



## **Freedom to Lead**

“Freedom to Lead” is a practical book designed to help any Christian in a position of leadership in a church. It is based on the rich combination of wisdom borne of practical experience of the ministry, of coming alongside those engaged in the ministry and research into the life of the ministry.

It covers the following areas, devoting a chapter to each:

- Self-awareness and Your Ministry
- Journal Writing in the Ministry
- The Call to Ministry
- Expectation and the Ministry
- Power, Authority and the Ministry
- Family Life and the Pressures of Ministry
- Sexuality and the Ministry
- Ministry and the Devotional Life
- Recognising Burnout in the Ministry
- Overcoming Ministry Burnout

“Freedom To Lead” is aimed at helping those engaged in the ministry to:

- Balance family life and ministry pressures
- Set realistic expectations in ministry
- Understand one’s calling to Christian service
- Avoid or overcome burnout

The sample chapter is “Power, Authority and the Ministry”. We trust that you will gain benefit from it as a stand-alone work.

You can obtain a copy of “Freedom To Lead” at [http://christian-leadership.org/shop/#freedom\\_to\\_lead](http://christian-leadership.org/shop/#freedom_to_lead)

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## **5. Power, Authority and the Ministry**

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I answered the telephone recently to hear a young woman with a friendly voice offering me a bargain if I wanted to buy a mobile phone. She told me how wonderful the deal was and that it could not be beaten. I said that I was interested but would need to see the specifications of the phone and view the national coverage of the network. The young woman gave me scant details and I asked for more information in writing. It was then that I learned that the offer was a 'here and now, there and then' deal. Order now in this moment or lose the deal! Not given to instant financial decisions, I refused the offer. It nagged at me and for a while I wondered if I had made a mistake. On reflection I realised that I had been given the 'pressure sales' treatment. The power of the 'great deal' had been held over me and I had been expected to give in and buy. I have encountered this approach scores of times and rarely respond, but perhaps (at worst) because of human greed or (at best) curiosity, I often wonder what I have missed out on. I am a victim of power dynamics at play through telephone sales.

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We are bombarded with power play every day of our lives: 'Do this; don't do that; buy now; send no money for 14 days'. Many of us suppose we are immune to the influence of power dynamics, but we are mistaken. Subtle selling techniques are employed to draw us all in through smells, tastes, sounds, colours, touch, etc. Many organisations have learned that human beings respond to an array of techniques with our vastly differing learning approaches, and information is presented as a broadside to have maximum impact. While I consider this to be highly manipulative, I recognise that it is a business ploy and that financial success is important for the future of any company. So I bow to the inevitable in the commercial world; but what about the world of the church? Should we expect the church to be a pressure-free zone? Well, whatever we might expect, wherever there are people there are power dynamics at play.

Power and authority are linked dynamics that curse and bless each other with regularity. Christian ministers in any church setting involve themselves with power dynamics regardless of their church type or system of church government. Wherever one person holds out his or her hand to another, power comes into play. When one person leads another across a busy road, there is a leader and a follower. It is impossible to develop a system that is 'power free'.

The word 'power', in this regard, tends to have negative connotations, as many people are able to recall personal experiences or well-known stories where power has been misused. Power is really describing a force or an energy that can be used positively for the good of all concerned. There is no escaping from power dynamics in all walks of life.

### Power, Authority and the Ministry

This chapter will consider power and authority in the light of the church and its leaders. I will endeavour to describe the nature of power in the ministry and consider the handling of this force in such a way that it is most positive for all concerned.

What is really going on? There are many church types and expressions of local church. Let me take one as an example, say the Baptist Church, and demonstrate by way of introduction how power can vary even in defined power systems. The Baptists are governed, as independent churches, by the 'church meeting'. This supposedly gives 'power' to the people and alleviates any possible misuse of power by a minister since he or she is accountable to the church meeting. This also prevents, in theory, any other individual from dominating the church by his or her personality. In reality, however, there are a number of possibilities:

- If the minister has a persuasive style, many may be swayed by what he or she has to say and will 'vote' with the minister. This is power with the minister.
- There could be an individual or a family who have been long established in the local church. It is possible that this family may hold strong influence in the church and that people will vote with them. This is power with a family.
- One church member may be eloquent and passionate whenever speaking in a church meeting and people could be persuaded by the power of this well-presented argument and vote accordingly. It is highly likely that many church members are not exposed to the competitiveness of debate in any other place in their lives apart

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from the church meeting and are thus persuaded. This is power with the individual.

