



Claybury International

Growing the Servant Heart

**The Challenge of Developing Christ-centred
Organisational Leadership**

A Claybury International White Paper

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Organisations Modelled on the Character of Christ

God's call to Christians in Romans 12, to no longer be conformed to the world but to be transformed, applies to all areas of life and Christian endeavour. By the renewing of our minds Christians are to live a Christ-centred, Spirit led, Christ-like life. This applies as much to leadership as it does to any other area of life and service.

Jesus explicitly challenged the prevailing views of leadership with his disciples. In fact, as he so often did when he presented a Kingdom perspective, he turned the "normal" upside down. He confronted the disciple's views of power and authority, telling them it was not to be that way for them (Matthew 20). In the famous foot washing incident, as the king with a towel tied round his waist (John 13), he established the Kingdom principle of humility and the pre-eminence of others instead of self, and he challenged the disciples to follow his example. In these two events he showed that leadership in the Kingdom is no longer to be as leadership is in the world. In that marvellous hymn in

The challenge for Kingdom enterprises and their leaders is to consider how much we reflect the Kingdom character of Christ, as opposed to the world, in our organisational and leadership practices?

Philippians 2, Paul captures the underlying attitude of the heart of Christ the Servant King, the ultimate leader, and calls upon Christians to have the same attitude of heart as Jesus.

It might be considered that leadership is well addressed in Christian circles and in many respects it is. With a few exceptions, however, the Christian emphasis on leadership development seems limited to a theological focus on

church leadership in a worship context. There is one great area that has been consistently neglected and this leads to the adoption of the world's approaches by Christians, or the adoption of a Christianised version of worldly principles. It is that of the leadership of organisations and people. This confusion applies to both church and Kingdom enterprises¹. If Christians are called to be Christ-like then Christ-centeredness must be applied to this area of leadership too.

Excellence in leadership is foundational for the achievement of high performance and organisational excellence in any enterprise. But in the Christian realm, excellence is based not on the world's paradigms but on Jesus Christ. Therefore, for Kingdom enterprises, i.e. those that have Christian objectives and which are led and staffed by Christians, a distinctively Christ-centred leadership style, following the example of the Servant King, becomes a critical ingredient.

The issue of leadership is further muddled because in the main, *leadership* and *management* are usually considered to be synonyms describing the same management skill sets. In fact they are different and both are crucial to developing an effective, high performance enterprise of any kind. In the light of the misunderstanding and resultant reliance on management processes, compounded by the tendency to fall back to the world's principles, developing Christ-centred leadership excellence is an essential for the Kingdom enterprise.

¹ In this context an enterprise is an organisation specifically structured to deliver some specific good or service. This is in contrast to church which the Bible describes in terms of being a body with all members equal under the headship of Christ, maturing by growing to be more Christ-like. A church may be called to specific ministries which in themselves are effectively enterprises. Richards & Hoeldtke Church Leadership, Zondervan.

The challenge for Kingdom enterprises and their leaders then, is to consider how much do we reflect the Kingdom character of Christ, as opposed to the world, in our organisational and leadership practices?

This white paper briefly focuses on the Kingdom enterprise. It reviews the differences between leadership and management and the challenge of Christ-centred servant leadership. It also considers the benefits that accrue from the servant leadership style, which typically far exceed any benefits that arise due to other leadership styles and approaches.

Conforming to Christ and Not the World

Essential to Kingdom enterprises, that are able to serve God by fulfilling their mission effectively, is excellent and exemplary leadership. But this not a Nebuchadnezzar style “command and control” approach, nor is its foundation found in the world’s business school philosophies. Rather, because they are Christian organisations, it is distinctively Christ-centred and follows his example of servant leadership. This is the very style that arose from Jesus’ nature and which he modelled and challenged his disciples to adopt.

Christ-centred servant leadership focuses not on the leader but those who are led. It is not concerned with position, power and status of the leader. It is concerned that those who are led are able to achieve their full potential in their service of the Servant King, as they seek to fulfil a common and shared higher purpose, which is about the Kingdom of God. It is also concerned that those who are led grow and develop as spiritual people and as servant leaders in their own situations. It is about collaborative working built on the trust that develops from competence and integrity.

