

**METANOIA &  
TRANSFORMATION**  
**Holy Power in Godly  
Organisation**  
**With Servant Leaders**

**Part 2**

By Norman Todd with Len Simmonds, Norman Spiers  
and others.

**Discovering some Underlying Principles  
of Church Organisation  
in the Biblical and Christian Theological  
Tradition**

## INTRODUCTION

**Part 1** described how we, the authors, believe that the time has come for the Church to apply more systematically to her own organization the spiritual discipline that her members are used to applying to their own lives. We had been impressed by the results of the teachings of W. Edwards Deming when applied to various secular organisations and, most importantly, by the similarity of those teachings to a secular presentation of Christianity. This had encouraged us to search for guidance in our own Biblical and theological traditions for the way we organize our work and worship. We worked on the assumption that Dr Deming had been (consciously or unconsciously) presenting his own Christian beliefs in language acceptable to secular organizations. The effects of his teaching are certainly remarkable. His influence has extended beyond Japanese industry (especially the car industry) to the Western World and to schools, hospitals, government as well as business.<sup>1</sup> Taking Deming's basic teaching as presented by Dr. Henry Neave<sup>2</sup> we attempted to trace its likely origins in Christian tradition. Dr. Neave knew of this attempt but did not participate in any way, though commenting that he believed there are many applications of the basic teaching.

Thus in **Part 1** we produced our first attempt at guidelines for the Godly organisation of the Church derived from Biblical and Christian theological tradition following the pattern of Deming's teaching. We realised that Deming was but one of many teachers in the field, and of several who also may have started from their personal Christian faith.. We hoped that similar work might be done on their teaching, but we stuck to Deming and found enthusiastic support from several of his followers who were professional consultants in the secular world.

From the first we were not merely producing guidelines, but launching a project that would involve Church leaders in committed application of the guidelines and to their continuous improvement from continuing experience. **Part 1** presented our work in booklet form and finished with plans for a small conference of interested Church leaders and Deming practitioners. That meeting took place in Grantham on September 24<sup>th</sup>. 2008.

In planning the Grantham Conference we tried to practice what we were advocating. We targeted people we thought would be interested and helpful. All invitations were personal followed by a copy of our booklet and a letter explaining carefully what we hoped for, namely a revised booklet of guidelines and advice on how we could most effectively develop our project. We booked a suite in a good business conference centre, and paid for it out of some funds brought forward from our previous activities in the East Midlands Group of MODEM.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, John Seddon in 'Systems Thinking in the Public Sector: The Failure of the Reform Regime and a Manifesto for a better Way. (ISBN 978-0-95500-8-4)

<sup>2</sup> The Deming Dimension (SPC Press, inc. 1990)

Planning the program for the conference was not easy. We had to talk through our disagreements. We decided not to use Power Point. We discovered that we should pray as much as possible for guidance, and eventually used the ancient Christian prayer, Veni Creator, 'Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire...' <sup>3</sup> A copy of this was included with our final letter to each participant just before the conference. We moved from a fairly prescriptive program to a very open one, assuming that all attending would have read the booklet, even though this flew in the face of much previous experience. We felt we could trust people and were honest with them. In the event this was justified. The main problem then became supporting our Chair in **not** thinking too much about what he wanted to happen and to trust in the anointing presence of Holy Power. This seemed to work very effectively.

Eleven people were expected, ten arrived, half local Church leaders and half Deming Consultants. All of the latter were also active members of their own Church. There was a good ecumenical spread. The general impression is well expressed by one who wrote afterwards. *Thank you for what was a very stimulating meeting. Overall I was struck by the wealth of expertise, interest and energy around the table. Many questions were asked, many opinions and suggestions made. All were attracted by the realization that management and ad-ministry (stewardship) could and should be Spirit-led. This would require a rigorous application of practical and mystical theology with careful testing against scripture and tradition.*

Records were kept and reports sent to all who had participated or had shown interest in the project and comment invited. The memories, notes and resulting thoughts were sorted into seven headings; the concept of metanoia and transformation, the need, the benefits, likely reactions of the reader, revision pointers, thoughts about implementation and moving on and, finally, the target audience.