This is not intended as a critique of the Baptist Church as a governmental style but as an illustration of the ways that power and authority can operate in circumstances where a system has within its design the possibility of factors beyond their control. It is impossible to have any organisation, church or otherwise, that is fully in control of its 'power factors'.

### **Towards an understanding of power**

There are power dynamics at work, almost without us realising it, in everyday behaviour such as crossing the street when the little green man appears on the traffic light. Or in keeping right on the escalator. Or only eight persons being allowed in the lift at the department store. Or not walking on the grass in the park. Or a sign not to touch wet paint. The last example seems almost to be a challenge to do just the opposite. Many people find it difficult to resist touching the paintwork to see if what the sign says is true.

My task is not so much to illustrate all the points of contact with power and authority in our lives so much as to see the impact of this in the work of the Christian minister.

*And God said...*

Christian ministers believe that there is an aspect of the supernatural in their work and this often takes the form of a sense of 'divine involvement' in all that they do in the life

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of the church. They have a sense of God in their work, which is wonderful, but it can go sadly wrong!

Christian ministers need to have a strong sense of integrity to handle this power dynamic. They have within their grasp a powerful tool indeed. They may believe that everything they do or say comes directly from God's mouth, and may begin to operate with a sense of infallibility, because they believe that they are endued with divine power and authority. Some ministering persons lose contact with their own humanity and fallibility.

### case study

*Bill lasted just two years as pastor of his first church. He had started pastoring immediately after he had left theological college, with a strong sense of God and all that was about to happen. He 'knew' that God had his hand on his life and this meant that they were all, pastor and congregation, about to take a journey together that would lead to great blessing and church growth.*

*Things went well to begin with. The church appeared to be motivated by the changes that had taken place and with the calling of their new minister. His enthusiasm seemed to carry them along like a whirlwind.*

*Bill became overconfident, however, and began to implement changes to the nature of the fellowship that were too profound to happen overnight. One church member, followed by a few others, expressed to Bill that they were unhappy with things changing so fast and wanted more teaching and more of an explanation for what was taking place among them.*

*Bill saw this as a challenge to his authority. He was called of*



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*God and enabled by him. His authority came from God and as such he was not to be questioned about the direction of the church. Once or twice Bill said, 'If you don't agree with me, then you are disobedient to God.'*

*Within a month the church was split down the middle. Half of them believed that they had in their midst a man of God, not to be questioned, while others felt that it was unreasonable to take such a stance. All they had wanted was further help with the possible changes. They felt pressurised and dealt with by a heavy hand.*

*Two months later, when Bill was asked to leave the church, he left and took a handful of church members with him. He was unable to see that he had made some obvious mistakes in handling people. He had been 'standing' on his belief that he was hearing from God as 'the man of God' and should not be questioned.*

Bill had started well but fell into the trap of considering himself more highly than he ought:

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. (Romans 12:3)

Bill's story is not uncommon. Falling back on what 'God says' can be a protective scheme used by leaders when they feel insecure in what they are doing or saying and if they fear the challenge of influential people. Using the name of God to give extra weight to a viewpoint is also a power technique employed by leaders (sometimes uncon-

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sciously) when they want to get their viewpoint across most strongly. Ministry can become dangerous and fleshly when spiritual authority is abused and undue manipulation is applied.

### reflection

*Do you agree with this assessment of Bill? Reflect on your views here.*

#### *Power imbalance*

Spiritual authority can often be claimed by Christian ministers on the basis that they have been called to God's service. Spiritual authority can be 'awarded' to Christian ministers also on the basis that they have not only been called by God but that that call has been recognised by many, including the denominational officials where appropriate, and by the congregation. This is like a seal of approval and is often good for many years, valued nationally and internationally depending on your church type. This is reasonable and is the belief of many when it comes to calling a minister to a church. Some, however, feel intensely this presence of a 'man or woman of God'. They are overawed and look up to their pastor or minister as the voice of God.