Essential to Kingdom enterprises is excellent and exemplary leadership. But this not a Nebuchadnezzar style “command and control” approach, nor is its foundation found in the world’s business school philosophies. Rather, because they are Christian organisations, it is distinctively Christ-centred and follows his example of servant leadership.

Such a style of leadership is not a theological construct, nor a theoretical exercise but it is intensely practical with intensely practical results. Servant leadership delivers massive efficiencies from an organisational perspective, making the very best use of people, resources and money. Three things that are in short supply for most Not-for-Profit Kingdom enterprises.

Christ-centred servant leadership is about organisations and their leaders being distinctly Christian in character, working out God’s core attribute of agape love.

Most Christian leadership development is focused on theological, spiritual, moral and worship matters. Because of this, leading people is sorely neglected, resulting in Kingdom enterprises and Christian leaders adopting secular leadership approaches which do not reflect the character of Christ. They can lead to the exact opposite.

The challenge then is to consider how Christ-like are our leaders and the organisations they lead, and how much do we reflect the world in our practices as opposed to the Kingdom character of Christ.

What is to be done about it?

Management and Leadership

According to Dr John Kotter², *management* is a set of processes that make an enterprise function as it was designed to function.

He describes *leadership* as the set of processes involved in creating a vision of the future and a strategy for getting there, and for communicating that to people in a way that causes them to choose to embark on the journey. It creates an environment that motivates people, that inspires them to want to make that vision a reality. Leadership creates those systems that managers manage or it adapts them in fundamental ways in response to changes outside an organisation, to seize opportunities, to avoid hazards or to raise standards. Both management and leadership are very important but they are not the same.

Management is about maintaining course in a stable, consistent, repeatable fashion. Leadership is about developing vision, identifying the destination, inspiring the team to embark on the journey, maintaining course, dealing with the forces and events that may arise en-route and that tend to throw one off course.

Often management and leadership are fatally confused. When the need for leadership is most urgent, most often more management is applied. It is leadership that develops and grows organisations; management maintains the status quo. Both are vitally needed at all levels but it is leadership that seizes the day and completes the journey.

Both management and leadership are very important but they are not the same and often they are fatally confused. When the need for leadership is most urgent, most often more management is applied.

Overlaying the Christian perspective, one can see management processes simply as tools and to that extent, like a spade or a pick axe, they are in the main spiritually and morally neutral. Leadership on the other hand is fundamentally about character and culture which inform one's attitude to others. This attitude determines how management tools are designed and creates the environment that determines how these management tools are applied. Being called to be different to the world, it is here that a character centred on Christ is vital in order to bring glory to God by maintaining a distinctively Christian testimony, in contrast to leaning on worldly principles.

Jesus, the Leadership Role Model

In Jesus, the towel bearing Servant King, we have a leadership role model, more than that we also have his instruction on leadership.

Jesus turned upside-down the disciples' normal worldview of leadership and headship. When he, the sovereign King, had served the disciples whom he led, by washing their feet (John13), something normally done by a servant, he challenged them to follow his example. His challenge was not about the superficiality of washing feet but to serve with a Christ-like attitude that seeks the benefit of

² Dr Kotter PhD is Professor of Leadership, Emeritus at the Harvard Business School

others. His act was a graphic illustration intended to challenge and instruct his disciples throughout the ages.

When James and John sought positions of power and authority (Matthew 20) Jesus challenged them. They were not to seek to operate in a power relationship over others, as did the leaders in the world in which they lived. Rather, they were to adopt the attitude of being servants of those that they led. These were the men that he was growing to be leaders.

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul exquisitely captures Christ's servanthood in that famous hymn (Philippians 2). Christ gave up his ultimate power and position and served in such a way as to achieve the greater good of mankind, in line with the Father's plan and purposes.

Jesus turned upside-down the normal worldview of leadership and headship. Our goal is to follow the example that he gave, becoming a Christ-centred servant leader.

The natural perspective of the world is that a leader's authority, and consequent submission to them, are derived from the leader's power and the sanctions that this power makes possible. The New Testament model established by Jesus is that authority and submission are not derived this way. Rather, authority is granted voluntarily by those who are led in response to grace and

concern for the others' wellbeing. Ultimately, in the New Testament, obedience to God's commands by the Christian does not come about because of compliance with his authority and the fear of punishment, but because of the desire to please the one who loves us, the one whom we love and in whom we delight (John 14).