At the conference Norman was asked to produce a second paper carrying on the project to its next stage of growth. This is what you are now reading. As with **Part 1**, we stress that it is still in progress. It is still a green paper, not a blueprint. In doing this Norman has regrouped the original pattern of Deming's Fourteen Points (via Neave). The new grouping seemed to grow out of the subtitle of **Part1**. This subtitle had emerged as a description of the original intention of the whole project.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix.

## METANOIA

It is necessary to remind ourselves more strongly of the hopeful meaning of *metanoia* that is not always apparent in the traditional English translation *repent*, which too easily becomes the way to earn forgiveness instead of the result having received it. We also remember that *gospel* means *good news*

*After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the gospel from God saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel.'* (Mark 1.14,15) Jesus attracted people who were hoping that God would send his Messiah to establish his just rule in a fallen world. Jesus said that was exactly what was happening through him. According to St. Luke Jesus returned to Nazareth and in the synagogue, read a prophecy from Isaiah, *The spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.* Then he said, *'This text is being fulfilled today even while you are listening.* (Luke 4.18-21)

Jesus came. His alternative life style was an embodiment of the hope that depended on the *good news* about *the reign of God*. He invited all to change their mind-set until it was like his. That change is *metanoia*. Seeing everything as he did. Hearing everything as he did. Having your eyes opened, your ears syringed, your perceptions healed, your understanding transformed into faith like his. He invited certain people to be his special companions, disciples and fellow travellers; pioneers in establishing the new way of living he came to establish and impart. (St. John 10.10)

Of course they regretted what they had been. *Simon Peter fell at the knees of Jesus saying, 'Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man'.* (Luke 5.8) But that kind of repentance always has an underlying basis of thankfulness for the gift of new insight. They began following, and being transformed into, his way, his truth and his life.

The concept of *metanoia* has a history enshrined within the records of life of the nation that used the word. The first change of mind-set (the hidden assumptions we take for granted in our hearts) was from worship of idols to worship of the transcendent living God. It was attributed to the call of Abraham and proclaimed and expounded by the prophets of Israel, most fully, probably, by Isaiah and his disciples. The battle for this *metanoia* is described in the historical books of the Jewish scriptures.

The second change of mind-set was from lawlessness to right living, uprightness, obedience to the will of Yahweh, the holy living God of the prophets. What we might call the norms and controls of society were expressed in written form and

became the Torah, the Law of Yahweh. This was attributed to Moses and developed by the prophets, priests and scribes. The point was that the laws and customs, values and worship of the people should be increasingly conformed to the will of Yahweh as expressed in the written Torah and interpreted by the informed leaders of the people. It was to this righteousness that John the Baptist recalled his contemporaries in preparation for the coming of the promised anointed representative of Yahweh.

Then came Jesus, renewing and fulfilling the *metanoia* of Abraham, and the *metanoia* of Moses by proclaiming and demonstrating the unconditional love of his *Abba, Father*, who was *I AM, the God* of Abraham, of Moses, and of the prophets and sages. The *metanoia* called for by Jesus is the change of mind-set to realising that all God's promises and commands are also free gifts, not rewards for right behaviour. *'There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom.* (Luke 12.32) Thus St. Paul could write, *So it is proof of God's own love for us, that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.* (Romans 5.8) The whole purpose of the coming of Jesus was that human minds might be conformed to his mind, as described in the great hymn in Philippians 2.5-11.

*Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus:*

*Who, being in the form of God,  
did not count equality with God  
something to be grasped.*

*But he emptied himself,  
Taking the form of a slave,  
becoming as human beings are;*

*and being in every way like a human being,  
he was humbler yet,  
even accepting death, death on a cross.*

*And for this God raised him high,  
And gave him the name  
Which is above all other names;*

*So that all beings  
In heaven, on earth and in the underworld,  
Should bend the knee at the name of Jesus*

*And that every tongue should acknowledge  
Jesus Christ as Lord,  
To the glory of God the Father.*

In this life we are never beyond the need for *metanoia*. Learning to live in the kingdom of God is our object, but transformation, or sanctification is a steep learning curve, more of a vertical ladder as in traditional teaching about spiritual growth, or an open spiral staircase on which we come round to the same outlooks as before, but from a higher vantage point of greater understanding.

## TRANSFORMATION

*Metanoia* leads to transformation. Other words describing the change are sanctification (becoming saints), rebirth, regeneration, birth from above, growing into the likeness of Christ, having the mind of Christ. *I urge you then, brothers, remembering the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, dedicated and acceptable to God; that is the kind of worship for you as sensible people. Do not model your behaviour on the contemporary world, but let the renewing of your minds transform you, so that you may discern for yourselves what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and mature.* (Romans 12.1,2)

*Metanoia* in the process of sanctification is recognition of the next rung in the ladder of our upward calling. Again it leads to sorrow for having missed the target we were aspiring to, but the sorrow is turned into joy as grace is added to grace. There is a place for penitential discipline, but always realising that it is the result of being forgiven, not that it is a work that earns forgiveness. The relief and joy are so powerful that they led some enthusiastic Christians to wonder if Paul meant that they *should remain in sin so that more and more grace might be given.* (Romans 6.1) His reply was short; *Out of the question!*

However, progress in dealing with our own propensity to backslide is a struggle. *With so many witnesses in a great cloud all around us, we too, then, should throw off everything that weighs us down and the sin that clings so closely, and with perseverance keep running in the race which lies ahead of us.* (Hebrews 12.1)

This temptation is always with us. Our backsliding is in all four stages of the great gift of *metanoia*; from idolatry to the Living God; from immorality to saving justice; from justification by obedience to the Law to the freedom of grace; from ever more fully accepting grace in transformation. Backsliding was there at the beginning as is clear from the New Testament Epistles. Of the seven churches of Asia addressed in the last book of the Bible five are urged by the Spirit to repent. For example, in the message to Laodicea the Spirit is saying;

*You say to yourself: I am rich, I have made a fortune and have everything I want, never realising that you are wretchedly and pitifully poor, and blind and naked too. I warn you, buy from me the gold that as been tested in the fire to make you truly rich, and white robes to clothe you and hide your shameful nakedness, and ointment to put on your eyes to enable you to see. I reprove and train those whom I love: so repent [i.e. change] in real earnest.* (Revelation 3.17-19)

## HOLY POWER<sup>4</sup>

Jesus received from his human ancestors through the normal transmission of experience in tradition a conception of the power of the God of the patriarchs and prophets. He was aware of a special, almost violent inrush of Spirit at his baptism. When he healed the woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage, he *was aware of the power that had gone out of him*. (St. Mark 6.30) The Gospels refer to the power of Jesus to put right all that was wrong: the power he gave to his disciples when he sent them out two by two to deliver his proclamation of the kingdom of God close at hand and to heal the sick; the power he would pour on his disciples from on high after his death. *But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name who were born not from human stock or human desire or human will but from God himself*. (St. John 1.12-13)

The New Testament pulsates with this Holy Power for which several words are used. A large part of transformation is learning to live in the availability of this power rather than in the assumption that the power of evil is in ultimate control. When the seventy-two disciples who had been sent out in pairs with instructions *Cure those who are sick in it [the house of your hosts], and say, 'The kingdom of God is very near to you'*, reported their success to Jesus he said to them, *I watched Satan fall like lightning from heaven*. Being born again is waking up in a new reality, realising that it is the old life being transformed into new and abundant life; and then learning to live the change incrementally for the rest of our earthly life. Instead of Holy Power being experienced as extraordinary as in the old life we increasingly realise that it is **ordinary** in the kingdom of God. This is at least part of the meaning of the *koinonia* of Holy Spirit, the ordinariness of Holy Power.