This can put a great deal of pressure on the Christian minister and can lead him or her into difficulty. When the members of the congregation look *up* to their minister they can also look *down* upon themselves and award great authority to this person. A power imbalance is experienced (probably unavoidably so) that places huge responsibility

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on the minister to use this dynamic for the glory of God and for the good of his or her congregation. This can be difficult to handle and requires a good deal of honesty and self-awareness. The unscrupulous minister could exploit this form of hero worship for personal gain, which has happened on a number of occasions.

### case study

*The Revd G. G. Brown and his Revivals Incorporated urged the congregation, in an emotionally charged atmosphere, to give all that they had to the offering. This was taking place in an inner-city area where financial deprivation was high. A number of the congregation, with great shows of emotion, emptied their wallets and purses.*

*A group of schoolboys put in their pocket money and were called to the front and interviewed. 'Did you boys put in all that you had?' 'We did.' 'Where did you get your money, boys?' 'It was our pocket money that we pooled together.' 'Did you hear that folks? These boys gave their pocket money to the work of the Lord.'*

*The collection continued and much fuss was made when a bus conductor who came to the meeting straight from work placed his unopened wage packet into the offering regardless of the consequences to his dependants. The belief was that God was going to honour this giving because the Revd G. G. Brown had said so.*

This is a true story. Some days later the schoolboys reflected on these events and considered that they had been carried along by the emotion of the meeting and the methods of the minister. They felt that they had been used.

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Two of the boys questioned the integrity of Christianity as the result of this, and in their youth gave up their new-found faith in God.

Most abuses of power are not so clear as the story above. The learning curve here is not that you have just heard the best arguments against the abuse of power in the world, but that you are thinking about how you lead and what power motifs you may adopt in your ministry.

### reflection

*Do you realise how powerful your position may be to the people in your congregation? What incidents of abuse of ministry power are you aware of in your experience? Consider how your leadership style might lead to the temptation to abuse your position.*

### *Power tools*

At different times throughout this century, the media have reported numerous misuses of power. Throughout the 1990s a number of high-profile cases on television and in the printed news have revealed manipulative practices. There is a need for leadership in all walks of life, but human insecurity often means that people want to opt out of decision-making and responsibility and leave it to the leaders. In my counselling practice, many clients begin their counselling by communicating a need to be told what to do by me: 'I am in need and don't know what to do; will you get me out of this?' Some Christian ministers have exploited this need and have become powerful, and some- times wealthy, as the result of this ministry motif.

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Although there are incidents of deliberate power misuse or malpractice, it is important to note that power may be misused and people may be manipulated without Christian ministers realising they are doing this. Many have adopted types of ministry from others who have become powerful role models. What follows is a descriptive list of some of the 'power tools' that may be employed in the ministry:

*Power dressing* Dressing in clothes that create a sense of presence and authority, clothing not usually worn by other members of the church, which often draws attention to yourself and not to God. (This may of course be required or expected by your church tradition.)

*Power speak* Using volume to get your point across, with overdramatic presentation; working the microphone to create emotional swings in the congregation; frequent use of the words 'submit' and 'obey' when referring to an office held in the church.

*Emotionalism* Emotion may naturally play a part in worship, as coming close to God can be deeply emotional. This tool is used when a Christian minister plays on the emotions of the congregation with the raising and lowering of the voice, the use of crocodile tears and the frequent use of emotive stories.

*'God says ...' or 'God told me ...'* This is not a reference to the reading of Scripture but to the validation of a point being made by the Christian minister. This is the same as

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saying, 'You can't argue with this; it comes straight from God.' This leaves no room for discussion and is highly confrontational.

*Gang building* This is where Christian ministers gather a group of 'yes' people around them to protect and agree with their points of view and acts of leadership – another form of power play.

