pursuit of common goals. Ministers and lay leaders usually agree on the church's overall purpose but sometimes disagree on the principals that guide their day-to-day decisions. To avoid conflict and keep a congregation focused on its mission, it is important for leaders to clarify and monitor their faithfulness to agreed-upon doctrine and theological principles for leadership.

### Determining the Nonnegotiables

The doctrine and theological principles for Christian leadership presented in this book are the *who* and *why* issues of faith. They are not negotiable and must inform leadership style and strategy in all of church life. Agreement and support on these issues among staff members, lay leaders, and the congregation can be an extremely positive influence in keeping a congregation healthy and happy.

Review the principles in the following section,<sup>1</sup> relating them to the biblical and theological foundations presented above. Decide to what degree you can freely pledge to use each as a guideline for your life and to what degree each principle should be at the heart of the life and ministry of your church. Then, in discussions with the church staff and with lay leaders in the church, jointly share your perceptions and agree on the principles that should guide the life and ministry in your congregation.

## Principles for Life and Ministry

### 1. Principle of Responsible Freedom

We must live and act within the framework of our basic commitments. We are created in the likeness of God to be God's people and to do God's work. Within the guidelines God has given, we are free to develop structures—the means, the ways, the how-tos—for being his people and passing on these basic commitments.

### 2. Principle of Servant Leadership

Christians are called to grow continually toward the likeness of Christ. This requires understanding and practicing a style of leadership consistent with the teachings of Jesus, caring for and serving others. A major responsibility is involving others in the process of discovering, developing, and using their spiritual gifts in Christian service.

### 3. Principle of Renewal

Just as in human life, there are cycles in organizations. There are periods of birth, development, peak strength, plateau, and decline. In this process the shift in priority moves inevitably from creating what could be to protecting what is—a subtle change in primary focus from the mission of the church to maintaining its structures. Although the life-cycle phases are sequential, decline and death are not inevitable. With appropriate leadership and God's blessing, a church can be renewed and persons can be redeemed.

### 4. Principle of Paradox

Mature faith requires that Christians be able to transcend rational thinking, to accept paradoxes. The simplest paradoxes are easy to understand: a child may also be a parent, water may also be ice or vapor, and one who is old may be young. But it takes great faith to accept other paradoxes: last *and* first; sinner *and* saint; judge *and* redeemer; sinfulness *and* goodness; God *and* Jesus; divine *and* human; Father *and* Son; God is love; God is truth; and the most unlikely possibility—you and I are the body of Christ! The ability to trust beyond human reason is the gift that allows us to have personal contact with God, to experience the mystery and wholeness of the Holy Other.

### 5. Principle of Acceptance

How we view ourselves and others influences how we seek to lead. Christ gave us the example of accepting ourselves, others, and institutions

as imperfect yet potentially good and useful in God's plan. All have potential for redemption.

## 6. Principle of Discrepancy

Discrepancy is the energizing force that enables us to solve problems and achieve dreams. Motivation and learning function best when people identify for themselves the differences between where they are and where they would like to be, between what is and what might be, between reality and the ideal that Christ has for us. Leading people to recognize discrepancies and act to resolve them is a basic strategy of life-giving leaders.

## 7. Principle of Authority and Responsibility

In the local church God has delegated authority and responsibility to the body, the church. Biblical teachings about spiritual gifts tell how members of the body are to work together under the lordship of Christ: as the church has affirmed *my* gifts, I am to take initiative and you are to assist. As the church has affirmed *your* gifts, I am to provide support. As we give to and receive from one another, we carry on the life and work for which we have been commissioned.

## 8. Principle of Unity and Diversity

We find our unity in Christ, his message, and the basic commitments to ministry, mission, and relationship. These are the *ends*, the goals for which the Christian body exists. We find diversity in the *means*, the ways by which we seek to live and pass on our faith. The *ends* of our faith are not negotiable, and people must choose to accept or not. However, the *means* usually are negotiable in order to find the best expression of God's will for a particular congregation. The body of Christ functions effectively when all parts accept their diversity in function yet work together on God's mission.

## 9. Principle of Inclusiveness

A necessary dimension of our life together requires interdependence among believers. All parts of the body are valuable, contributing to the life and mission of the church: young and old, male and female, doctor and grocery clerk, deacon and nursery worker, ordained and unordained, brown and white and black and yellow. There is no greater or lesser in the sight of God.