St. John describes the risen Jesus breathing his Spirit into his disciples, having previously promised that he would send another *Paraclete* to them. That Greek word gives the idea of God's Spirit coming alongside the human spirit with infinite courtesy and calling out all the stifled potential for communion with God. He is personal power enabling personal relationship and effecting the change that is continuing *metanoia* and transformation.

St. Paul prays for the churches he writes to.

*We also pray continually that our God will make you worthy of his call, and by his power fulfil all your desires for goodness, and complete all that you have been doing through faith; so that the name of our lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and you I him, by the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ*. (2 Thessalonians 1.11-12)

*May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, how rich is the glory of the heritage he offers among his holy people, and how extraordinarily great is the power that he has exercised for us believers; this accords*

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<sup>4</sup> A valuable careful analysis is given in Stephen Sykes, *Power and Christian Theology* (Continuum 2006) ISBN: 0-8264-7651-1.

*with the strength of his power at work in Christ, the power that he exercised in raising him from the dead and enthroning him at his right hand, in heaven, far above every principality, ruling force, power or sovereignty, or any other name that can be named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. He has put all things under his feet, and made him, as he is above all things, the head of the Church; which is his body, the fullness of him who is filled, all in all. (Ephesians 1.17-23)*

See also Ephesians 3.14-19; Colossians 1.9-14.



## GODLY ORGANISATION

The result of Jesus' life; his calling, proclamation, teaching, training disciples, betrayal, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, sending of the Paraclete; was the creation of a growing group of people in which his work, his mission and ministry, continued. They began learning how to live together in communion with God through Jesus Christ, and with each other, realising that they were sent into the world to play their full part in converting it into the kingdom of God. This is another steep learning curve.

Here we use 'organisation' to indicate the human activity of cooperation or collaboration whereby two or more work together on a particular task. It is the phenomenon of 'I' becoming 'we' in common intent. The intent can be anything, good or bad, making a home, running a business, fighting an enemy, making a law, defrauding the public, building a house or destroying one. Godly organisation is cooperation with God in God's intent. As we remembered in **Part 1** when Jesus was asked, *What must we do if we are to carry out God's work?* he replied, *This is carrying out God's work: you must believe in the one he has sent.* (St. John 6.28-29) Particularly in St. John's Gospel 'doing God's work' is what Jesus has come to do, and what his followers are to continue when inspired with his power. *My food is to do the will of the one who sent me, and to complete his work.* (St. John 4.34)

Jesus taught his followers to pray for our union with him and that his work would continue in us. The *fruits of the Spirit* in Galatians 5.22 all enable 'I' to become 'we' with God and our neighbours instead of yielding to self-indulgence, which prevents inheritance of the kingdom of God. The *gifts of the Spirit* in 1 Corinthians 12 are all to enable Jesus' disciples, baptised into him, to work together as the single body of Christ. There follows in chapter 13 the famous hymn to the greatest gift, the best way of all.

The body is one of many metaphors used to describe the Church in the Bible and elsewhere. As with all metaphors, an analogy is being drawn. Though in some ways the Church is a body, it is a funny kind of body, a funny kind of temple, race, army, etc. Empirically the Church is a collection of people attempting to live the life pioneered by Jesus. They meet, argue, form factions, have solemn assemblies and meetings, as well as carrying on all the normal necessities of life. They seek to learn how to become what they hope to be. They seek to love their neighbour as themselves and to love their enemies, to include everyone in their own 'we'.