*Lying* This includes the use of half-truths and decorated truth employed by Christian ministers when they feel threatened and caught out in their behaviour or with their failure to carry out certain tasks. No one expects the Christian minister to lie and the Christian minister understands this when he or she lies to get out of trouble.

*Exaggeration* Like lying, this is embellishing the truth. Often used when trying to impress the congregation or colleagues, for example: 'I always get up at 5.00 a.m. to pray for you all.' The truth is: 'I have twice in the last six months got up at 6.00 a.m. to pray and fell asleep while doing it.' The Christian minister who feels the need to impress employs this motif and it is often coupled with a low sense of self-worth. Many people can tell when a Christian minister is exaggerating and Christian ministers are often caught out.

*Name dropping* The same as exaggeration. This is the need to impress when you do not feel impressive. Sometimes employed by those who are comparing their ministries with other 'well-known names', always as the result of a sense of inadequacy.

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*Atmospherics* I mean by this, Christian ministers who create an atmosphere around them of distance and rank. Like the Christian minister who sits behind a huge desk when people come into his or her office to have a pastoral discussion, or the minister who is afraid to get too near to the people for fear of being discovered as a fraud, weak, or in need, etc.

*Public correction* This is the minister who often corrects people's behaviour in public. This is a form of humiliation and carries the message, 'I am righteous and you are not.'

*Binding members* This is the Christian minister who makes it difficult for the church members ever to leave the church. Some have gone as far as to suggest that terrible things will happen if the person leaves, since 'God has said' that they should remain. This is a position of fear that says, 'If I don't bind the people then they will leave, because I am not a good enough minister to hold them.'

*Heroic stance* Where the minister frequently tells stories of his or her great deeds done in the service of the Lord. The emphasis always points to the greatness of the doer. This is PR work and is connected with low self-worth. When ministers feel the need to advertise their own greatness the emphasis has slipped from bringing glory to God, to glorifying self. This a common trait.

The above is not offered as a complete list. As I read again the list I have written I am aware that these motifs are in common use and are not so easily identified. I am aware that there have been times in my years as a minister that I

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have used more than one of these power tools, particularly when I have been at my most vulnerable and insecure. Not that I set out to use the tools to fend off others, but I simply slid neatly into using them without so much as a second thought. In my journey of personal growth as a leader, I am aware of a good many mistakes I have made along the way and I hope and pray that giving them recognition enables me to deal with my needs in a better way.

I am sure that as you look through the power tools list you can spot people whom you know or have heard before. Difficult though this may be, take a second look and think about your own ministry motifs both now and in the past.

### reflection

*Where do you see yourself in the list? Are there better ways of coping with your own need than using a set of power tools?*

### **Other ministry motifs**

- 'Hundreds die as religious leader declares suicide to be the only answer.'
- 'Religious leader declares that he will not be seen in public again until his followers have raised £1,000,000.'
- 'Religious leader forbids marriage.'
- 'Religious leader controls lives. Many give up their homes, money and belongings for the cause.'

Headlines like these appear frequently in the press and on our televisions. Although many ministering persons know



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how to use their position positively to the glory of God, behave wisely in their use of 'awarded authority', and take care to value the people whom they serve, some clearly do not. Often the misuse of power and authority stems from a driving or motivational force within.

As we consider the subject of power and authority, we look next at some of the types of leadership that are at large. I will endeavour to look at the motivation for the ministry type adopted. While the examples are a little simplistic, they are offered in such a way as to make them more easily recognisable. In real-life situations the motif may be as simple as the examples below, but offered with a measure of camouflage.

*'I am a man or woman of God, therefore I cannot be questioned'*

This is the position outlined in our story about Bill and can be understood as a position of fear. Those who hold to this point of view as a ministry type may well be hiding behind their office. They may feel a sense of inadequacy for the tasks they carry out and so hope to get through by a display of authority. These people are frequently heard reminding the church of the office they hold:

- 'As your minister I ...'
- 'My office among you requires that ...'
- 'Must I remind you that I am a man of God ...?'