In practical terms, examination of the Gospels from the perspective of Jesus' relationship with and development of the disciples shows many examples of how he instructed and modelled the principles of being a servant leader. Thus for the Christian leader, our goal is to be a Christ-centred servant leader, following the example that he gave.

Jesus' goal was that the disciples should be equipped to extend God's Kingdom on earth when he was no longer present. It was essential therefore that they not only be enabled to fulfil their potential in line with God's Kingdom purpose but that they also be equipped to grow new leaders in the style of Jesus. Jesus grew not only Kingdom workers but servant leaders. As part of the Great Commission (Matthew 28) he also challenged them to do likewise: *"teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"*.

What is Servant Leadership?

Dr Paul Wong³ describes Servant Leadership as follows: "Servant leadership is characterized by the desire to serve and empower followers and the belief that the best way to achieve organisational goals is through developing the potential of workers."

Servant Leadership recognises that focusing on inspiring and enabling people to achieve their full potential, in pursuit of a shared and common purpose, is the best way to achieve a high

³ Dr Wong PhD has held professorial positions at various universities including York (UK), University of Toronto, and Trent University (Canada) and served as the Division Chair of Psychology and Business Administration at Tyndale University College, Canada.

performance enterprise. The leader serves the members of the team in the sense that the servant leader's goal is to establish an environment in which they can achieve their full potential and to facilitate that achievement.

In contrast to what McGregor⁴ described as the Theory X management view, that workers are essentially lazy and need to be motivated by a combination of “the carrot and the stick”, servant leadership recognises that workers are in reality self-motivated, responsible and intrinsically desire to achieve (McGregor's Theory Y). A terrifying Biblical example of Theory X is Nebuchadnezzar's edict to worship the golden image or be thrown into the fiery furnace (Daniel 3). The carrot – stay alive, the stick - be burned alive!

In the secular business schools it was Robert Greenleaf⁵ who, in the early 1970s, coined the phrase “servant leader”. It is now a widely adopted, mainstream secular leadership approach. However, at its heart, servant leadership is neither a worldly nor a modern concept. As we have seen, it is found in the Biblical account of the life of Jesus Christ, who is the perfect exemplar. By examining his model we can identify a Christ-centred, Christ-like servant leadership style that works for Christians who lead people in any situation.

The servant leader recognises that focusing on inspiring and enabling people to achieve their full potential, in pursuit of a shared and common purpose, is the best way to achieve high performance.

Dr Thorsten Grahn⁶, summarises servant leadership as follows:

From the teaching and example of Jesus Christ we learn that being a servant leader in the most general sense means being:

- A voluntary servant, who submits themselves to a higher purpose, which is beyond their personal interests or the interests of others,
- A leader who uses the power that is entrusted to them to serve others,
- A servant who, out of love, serves other's needs before their own,
- A teacher who teaches their followers, in word and deed, how to become servant leaders themselves.

Applying these dimensions to a consideration of Jesus as a role model for Christian leaders we can see that, from a Biblical perspective, a servant leader is a person, who is:

- Christ-centred in all aspects of life (a voluntary servant of Christ),
- Committed to serving the greater purposes of God,
- Committed to serve the needs of others before their own,

⁴ Douglas McGregor (1901-1964) was a professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management (amongst others). His book *The Human Side of Enterprise* (1960) had a profound impact on management theory.

⁵ Robert Greenleaf researched management, development and education whilst working for AT&T. In 1964 he founded the Robert Greenleaf Centre for Servant Leadership.

⁶ Thorsten Grahn works for the German Christian media organization, ERF Medien (www.erf.de). He directs their international ministries in 25 languages for foreigners in Germany and he coordinates their worldwide ministry in partnership with national NGOs in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. He received his PhD in Mathematics from the University of Heidelberg and graduated with an MA in Organizational Leadership from Azusa Pacific University in California.