It is this empirical work, what is actually done, the nitty-gritty of organisation, that we are attempting to bring under the scrutiny of '*metanoia* for transformation'. The way everything is done in the Church has to be looked at honestly and ways of improvement implemented. The way the whole organisation, people in working relationship<sup>5</sup>, a system of systems, actually WORKS; that is what the Church, like every other organisation, should be aware of and, where appropriate, ask forgiveness

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<sup>5</sup> For an exposition of the idea of 'people-in-working-relationship' see *The hidden depths of organizations: people in working relationships*, in *Leading, Managing, Ministering* edited by John Nelson (Canterbury Press 1999)

for. Only so can the Church become what she is called to be, the exemplar and the enabler, the effective promise, of the kingdom of God.

Life really together with only one 'we' in which all are included requires humility in which self-indulgence is denied and the values of the Beatitudes are practiced. No Church is yet a perfect organisation, yet a penitent Church can witness to what it should be and aims towards becoming. It also witnesses, at least in aspiration, to what humankind is to become within a renewed creation. *With the intention that the whole creation itself might be freed from its slavery to corruption and brought into the same glorious freedom as the children of God.* (Romans 8.21)

Within the history of the Church various reform movements have appeared witnessing to the recognition of the call to *metanoia*. In Desert monasticism through Cassian to the Rule of St. Benedict and other religious orders; in Reformation and Counter-Reformation; Brotherhoods, Sisterhoods; in the Ecumenical Movement; the call for *metanoia* has brought change. Transformation often seems to come noticeably in lurches rather than in steady growth but the steady growth is also happening. Rather like the secular theory of the progress of scientific discovery in steady growth punctuated by more violent paradigm shifts.

The Church, following Israel, has always given importance to documentation. We have the Bible itself and the other writings around it. We have from the earliest times had prayer books, liturgies, litanies, creeds, confessions, institutes, rules, constitutions, canon law etc. These are documents that are about the organisation of the Church, its worship, formation, governance: how best to achieve and maintain the results for which it exists. All these documents have to be revised, translated, developed, kept relevant in the living tradition by which continuity is sought. They also have, in our opinion, to be augmented by new insights, new learning and developing wisdom as described generally by David Ford in *Christian Wisdom: Desiring God and Learning in Love*.<sup>6</sup>

*That cry of Jesus to the Church [the seven Churches in the first two chapters of Revelation] to listen, echoing the Old Testament cry, 'Hear O Israel', constitutes the church as a school of the wisdom of Christ, alert to his words and to his own embodiment of them.* (Page 254)

*As with unity, the claim that the church is holy seems to be contradicted by the reality of much church life in the past and the past and the present. Biblical Israel had the same problem of failing repeatedly to live up to God's call to holiness, as does Judaism. In both Christianity and Judaism the answer has not been to give up on holiness but to acknowledge the necessity of habitual repentance.* (Page 261)

The documents also have to be transparent; open to scrutiny. There is a kind of interaction between the past and the present via the documents and oral traditions.

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<sup>6</sup> Cambridge University Press, 2007.

These documents, the earliest written on stone, clay tablets, parchment papyrus, are guidelines. They are not ruts to be followed blindly. They are advice for pioneers from the pathfinders who followed the Pathfinder who is the new and living way through the curtain that separated us from God. (See Hebrews 10.19-25 and 1 Peter 2.4-10)

What are the guidelines<sup>7</sup> for the Church, the whole Church on earth with the whole potential in all her separated parts, consisting of people in working relationship seeking to continue the work that Jesus began? The metaphors are helpful but we have to come back to the solemn assemblies, the meetings, the decisions, the financial and personal support, the learning and training, the synods seeking the common way for us to follow together, the groups of, as yet un-named reformers and explorers. What are the guidelines for the actual work of the Church whether it be two or three gathered in the name of Christ and coming to a common mind with him and with one another, or any of the larger groups and assemblies, and for all the activity that proceeds, ultimately from God, but becoming incarnate in the living Church? She is a living hierarchy of service, inclusion and worship of the living God by the whole of creation.