## 10. Principle of Faith, Hope, and Love

This is the underlying principle that holds the other nine together. The qualities of faith, hope, and love must guide application of the other nine

principles and permeate the lives of those who seek to be life-givers with Christ.

- *Faith*—the Christian term for knowing the unknowable, seeing the unseeable, touching the untouchable, experiencing the impossible, incarnating the Alpha and Omega—the Beginning and the End.
- *Hope*—the underlying conviction that all can be redeemed, forgiven, made right, work together for good for those who love the Lord.
- *Love*—the glue that binds hearts, minds, and souls—all creation—together in a timeless and spaceless demonstration of Immanuel, God with us!

### All Are Necessary

No principle stands alone, nor can it be emphasized to the neglect of others. All ten are the checks and balances for determining leadership strategy and teaching ministry in a local church.

## Paradigm Shifts

Apart from major shifts in doctrinal interpretations, denominational alignments, and worship styles that dominated the paradigm shifts during the last century, the church in North America is now being transformed by lesser shifts but ones that hold significant promise for renewal of the church as a missional body. Simply put, the church is on the brink of becoming more like the New Testament image of the body of Christ and the Old Testament image of the people of God.

As illustrated in figure 1.1, the paradigm shifts answer four questions about the twenty-first-century church.

### Where Does the Church Do Its Work?

For most of the last century, the church became increasingly centralized. Part of this was the growth in wealth among Christians, and part was the development of programs and ministries designed to operate in particular types of facilities, such as sanctuaries, fellowship halls, recreation centers, and Sunday school classrooms. The church building boom of the last half of the twentieth century created the most visible example of the church being a *place*. This paradigm shift toward missional ministry suggests that, increasingly, congregations and individual Christians are reverting to the concept that the church is *people*, not a place.

The church can be gathered in one place, or it can be scattered in a variety of locations; but it is still the church. Similarly, programs and ministries, once located almost exclusively in the church's facilities, now are located in a variety of facilities and locations, many without direct

ownership or control by church authorities. Even so, the church is present because members are dispersed throughout the community providing education, worship, pastoral care, social services, and other church-related programs and ministries on behalf of the home congregation.

Members come and go—gathering with the larger community of faith for corporate worship, training, and fellowship—but returning to their fields of service for evangelism and ministry.

*Where does the church do its work?* At home *and* in the community.

### Who Is Responsible for Leadership in a Church?

Until the first part of the last century, multiple ministers working with a single congregation was rare. The first staff ministers other than pastors were drawn largely from talented lay members, particularly Sunday school leaders.

Although many lay leaders contributed significantly to church life, ordained ministers held primary responsibility for religious leadership in the church and parish/community. Shifts became apparent, however, as the Sunday school movement and other lay-led organizations became more popular and were incorporated into the ministry structure of most churches.

Following World War II, a great recovery of congregational life resulted in growth of churches, development of many new programs and ministries, and a building boom—new churches and new educational facilities.

To meet the need for leaders, many of those who had been lay leaders began serving as staff ministers; they cared for various programs and ministries, provided leadership for age-group ministries, and handled the business and administrative functions of the church. In addition, theological schools began providing degree programs for those desiring to serve in staff positions; students in pastoral ministry and those preparing for a variety of other church and related ministries studied together and earned theological degrees. Thus, those who formerly were called *directors* gradually became associates to the pastor, or ministers of \_\_\_\_\_.

Increasingly, churches have *multiple* ministers (including full- and part-time) and many lay leaders. Whereas for the last century churches had a pastor and staff who were responsible for leadership, today there is a major shift toward multiple ministers and lay leaders working together in a *shared ministry* as ministry teams under the guidance of a staff minister. This transition has largely been the result of an emphasis on discipleship training, a growing lay ministry movement, and a conviction that all believers are called to ministry.<sup>2</sup>

Who is responsible for leadership in a church? Ministers *and* teams.