- Courageous to lead with power and love as an expression of serving,
- Consistently developing others into servant leaders, and
- Continually inviting feedback from those that they want to serve in order to grow towards the ultimate servant leader, Jesus Christ.

On examination we can see that Christ-centred servant leadership is an expression of God's agape love, which has as its concern the individual benefit and wellbeing of those to whom it is directed. The consequence is that these individuals are able to achieve their full potential in the common service of God's Kingdom purpose. If this happens, then the Kingdom enterprise must also achieve its full potential. What Christian Not-for-Profit leader or indeed what church leader would not want that?

A Widely Accepted Leadership Style

In its secular form, servant leadership is a mainstream approach to leading an enterprise; it works regardless of organisation size, delivering significant operational and financial benefits. It underpins organisational success by creating an environment which:

- Establishes a people focused, collaborative style of working that enables the staff to achieve their highest potential, delivering exceptional results for the organisation.
- Enables the whole team to buy into the vision and work coherently and cohesively towards the common purpose.
- Releases leaders and employees to form high performance teams, maximising their efficiency and effectiveness.
- Creates a collaborative culture in which leaders and staff are 'in it together'; all committed to helping each other achieve success.
- Fosters high levels of integrity and trust between all members of the team.
- Generates a sense of commitment to achieving the values, vision and goals of the organisation, delivering high quality work.
- Creates a culture which delivers best value and exceptional customer care.
- Facilitates both commitment to quality processes and innovation to continually seek and find operational improvements.

Servant Leaders create a collaborative culture in which leaders and staff are 'in it together'; all committed to helping each other achieve success. It releases the staff, enabling them to achieve their highest potential, delivering exceptional results for the organisation.

All of this is equally true for Christ-centred Servant leadership but it originates from a distinctively Christian foundation and ethos, not a worldly secular one. It is not another organisational tool designed to leverage the maximum performance from its staff. Thus its primary concern is not the organisation but:

- The embodiment of the character of Christ,
- A common, greater purpose that is orientated to achieving God's Kingdom purposes,
- A care and concern to foster the distinctive character of Christ in the people who are led,
- An integrity that honours God's own integrity and values that are based on Holy Spirit empowered, Biblical principles.

Christ-centred servant leadership has had a transformative effect upon Kingdom enterprises because everyone serves the same higher purpose and they have learned to work together to that end. In such an environment there are no losers.

For a moment, adopting an organisational perspective, it is legitimate to enquire about the benefits that arise from exemplary leadership conducted in a manner that is at least in sympathy with Christ-centred servant leadership. The measurements have been conducted in the secular world but are none the less informative. In short the answer is that such organisations outperform others on almost every level. They enjoy greater staff engagement

and commitment, higher quality and productivity, better use of money, higher levels of staff satisfaction, lower levels of sick-days and staff churn and better growth and financial performance: all things that Not-for-Profit enterprises need. See Appendix A: The Benefits of Servant Leadership.

The testimony of a Christian enterprise, engaged in mission, is that Christ-centred servant leadership has had a transformative effect upon them. They told us that servant leadership had provided them with the tools to be able to work together far more effectively than they used to; it had fostered an attitude that values the individual and generates a greater openness and appreciation of each other. It had led to increased levels of commitment and engagement among staff and, in a time of economic pressure, it has also enabled them to do more than they did in the past with significantly fewer funds.

Servant leadership enabled them to develop an attitude that values the individual and encourages the leaders to create a 'greenhouse' in which people can grow and flourish. It helped them to collaborate more effectively; for instance when it came to making choices about how to use their funds some voluntarily gave up their own dreams so that others could achieve. *This is all because they all choose to serve the same higher purpose and they have learned to work together to that end. In such an environment there are no losers.*

How to Develop Christian Leadership Excellence

Investment in developing a Christ-centred, servant leadership culture and practice leads to a spiritually mature, exemplary, practical leadership excellence that is modelled on Jesus. This in turn leads to a highly engaged team, organisational excellence and exceptional performance, all bringing honour to God.

Management and leadership development stand in stark contrast to each other. However, because of the confusion between management and leadership, most “leadership” training is actually management training.

Management training is about developing the necessary skills to successfully use management processes; applying the method, making the business predictable. However, that predictability is illusory; there are too many forces at work for it to be a true reality.