The Church is also *waiting with eagerness for the children of God to be revealed...having this hope for what we cannot yet see...able to wait with persevering confidence. And as well as this, the Spirit too comes to us in our weakness, for, when we do not know how to pray properly, the Spirit personally makes our petitions for us in groans that cannot be put into words; and he who can see into all hearts knows what the Spirit means because the prayers that the Spirit makes for God's holy people are always in accordance with the mind of God.* (Romans 8.18-27)

Probably the most important part of the church is at the local level, whatever form it takes. This is where ordinary life is being changed, where interaction with the world takes place and where resources are found. In the New Testament there is a lot of guidance about human relationship but not much about organisation. This is not because there was no organisation but because it was taken for granted. There are brief references to the life of local Churches, and to communication between them; there was need to organise the *daily distribution* to widows in the Jerusalem Church (Acts 6.1-6); St. Paul returned to some of the Churches he had founded, *consolidating* them (Acts 16.41). There are hints of how things are done as well as statements about how not to do them.

Rather like Moliere's character who discovered, 'Good Heavens! For more than forty years I have been speaking prose without knowing it', humans have discovered they have always lived in organisations. And the spotlight has been turned on the phenomenon in historical and scientific scrutiny. This new understanding of how

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<sup>7</sup> Fifteen hundred years ago, St. Benedict wrote guidelines for people living and working together in the messy, disordered, unpredictable realm that is real life. These guidelines are traditionally referred to as 'The Rule of St. Benedict'. However, 'The root meaning of the Latin and Greek words translated as "rule" is *trellis*. St. Benedict was not promulgating rules for living; he was establishing a framework on which a life can grow. While a branch of a plant climbing a trellis cannot go in any direction it wants, you cannot know in advance just which way it will go. The plant is finding its own path, within a structure. The space in which it moves is open, though not without boundaries'. (Note provided by Gillian Stamp quoting from Henry, Patrick, *Benedict's Dharma*, 2001)

human organisation ‘works’ can be combined with Christian awareness of the ‘kingdom of God’ or kingdom of heaven’. It is often said that a better translation than ‘kingdom’ would be ‘rule’, but this can lead to ignoring the results of that rule in the behaviour and – yes – organisation of its human subjects. This, surely, is the discovery of Godly organisation within God’s sample holy people.

Our emphasis on the actual internal working of the Church in every way and at all levels of structure is not by any means unprecedented. The rule of St. Benedict is influential beyond the Order he founded, and could be more so.

For example. *As often as any important business has to be done in the monastery, let the abbot call together the whole community and himself set forth the matter. And, having heard the advice of the brethren let him take counsel with himself and then do what he shall judge to be most expedient. Now the reason why we have said that all should be called to council, is that God often reveals what is better to the younger. Let the brethren give their advice with all deference and humility, nor venture to defend their opinions obstinately; but let the decision depend rather on the abbot’s judgement, so that when he has decided what is the better course, all may obey. However, just as it is proper to disciples to obey their master, so it is becoming that he on his part should dispose all things with prudence and justice.* (The first paragraph of Chapter 3)<sup>8</sup>

As well as a Rule for religious orders there are the Constitutions addressing the way that things should be done.

For example, St. Teresa’s Constitutions include under the heading ‘Of the Humble Offices’, *The rota for sweeping the house must begin with the mother prioress, so that she may set a good example in everything.*

It was *method* that earned the Wesleyans their nickname. Michael Ramsey (later, Archbishop) wrote *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, at least partly, from the conviction that *the structure of the Catholic Church has great significance in the Gospel of God, and that apostolic succession is important on account of its evangelical meaning.* Is not John Milbank arguing, at least implicitly for the specific Church structure as revealing the purposes of God?

Perhaps most recently the martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who visited Anglican religious orders during his pastorate in England, formed his own ‘brotherhood’, and during his last weeks of freedom live in a Benedictine monastery, gave great importance to the empirical human structure of the Church. This emphasis was according to the Editors’ *Afterword*, part of the theology of Bonhoeffer in his seminal *Life Together*.