It is difficult for this kind of leader to 'hear' any helpful correctives on their approach to their work. Although it is true to say that all Christian people are men and women of God, this motif encourages the 'elite' view of ministry and sug-

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gests that the people are in a different spiritual place, of lesser importance, to the minister. This encourages a hierarchical view of church life and leads to others looking for significance through promotion in the leadership structure of the church.

#### *'I am a servant of the people'*

This type of ministry is at one level balanced and helpful. It is a position of heart. At all times those working in Christian ministry need to see themselves as servants of God. However, it can also be interpreted as a position of weakness where the Christian minister takes no leadership role and simply becomes the 'do-gooder' who is always available. Here a minister can look for worth from the 'feel-good factor' that may (although not always) come from people who consider their minister as always available to help. This can amount to a denial of the minister's own and family needs in order to hear that he or she is doing well. Where there is a measure of weakness here, it is possible that a stronger personality may emerge and threaten the leadership balance of the church. Such a motif will work well, however, if the minister finds worth from sources other than the acclaim of the congregation.

#### *'I keep my head down'*

This is a position of fear. A Christian minister may become fearful of dealing with the many conflicts that arise in any church. Wherever there are groups of people gathered, there are usually measures of conflict, particularly if leadership has moved from function to elitism. The Christian

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minister is frequently required to intervene and this intervention is emotionally costly. Responsible leadership can bring high stress factors and none more so than with the conflict resolution mode. Many personality types seek to avoid conflict by ducking the issues, particularly since engaging in this task can bring blame to the peacemaker for interfering. Since this is uncomfortable for Christian ministers, they may have developed the defence mechanism of hiding. Some Christian ministers will literally avoid people in the street or the church building if they feel this will entangle them in a difficult situation. Avoiding the issues often leads to greater destruction taking place in the church community, so hiding may indeed make things worse.

*'I cannot be held responsible'*

Like the last point, this is a position of fear, the fear that the minister may be blamed for a set of circumstances that has arisen. It is a position of hiding that believes, 'If it's nothing to do with me then I cannot be held responsible.' It is possible that such a motif may stem from childhood where making mistakes led to harsh disciplinary measures. Ultimately, this motif results in failure to take responsibility and fulfil a leadership role. It may also stem from an experience of being 'burned out': becoming worn down after a long period of conducting the ministry with an over-developed sense of responsibility. Energy levels can reach such a low ebb that any responsibility becomes an emotional and physical drain. This motif results in manipulative behaviour where Christian ministers seek to extract themselves from difficult situations.

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*'I'll show them who is boss!'*

This is a position of anger, with pride probably lurking beneath the surface. It is indicative of people who feel trodden down, for whatever reason; who need to pull themselves up to their full height and strike back to prove their worth. We may see the 'I know what I'm talking about' heart or the 'they haven't the faintest idea what they're doing' heart. As we look deeper we will discover a form of anger causing this low sense of self-worth. Once again, childhood issues may be the root cause. Perhaps such people feel pressed down in life and now intend to redress the balance on the unsuspecting church that has called them. This is a dangerous position for the individual and the church and usually leads to pain and disaster.

*'Everything is great – do what makes you feel happy'*

These people are usually good to be around for a while. They can have the appearance of freeing others to do what they are good at. They can give people a sense of security in that 'all is well'. Sometimes, however, the driving force behind this model or style of ministry is one of avoidance of responsibility. Actually, this motif ducks the issue of the need for certain guidelines and boundaries for church life. Such boundaries bring order and peace and help to avoid conflict. Freedom becomes anarchy when there are no boundaries to delineate acceptable from unacceptable behaviour. The real issue here may be one of fearing responsibility or feeling incapable of the task to which ministers have been called. Quite possibly they are abandoning their role within the church.