### How Is a Church Organized?

Traditionally, the church has been organized in a hierarchy. In fact, during the Middle Ages, this was called a “ladder of perfection.” Ordained church leaders were closer to the top, and the common people were at the

bottom. In some ways that tradition has influenced modern corporations, businesses, and even churches and denominations. However, Christian theology since the Reformation has focused on the equality of all believers; as disciples, they have the right and responsibility to worship, commune, petition, and serve God directly without any mediator except the Lord Jesus Christ. The hierarchy that we inherited has been crumbling. Today, with the ministry of every believer, organization has been reduced to only the structures and layers necessary to fulfill the mission of the local church. And in denominations and other church-related organizations, the hierarchy of ownership and control that has traditionally governed relationships is for many shifting to affiliations and partnerships.

*How is a church organized?* It is flat rather than hierarchical with only the organization necessary to fulfill its purpose.

### How Does a Church Measure Success?

Depending on denominational and cultural heritage, churches have traditionally measured success by a combination of factors such as baptisms, community influence, buildings, attendance, financial stability, faithfulness of members, and mission support. Essentially for the last fifty years most congregations have been happy when they have had a growing church and good programs.

A growing church is defined as increasing membership, attendance, and contributions. So, when churches are declining rather than growing, ministers and congregations are unhappy.

Good programs attract people, provide a meaningful experience, and bond them to the church. When a program is not functioning well, people don't attend, and the purpose of the program or ministry is thwarted. When programs are dying, the church is dying, and ministers and congregations are unhappy.

Today churches still measure success by whether the church is growing. But the theological understanding of church has added additional criteria beyond membership and giving, such as spiritual growth, growth in service, and growth in understanding and application of biblical principles. Yes, today's ministers and congregations still want a growing church. But rather than being satisfied just with having good programs, they look for the *results* of those programs. Are lives being changed? Are members practicing their faith at church and also in the community? Are they becoming missional, living and serving as Jesus did?

*How does a church measure success?* A church is successful when members of the congregation are growing in faith as the body of Christ, in all ways unto him, and disciples are discovering, developing, and using their gifts in Christian service within the body, in the community, and in partnership with other believers around the world.

## A Vision for the Future

Transformational leadership appears to be the necessary ingredient to help congregations renew their visions and commitments to be the people of God and the body of Christ in a new world. Shifting paradigms related to leadership patterns, worship styles, program and ministry structures, and institutional affiliations point to the need for revisiting and renewing our core theological, organizational, educational, and missional understandings.

Our biblical principles do not change, for they are eternal. But the methods we use to share the gospel and cast a kingdom vision for a technologically oriented society do change. So ministers and other church leaders need to make a choice: do we resist the future and try to maintain the status quo, or do we seek to be *life-changing* leaders, assisting congregations and individual believers to be all that they can be, in the likeness of their Lord?

It is the conviction of the authors of this book that ministers must revisit their call to ministry, renew their commitment to servant leadership, and, together with their congregations, redream their visions of the kingdom and what it means to be a community of faith, a church, in the twenty-first century. That is our mission for this new age.

## Transformational Leadership in the Church

To move toward transformational leadership requires that ministers *and* congregations be willing to create dynamic, active, developing organizations within the church that are responsive to the complex needs of its members, the community served by the church, and the regional and global mission fields. In addition, as leaders of the church, we ourselves must engage in our own process of transformation.

Before we can talk about transformational leadership, we must define what we mean. To do this, we will first grapple with the concept of transformative learning and transformation. Then we will consider organizational structure and leadership in the church. Finally, we will focus on transformational leadership in the church and suggest approaches to using the information in this book to enrich the lives of church leaders and the effectiveness of congregations in fulfilling the purpose for which they exist—to be the people of God and the body of Christ.

### **Transformative Learning and Transformation**

Learning is a necessary ingredient for transformation. Among those experienced with professional development, there are three primary pillars: *self-directed learning*, *critical reflection*, and *transformative learning*.<sup>3</sup> Self-directed learning is viewed as the foundation of transformative learning, and critical reflection is the central process.<sup>4</sup> Transformative learning occurs when an individual has reflected on assumptions or expectations, has found them to

be inadequate or faulty, and chooses to revise them whether related to one's personal and professional life or to broader social and cultural issues.