*Bonhoeffer seeks to show a continuity in the event of revelation, both by grounding the concrete community [of the Church] in the reality and activity of Christ and by seeing it become actual through Christ in the present through Word and Spirit. This idea finds its expression in frequently occurring phrases such as “Christ existing as community” or “the community is the presence of Christ himself.” The church, understood as the form of revelation, overcomes from the outset the atomistic*

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<sup>8</sup> The Rule of St Benedict translated and edited by Abbot Justin McCann (Burns Oates 1952)

*misunderstanding of the church as a secondary association of religiously or ethically motivated individuals. Therefore, the way of access to transcendence must include the church in its specific structure, its mission, and the form it takes to carry out its mission.*<sup>9</sup>

There are other examples, but also recognition that more guidelines could be beneficial. John Walker described a new initiative with examples of two sets on guidelines. One was for a parish Baptismal Team and the other for managing an interregnum in a parish church<sup>10</sup>

## **SERVANT LEADERS**

For the Church there is only one leader; Jesus the Anointed by God the Father. The rest of the Church is a company, a community, of followers. Jesus is the Head of the Church, The Firstborn, The Author and Finisher, The First and the Last, The Living Stone, The Great High Priest and Sacrifice, The Servant *I have chosen*. So a Church leader is a follower leading others in following a Servant who has opened a new and living way for all to communion with God the Father in the Power of the Spirit. The Leader gave his example of leading when he *got up from table, removed his outer garments and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples feet and to wipe them with the towel he was searing.* (St. John 13.4-5)

In *Life Together* Bonhoeffer wrote, “An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest” (Luke 9:46). *We know who sows this dissension in the Christian community. But perhaps we do not think enough about the fact that no Christian community ever comes together without this argument appearing as a seed of discord. No sooner are people together than they begin to observe, judge, and classify each other. Thus, even as Christian community is in the process of being formed, an invisible, often unknown, yet terrible life-and-death struggle commences. “An argument started among them” – this is enough to destroy a community... There is no time to lose here, because from the first moment two people meet, one begins looking for a competitive position to assume and hold against the other.*<sup>11</sup>

A similar occurrence is recorded later in the same Gospel. *An argument also began between them about who should be reckoned the greatest; but he said to them, ‘Among the gentiles it is the kings who lord it over them, and those in authority over them are given the title Benefactor. With you this must not happen. No; the greatest among you must behave as if he were the youngest, the leader as if he were the one who serves. For who is the greater; the one at table or the one who serves? The one at table, surely? Yet here am I among you as one who serves!’* (St. Luke 22.24-27)

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<sup>9</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible* (Fortress Press). ISBN 0-8006-8325-0. Page 132.

<sup>10</sup> John Walker, *Quality Ministry*, in *John Nelson (Ed), Management and Ministry* (Canterbury Press 1966). ISBN 1-85311-142-2. Pages 141-146. This work has been continued by Haydon Wilcox, who can be contacted at [haydonwilcox@mac.com](mailto:haydonwilcox@mac.com)

<sup>11</sup> Page 93.

It is a problem for both Church leaders and Church followers. How does the leader guard against lording it over the followers, or the followers from wanting to be lorded over? What do the followers do when they realise that their leader is lording it over them? Swallow their justifiable resentment and collude? Very few lay people speak out. They excuse the leader because he or she 'is too busy', or 'not been well'. In fact they are letting him or her proper responsibility, and the work of the organisation is hindered. If the problem is recognised *metanoia and transformation* is possible. Unfortunately it is usually glossed over in a culture that prefers 'niceness' to honesty. Therefore some method of detecting it must be included in the work they are doing; synod, council, committee, study group, ministry of Word and Sacrament, or any other. This is good Christian realistic practice where human failure is always possible and often frequent. Who is responsible for ensuring that a suitable and effective check is in place and understood? A sense of humour to laugh at one's own folly can also help, as long as the serious side of it is recognised and genuine *metanoia* and humility practised.