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*'I am going to build the biggest church for miles around'*

This can be confusing even for the owner of the statement. Many good leaders have confused the building up of the church with establishing their own importance and esteem. Some Christian ministers are unaware that their desire for a larger church has much to do with their own desire to be successful and influential. Of course there can be a healthy desire for church growth and for a greater impact on the community around, but such a desire to succeed probably comes from the 'need to succeed'. Success is not to be despised, but a drivenness to succeed in such a way that others need to acknowledge it usually comes from a place of wounding. Many of these people grew up in a success-based society, recognising that their parents wanted them to do well and be seen to do well at school and in life. Unfortunately some could never earn the approval of those who mattered most and so are driven to chase the wind, to strive continually for success without a tangible, measurable target. Churches will never grow fast enough or large enough to silence the inner voice that haunts leaders such as these.

For about my first five years as a minister I played the 'numbers game': I would count the number of people in my congregation and be pleased when there were many and not so pleased when there were fewer than before. I told myself that I was simply interested in church growth dynamics, when in truth I wanted the sweet taste of success. Success for me, that is! I wanted to be the minister of a fast-track, fast-growing church that reflected me. I struggled with the rights and wrongs of all of this until I realised that

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I could get no higher in my life than I had already reached. I was and am a child of God from where there is no meaningful promotion. There came a point for me where I felt rebuked by God for believing in my ability rather than his to build the church. This may not be true for you, but it was for me, and I eventually stopped counting heads.

I am tempted now to offer you the motif that is most healthy and productive, but in reality no such model exists. There can only be right attitudes and helpful approaches, all of which spring from a spiritually and emotionally healthy lifestyle. Such a lifestyle can be neither bought nor copied but develops over time in individuals who are prepared to be travellers or eternal students in the journey of life with God, remaining in touch with their humanity.

If you see something of yourself in some of these motifs (and you probably will) then simply acknowledge what you see. Self-awareness can be shocking at times when we make unpleasant discoveries about our motives for what we do or say. Thankfully, God is full of grace and allows us to grow. He will help us to move from where we are, to better and more informed methods of ministry.

### reflection

*What feelings has this section allowed to surface? Can you see yourself in any of this?*

### **Power and character**

A few years ago some colleagues and I hosted a series of one-day conferences for Christian leaders at a well-known

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London conference centre. The first two were a great success. A list of well-known speakers and a topical subject seemed to be the winning formula. Around 1,500 leaders attended each conference. The third was at the same place with the same formula, except for one change – the subject. We had decided, as conference organisers, that one of the most pressing needs among leaders was the development of integrity. We set the topic and posted the invitations, but when the day came, only 150 delegates attended. When we went on to hold a fourth conference on another topical subject, however, there was a huge turn out. Integrity seems to be a thorny subject for leaders!

Character and integrity are the great safeguards and health-giving boundaries to the use of power and authority. World history cries out with horrific stories when character and integrity are absent. Millions have lost their lives over the centuries thanks to unscrupulous leaders. Thank God for his church where peace reigns and where leaders demonstrate leadership integrity that should be the envy of the world. Like a light in the darkness Christian leadership points the way to the correct use of power for the world.

Probably one of the biggest problems with the use of power is that many Christian leaders have not considered their power motif or level of integrity, and many have held back from the process of personal growth that leads to inner security and peace. When Jesus said 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid' (John 14:27) he was speaking of a deep-rooted, heart-mind dynamic that is the envy of the world. Leaders

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often work out their role with an insecurity that impedes their use of power and authority, and colours their leadership. If we can sort out a disintegrated belief system, then leadership from the place of peace will flourish. We can preach 'peace', but living with it is harder to do. Our belief systems and lifestyles need to become an integrated whole.

This may be an uncomfortable topic for you as you read it and you may already have decided that I make too many generalisations with my use of 'many'. However, my perspectives come from much research and from years of working on myself and with other leaders in searching for a better personal perspective. I have always been impressed with the way that Jesus was able to handle his critics. There was not a hint of insecurity to be found when mocked and accused. It seems as though he was so fully aware of who he was and of his standing with his Father that no amount of name calling or false accusations could convince him otherwise: 'Do what you like to me and say what you like, I am still the Son of God.' For me, Jesus is our model of Christian maturity and peace. Christlikeness is maturity, bringing an inner security that acknowledges that we cannot reach any higher than 'sonship'.