Figure 1.1

**PARADIGM SHIFTS**

<b>The Church</b>		
<i>Traditional</i>		<i>Missional</i>
Centralized	Location of programs and ministries	Dispersed
Pastor and staff	Leadership	Ministers and teams
Hierarchy	Organization	Flat
A growing church and good programs	What makes you happy?	A growing church and people on mission

People work out of meaning perspectives, frames of reference that serve as a (usually tacit) belief system for interpreting and evaluating the meaning of experience.<sup>5</sup> These perspectives are paradigms, which refer to our ways of seeing, method of inquiry, belief, ideas, values, and attitudes. They shape our perceptions of ourselves, others, and our surroundings. Patricia Cranton notes that our perspectives of meaning are formed through experiences and that one's past shapes the way in which each of us responds to and assimilates new experiences.<sup>6</sup>

There are two dimensions to transformative learning in the individual: the transformation of meaning schemes and the transformation of meaning perspectives.<sup>7</sup> The transformation of *meaning schemes* (the particular knowledge, beliefs, value judgments, and feelings that make up our interpretations of experience) goes with reflection and does not necessitate a major change in our lives. Persons experiencing this kind of transformation will correct their interpretation schemes, which makes for minor adjustments. Persons engaging in a praxis model of education will continuously experience a transformation of meaning scheme.

Transformation of *meaning perspectives* is quite different. Only when we are forced to assess or reassess the basic premises we have taken for

granted and find them unjustified does transformation of meaning perspectives happen. Normally such transformation is accompanied by major life change and leads to emancipatory knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

With *meaning perspective* transformation, we become critically aware of how our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about the world. Changing these basic assumptions opens us up to new possibilities, and hence we experience a transformation. Some researchers place this kind of transformation in the process of adult development rather than adult learning.<sup>9</sup> We are looking for this kind of meaning perspective transformation in transformational leaders. This transformation allows individuals to discard old assumptions based on outdated facts, and it can lead them to a self-awareness that is crucial to *transformational leadership*.

In addition, *meaning perspective* transformations can occur not only in individuals but also in mass, or a collective transformation. If we are part of a group, it is possible for the transformation to occur in several persons in the group and eventually affect the entire group. Persons who have undergone a meaning perspective transformation can be catalysts in a social movement. A meaning perspective transformation may begin with one individual and spread through an entire organization, indeed, throughout society. This would make it possible for an individual to transform an entire organization or society.<sup>10</sup>

## Organizational Structure

Organizations are complex groups of people who function as an organism. They are structures of interdependent and subordinate elements or units whose relations and properties are largely determined by their function in the whole. Most organizations are defined with a specific purpose in mind. The organization is generally structured to accomplish that specific purpose.

In a widely used textbook on organizational renewal, leaders are advised to view their organizations through four frames:<sup>11</sup>

1. The *structural* frame, which describes the basic issues that managers need to consider in designing structural forms that fit the organization's goals, tasks, and context.
2. The *human resource* frame, which looks at the relationship between organizations and human nature.
3. The *political* frame, which focuses on the power of political dynamics in making organizational decisions.
4. The *symbolic* frame, which demonstrates the power of symbol and culture in organizations. This frame spells out the basic symbolic elements in organizations such as myths, metaphors, stories, humor, play, rituals, and ceremonies.

In each organization a common thread speaks to the mission or purpose of the organization and how the organization is structured to accomplish that mission.

The units within most organizations are divided along *functional* lines. Each unit owns the responsibility for getting the organization to its goal. Each unit has a manager or leader whose responsibility is to ensure that the unit makes its required contribution to the overall mission of the organization. The functional unit may itself be further structured into smaller units that have the responsibility of seeing to it that the unit reaches its goals.

The collection of functional managers or leaders is normally considered the leadership team of the organization. As long as the organization is running smoothly and the goals are being met, there is little issue with leadership. Most would probably agree that the organization is being successful and fulfilling its purpose.

### Organizational Leadership

The leadership of the organization is that person or team of persons who have the responsibility of ensuring that the organization is organized to reach its goals. A normal leadership team would consist of the functional unit leaders and the overall leader of the organization. The measure of success of a leader is determined by whether the organization has reached its projected goals.