Leadership is about discerning and maintaining direction in the face of the unpredictable reality. For the Christ-centred leader this is to be done in a manner that is consistent with Biblical principles and Jesus as the model. Therefore, Christ-centred servant leadership requires the development of those characteristics that can envision a team, equip and motivate them to achieve excellence, enable them to confidently adapt to change, innovatively solve problems, inspire commitment, engender trust and achieve goals with distinction; all modelled upon the character of Jesus. This is as much about heart and character as it is about skill.

The primary perspectives of the servant leader are twofold: When his people achieve their full potential so will his enterprise. When they have all bought-in to a common and shared purpose, a goal that transcends their own functional objectives and which is about serving God, they will work coherently, cohesively and collaboratively towards the achievement of that purpose, for themselves, for the enterprise and for God.

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The keys to a culture in which staff are enabled to achieve their full potential are:

- **Spiritual Maturity**

Spiritual nature is a core element of the whole person, Jesus constantly developed the spirituality of his disciples and he modelled love for and obedience to God.

In the Christian enterprise, where Jesus is the role model, as opposed to the world’s leadership gurus, spiritual maturity is essential to the culture and the goal of serving God. Thus the Christ-centred servant leader must pay attention to this dynamic and foster the application of Biblical principles and spiritual growth amongst his team. Only in this context can the Christian member of staff achieve their full potential.

- **Effective Relationships**

In God’s eyes we are each unique and so individual people need to be treated as individuals out of respect for their God given differences and uniqueness. Emotional Intelligence is the ability to understand the behaviour patterns both of one-self and of others. It allows

individuals to choose appropriate forms of interaction with each other in order to maximise the effectiveness of their relationship. This pays dividends by enabling more effective interworking between colleagues, fewer and less severe conflicts, and higher levels of collaboration.

- **Envisioning**

To be truly effective, direction cannot be imposed but team members must voluntarily choose to work towards a common and shared goal. This goal is the vision of the different and better future that is their shared purpose. It is crucial for the leader(s) to guide and facilitate the development of this vision, gaining the buy-in and shared ownership of the team. Only then will they travel the same direction together.

- **The Highest Levels of Individual Achievement**

Jesus nurtured the disciples, developing them a stage at a time. When they were ready he moved them on to the next level. He had high expectations and presented them with deep and significant challenges but he never dropped them in the pool at the deep end without modelling how to swim.

Enabling people to achieve their best does not just happen; it demands that the leader deliberately set out to create and foster an environment that will support this goal. It requires the intentional nurturing, development and coaching of staff.

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- **Integrity and Competence**

Jesus never let his disciples down. They knew they could trust him and as he developed them. Trust derives from integrity and is an essential ingredient for teams. In collaborative situations integrity is shown in terms of competence and trustworthiness. So that others know they can trust a leader, or a fellow team member, that person must be able to do what they say they will do (competence) and then do it (trustworthiness); they must 'deliver the goods'. Without the trust that this engenders, higher levels of collaboration will not be achieved because in its absence individuals, believing that the other cannot or will not deliver, will tend to look after themselves first.

- **Proactively Dealing with Change**

Jesus prepared the disciples in advance for the greatest change that they were to face, his death and return to heaven. He repeatedly explained what was going to happen, he explained the benefits, he equipped them to do the work without him and then he coached them through the change before his ascension.

Change is inevitable. Where it is poorly led or just allowed to happen it demotivates, disempowers and disengages people. Where the servant leader develops a high trust level and leads the way, an organization develops an agility, allowing it to respond to the constantly changing environment, minimising internal resistance to change.

- **The Right People in the Right Jobs**

Jesus deliberately and specifically chose the disciples for the task that was to come and he trained them and equipped them for their roles.

An essential foundation for achievement and competence is to have the right people in the right jobs with an eye on both the present and the future. A mismatch between people and roles not only demotivates individuals but undermines the team and weakens the organisation. The issue is not simply about technical and functional ability on the part of the individual, but of personality and aspiration. The highest performers are those who are excited and delighted to be doing their job. This only happens when their job fits with the person they are and helps to fulfil both their and the enterprise's aspirations. The leaders need to maintain a focus on developing individuals to meet the future needs of the organisation.