Acceptance of ourselves with all our strengths and weaknesses, in the knowledge that we are his, and through Christ made acceptable to him, is a route to deep security and peace from which may spring true altruistic leadership and use of power. This can lead to a healthy, safe self-evaluation that can enhance our leadership skills and use of the power and authority such roles engender.

I am unconvinced that our growth in maturity leads to a



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total sense of security or that we *can* ever feel totally secure in this world. However, we can make significant life changing and peace-bringing advances in this area.

### reflection

*What has this section of the chapter made you feel? Are you aware of areas of insecurity in your life and ministry and can you list them? If you can, are you able to reflect on the kind of leadership behaviour this has brought about in you?*

The following exercise requires a good deal of honesty and courage to reflect. It is a little self-test but BEWARE! Self-tests are not the final word on you and cannot see into your inner being. At best, they are helpful indicators.

I have designed this test, which I call the 'I' Test, as a simple procedure to help you discover the measure of your insecurity that you may experience with your role. You can beat the test and get around it. You can argue with its scientific value and point to its flaws, of which I am sure there are many. Or, you can take it honestly, and use the information for personal growth. Few of us will have a zero score. A high percentage does not indicate that you are unfit to lead; the test simply acknowledges feelings of insecurity that you can work on for the future.

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**The 'I' Test**

Place a tick to the left of the statements in this list that are true, regardless of how strongly so. Do the test quickly without dwelling on any question for very long.

1. I need to be loved by everyone
2. I need to please the people
3. I need not to be discovered for who I really am
4. If only they knew what went on in my mind
5. I need to be the best
6. I need to be seen
7. I need to be heard
8. I need to have attention
9. I need to have the biggest church
10. I need the best income
11. I need to pretend
12. I need to do it all myself
13. I am uncomfortable if someone questions my motives
14. I frequently feel attacked by the people
15. I wish people would take notice of what I say
16. I feel vulnerable
17. I am in pain
18. I must protect myself
19. I must make them see my strengths
20. I must make them see what I know
21. I must be seen to be mature
22. I must be more mature than they are
23. I must know more than they do
24. I must be an expert
25. No one listens to me

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26. No one knows who I really am
27. No one cares for me
28. No one understands me
29. No one can help me
30. I am not sure that I am intelligent enough
31. I am not sure that I know enough
32. I am not sure that I believe what I say
33. I am not sure that I say what I believe

(a) Add up the number of statements that are true for you and multiply by three for your 'I' percentage. The higher your percentage, the greater your feelings of insecurity are likely to be.

(b) Whatever your score, make a list of the statements that reflect some of your insecurity, think through the causes, and reflect on what might help you to change this feeling.

(c) For the truly brave: ask a trusted other, spouse, friend, etc., to mark this test from their perspective of 'you' and discuss your findings together.

If you know, either with the help of the 'I' Test or from general self-awareness, that you suffer from medium to high levels of insecurity, then you may want to opt for a period of professional counselling and reflection to enable you to grow in security. You will discover later in this book that I believe that counselling is a tool for the wise. Obtaining professional help to enable us to reflect on our lives is a mature thing to do and I strongly encourage Christian leaders to opt for regular periods of counselling as a commitment to personal growth.

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### **The best leadership power motif**

The desire to see God's church built up needs to be the central driving force behind Christian leadership. It is a desire to engage in the ministry in such a way that God receives the glory and the church is equipped. This represents freedom from the fear and insecurity that makes many leadership decisions self-focused, and enables the leader to look outwards. Consider the following passages:

This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority – the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down. (2 Corinthians 13:10)

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ.

(Ephesians 4:11–13)

Good Christian leadership, then, requires an empowering mentality along with good character. Christian ministers are people who have been awarded levels of responsibility that contain a measure of power and authority. Ministers often stand at the front of the church building and participate in the conducting of worship. They often lead groups and act as chairpersons of meetings. They are seen in the public eye to be in authority and are considered by the community to be respectable figures. The power and

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authority they have, which could lead them into potentially abusive situations, may be put to good use in the church and community. They may use their position to bless the church and enable people to mature in their walk with God. They may be effective in making changes in the local community that will benefit all through escaping the self-focused agenda.