Most organizations are structured to run with minimal intervention on the part of the leader. However, in transitional periods, organizational goals and structures are required to change if the stated goals are to be met. When the environment changes, there must be change within the organization. Either the goals must be modified, or the structure of the organization must be modified. Leadership is about managing change and not about managing the status quo. A leader's effectiveness has to do with how well he or she can manage change, whether it is external or internal to the organization. Such change requires a clear understanding of why the organization exists and what the goals of the organization are.

### The Church

The church is the living body of Jesus Christ. It is to have functional parts as any other organization. We can envision the leaders of the church as those who have identified with the principles of Jesus Christ—the head of the church. As discussed earlier, the leaders in a church have traditionally been the pastor and staff, but now many congregations are being led by ministry teams under the overall leadership of a senior pastor.

Leaders must be prepared to cope with some unique characteristics, the most significant of which is that people serve the church not for monetary reward but because of a sense of duty or calling. For this reason transactional leadership sometimes is difficult. People in the church can

be extremely positive if they are committed to the stated goals, mission, or vision of the church. On the other hand, if their commitment is *against* the stated, or unstated, goals, their response will reduce the church's overall ability to accomplish its mission. Such reaction can lead to fragmentation and serious conflict in the life of a church.

### Transformational Leadership

The idea of transformational leadership has been around for some time. Researchers have developed differing but complementary definitions of the term. James McGregor Burns, in his seminal work *Leadership*,<sup>12</sup> refers to it as the process of pursuing collective goals through the mutual tapping of leaders' and followers' motives based toward the achievement of the intended change. Others suggest that transformational leadership occurs when all stakeholders converge on a compelling vision and seek to work in a cohesive body to accomplish a common purpose. In the church transformational leaders are those who share the vision, embrace the purpose, and give their lives to building up the body in the image of Christ. Consider this definition as a way to understand and explain transformational leadership:

Transformational leaders create an appealing and compelling organizational vision that often necessitates a metamorphosis in cultural values to reflect greater institutional inventiveness. To achieve the vision, leaders attempt to secure greater effort and commitment from members by bonding individual and collective interests. The Transformational Leader is also thoroughly aware of conditions outside the organization and works collaboratively with leaders of other organizations to ensure the goals of the whole community rather than merely the organizational goals.<sup>13</sup>

The most significant characteristics of transformational leadership include

- Appropriating a shared vision
- Communicating that vision
- Motivating others to own the vision
- Addressing real problems within the organization
- Encouraging others to put forth their personal best

### The Transformational Leader

One of the fundamental traits of a transformational leader is a clear sense of self-identity and worth. The transformational leader has enjoyed the emancipatory knowledge that has caused him or her to challenge old assumptions and view the world through a new set of lenses. Having been

transformed, the transformational leader is open to risk-taking and improving what he or she does. This person is not stuck in a paradigm that has lost its functional meaning and is not afraid to seek renewal, whether related to personal, church, or community issues. In addition to having been transformed, the transformational leader has the ability to inspire others to take on a challenge.

The trademarks of transformational leaders are empowerment, collaboration, creative problem solving, and shared decision making. As leaders, we are required to rethink relationships of power within our setting. This rethinking involves moving away from top-down, hierarchical modes of functioning and moving toward shared decision making, teamwork, and community building. We are about connecting people, connecting with people, and then inviting them and challenging them to live up to their strengths.

### **The Church as a Transformistic Organization**

As church leaders and as transformational leaders, our task is to make the church a transformistic organization. We are to transform individuals within the church, thereby transforming the church itself. Our task is to further use the influence of the church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to transform society. We manage an organization whose objective is to provide for more abundant life.

### **The Invitation**

Renewal requires analysis and then a strategy for change. Leaders must be able to engage the church in a dialogue whereby the congregation, particularly the leadership team, must decide what the problems and/or opportunities are and then decide on how to address them. Any attempt to dictate problems and solutions to the church will probably meet with serious resistance.

Most church members will want to follow their own hermeneutical understanding of Jesus and the Scriptures. It may be necessary, therefore, to do some biblical teaching before a transformation can take place. If and when the church can come to a common understanding of the church's major problems and opportunities, then and only then can strategies be developed and significant change occur. The congregation must choose. *The role of leaders is to proclaim the gospel and to invite response.*

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Strategies for change and guidelines for leaders are presented throughout this book, particularly in chapters 4, 8, and 21.