- **Consistent and Effective Team Structures**

The team must not only know what is its purpose and goal, but its members must understand how they will work together. Each must have a clear role and understand what everyone else will do. The roles must be shaped to ensure that there are no black holes into which activities disappear, never to be seen again. In this way, not only will the team be effective but conflict is pre-empted because the opportunities for confusion, frustration and failure are reduced. The collaborative nature of an effective team means that team members will support and cover for each other because they all, equally own the team's goal.

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- **Innovative Outlook**

The most effective leaders and teams are always looking to improve the processes they use so that they can be more effective and achieve more.

When problems arise, and they will, they don't panic, point the finger or sweep it under the carpet. They seek to understand the real issues and find the solution that delivers the greatest advantage with regard to achieving their shared goals and common higher purpose. This includes maintaining an external focus on innovations outside the enterprise and a desire to challenge and improve current processes and methods.

- **Effective Communications**

Truly effective communications is the oil that makes high performance teams and organisations work. Most people believe that communications have been achieved once the email has been sent or they have said their piece. In reality, communication has only been achieved when the recipient has understood exactly what they have to do and have done it. Without this paradigm shift both personal and organisational performance will fall short and neither will achieve their full potential.

- **A Sustainable Work Environment**

All work situations include pressure but not all work situations need generate destructive stress leading to demotivation, poor performance, staff churn, illness, burnout and sometimes death. They are the very opposite of the needs of every individual and every

enterprise. The UK Health and Safety Executive have identified that each year around 37,000 cases of cardiac illness are due to stress in the workplace.

All the other factors in this list enable leaders to build a healthy and sustainable working environment. In addition there are two key dynamics that can make all the difference to staff: participation and recognition. Being consulted and included in the processes of solving problems, establishing vision and determining direction for the team generates a sense of being in control, which is essential to stress reduction. Also, being valued by leaders and colleagues, through the genuine and often simple, non-financial recognition and celebration of achievement, develops the sense that one's efforts are meaningful.

- **A Facilitating Leader**

In high performance, high achievement organisations the leader is not merely the director of operations – that is no more than management. Their role is to facilitate the achievement of

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their staff, so that their staff can fulfil their potential, so that the team can operate with the greatest effectiveness. Their job is to prepare and rehearse the orchestra and conduct the symphony so that the orchestra can achieve its highest levels of performance, resulting in the reward of satisfaction

and achievement for all. To serve his team in this way is the essence of the servant leader. For the Christ-centred servant leader the composer is God and the orchestra is seeking to fulfil his Kingdom purposes, his way.

Developing Servant Leadership

The question of “How to develop a Christ-centred servant leadership environment?” now arises. How can it be done?

Claybury International’s ministry is to enable organisations and leaders to develop the characteristics of Christ-centred servant leadership so that their staff can achieve its full potential. Practical experience shows that training sessions alone have little practical impact. They need to be supported by coaching that helps developing servant leaders to apply their learning in real-life, day to day situations. Coaching that does this massively increases the effectiveness of the training.

Rather than uncritically adopting the world’s leadership philosophies, and the approaches and techniques that accompany them, applying a Christian veneer, it is necessary to approach the task in the context of Biblical principles and leadership that bears the character of Christ. Any programme must enable individuals to grow a servant heart, growing into their full potential through a Christ-centred servant leadership character. It is through this filter that leadership strategies and tools need to be selected so that they are consistent with this character.

Growing the Servant Heart

By way of example “Growing the Servant Heart” is an accessible programme in 5 modules that can be completed within a year. It is an intensely practical course aimed at starting leaders on their journey to become a Christ-centred servant leader, growing a Christ centred leader’s heart.

Because imparting information alone does little to grow people, they need support to take information and convert it in to every day practice. Consequently the programme includes a “greenhouse” in which individuals are nurtured through coaching.

The programme takes a year because it is the start of a journey, which simply cannot be completed in the space of a single day or a single week. Its modules comprise:

- **The Jesus Model:**
Starting from the perspectives of Jesus the servant leader and “Who am I in Christ?”, it addresses the question: ‘How should I be as a Christ-centred leader so that others may be released to achieve their full potential for the Kingdom?’
- **Leading with Insight:**
Searches out how a leader’s concern for and awareness of others helps to develop the excellent working relationships that are necessary for the higher mutual fulfilment of potential. In essence this is about developing emotional intelligence.
- **Leading through Others:**
Examines how the Christ-centred servant leader can establish a highly effective and collaborative team that achieves excellence for the Kingdom, delivering its goals with quality. It looks at the requirements of effective, collaborative teams and the characteristics required of their leader.
- **Leading through Relationships:**
Discovers how to develop the clear communications and high levels of mutual confidence required between individuals if teamwork is to be effective.
- **Leading the Journey:**
Explores how the Christ-centred servant leader can engage the team in the vision journey and successfully guide them through the change that this journey inevitably brings

Learn More

If you want to learn about how you can develop servant leaders in your organisation please view our Christian leadership resource site christian-leadership.org or contact us via info@OneAnother.com.

Appendix A. The Benefits of Servant Leadership

Organisational performance is highly dependent upon the levels of engagement of staff which in turn is very closely related to the style and quality of leadership in the enterprise. Many studies (e.g. Kouzes and Posner, Wengel and Folkman, Towers Perrin) show that the highest levels of workforce achievement and engagement in an enterprise are realised where there are the highest levels of leadership excellence, not simply management. That exemplary leadership bears the hallmarks of servant leadership. Conversely, a high correlation between poor leadership and poor performance is observed. The gap between the two is operationally significant, which is why it is of interest to Not-for-Profit enterprises.

These studies use commercial financial performance measures as indicators of effectiveness; Not-for-Profit organisations and Kingdom enterprises will not be measured in quite the same way.

The performance gap between those organisations that enjoy exemplary leadership and those that don't is operationally significant, which is why it is of interest to Not-for Profit enterprises.

However, the studies serve to demonstrate the sustainable achievement that is possible with a more effective use of resources (money and materials) and greater staff effectiveness and efficiency. This is directly applicable.

Both Kouzes and Posner and the Towers Perrin's Global Workforce Study show that organisations exhibiting high levels of staff engagement, which results from high quality

leadership, deliver high levels of financial performance. Revenues and profitability exceed those of other companies. This results from the better use of resources and more effective achievement of goals; both of these factors do directly apply to Not-for-Profit organisations and Kingdom enterprises.

Towers Perrin looked at 50 companies around the world over a 12 month period and identified a significant differential in performance between high engagement/excellent leadership organisations compared to low engagement/poor leadership. They found a 19% increase in operating income for high engagement organisations compared to an income drop of more than 32% for low engagement organisations (*a 50% differential*); and also almost a 28% growth in Earnings Per Share compared to an earnings per share decline of over 11% (*a 60% differential*). Earnings Per Share is a measure of profitability and so reflects an organisation's efficiency and productivity, both of which are high in a highly engaged organisation with exemplary leadership.

In a study of 100 global companies over a 3 year period, Towers Perrin also identified a spread of more than 5% in operating margin and more than 3% in net profit margin between the companies with high employee engagement and those with low engagement. Considering that profit margins are frequently in the region of 10% or less, this is a proportionately huge difference in operational effectiveness. This gain is derived from a highly committed and engaged workforce which only ever arises as a result of exemplary leadership.

Half of the top 10 of *Fortune Magazine's 100 Best Places to Work* (published November 2012) are organisations which practice servant leadership. They include the SAS Institute with a \$2.7bn

turnover and now in its 36th consecutive year of growth and Zappos.com, an on-line retailer founded in 1999 with a turnover now in excess of \$1.5bn. Zappos.com was also named J.D. Power 2011 Customer Service Champion, only one of 40 companies so named.

One would expect a “Kingdom enterprise” by definition to be a best place to work. Alas the truth is often far different. However, as we have seen, special concern needs to be given to achieving high levels of Christ-centred leadership.

The essential point is that operational and financial performance is inextricably linked to the excellence of leadership in an organisation. True, it is mediated through exceptional levels of staff commitment and engagement, but they also only come about where there are exemplary leadership practices. In the Not-for-Profit world where finance and resources are precious, high levels of operational performance are paramount.