It is also a problem because every follower is a potential leader, and may be called upon to witness to the faith that has been granted in the words he or she will be given. (St. Matthew 10.19-20) This applies not only to times of persecution but also to the casual remark, or when one is lorded over.

There are many relevant quotations from Gregory the Great, St. Bernard, Richard Baxter, Michael Ramsey. Here is another from Bonhoeffer.

*The community of faith does not need brilliant personalities, but faithful servants of Jesus Christ and of one another. It does not lack the former, but the latter. The community of faith will place its confidence only in the simple servant of the Word of Jesus, because it knows that it will then not be guided by human wisdom and human conceit, but by the Word of the Good Shepherd. The question of spiritual trust, which is so closely connected with the question of authority, is decided by the faithfulness with which people serve Jesus Christ, never by the extraordinary gifts they possess. Authority in pastoral care can be found only in servants of Jesus who seek no authority of their own, but who are Christians one to another, obedient to the authority of the Word.<sup>12</sup>*

With *metanoia* every problem is an opportunity for transformation, learning rather than blaming. It is needed particularly in the leadership structure, or hierarchy. The word is familiar in both the church and secular society. Its usually bad connotation is often, but not always justified. A diagram of the worst form of hierarchy consists of a man at the top wearing a top hat, below him a row of men wearing bowler hats and below them a row of workers with no heads to put any hats on. Each layer exists to satisfy the requirements of the one above. In management jargon the one above is the 'customer' of those below and is served by them obediently. Is still generally assumed that most, or all of those with heads and hats are men.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. page 107.

Such an arrangement is common in the Church and may be a factor today in some decisions to leave the Church. It may in the Church have 'God' at the top. But it cannot be a loving God or a servant Messiah. Nor can the bottom line (all lay women and most lay men) consist of headless people. Nor can the intermediary leaders of the followers be superior in any way; they merely have a role in the whole that their hat might signify. There seems to be an uncanny temptation for Church leaders to remain humble in their personal life but to develop a kind of institutional pride within the organisation. It has been suggested that this may be something to do with their awareness of the vulnerability of the institution and their desire to do something about it. But it is a short cut in the wrong direction. It can happen in the largest Church organisation or in the smallest local 'independent' tabernacle or discussion group. Often at least some of the contagion spreads from the institutional role to the person. One woman member of a small independent Church described the Chairman of the Elders as 'Big Brother'. It happens also in secular organisation where it may not be as glaringly wrong as it should be in the Church of Christ. Would a transformed hierarchy be more like a cascade of empathetic service supporting the efficacy of each part within the purpose of the whole? The 'customer' is the layer below served by the layer above. All exist to serve the lay women and men who are in the world, but not of the world. *I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the Evil One. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in truth; your word is truth. (St. John 17.16-17)*

Once pointed out, recognised and owned, a change of heart-mind can be empowered and the transformation to servant leaders be renewed. So, somehow, we need to have a constant reminder in our guidelines, and to consult them regularly. Such reminders do exist in the Christian tradition (e.g. Bishop Ridding's 'Litany of Remembrance'<sup>13</sup>).

It begins.

*Seeing, brethren, that we are weak men, but entrusted with a great office, and that we cannot but be liable to hinder the work entrusted to us by our infirmities of body, mind and spirit, both those common to all men and those specially attaching to our office, let us pray God to save us and help us from the several weaknesses that beset us severally, that he will make us know what faults we have not known, that he will show us the harm of what we have not cared to control, that he will give us strength and wisdom to do more perfectly the work to which our lives have been consecrated – for no less service that he honour of God and the edifying of his Church. Let us pray.*

These liturgical reminders of the need for *metanoia* may need reviving in general but in this paper the plea, once again, is that they be applied to the actual working organisation of the Church from bottom to top and top to bottom from left to right and right to left. The only true Church on earth is one that is constantly accepting the gift of *metanoia and transformation*; in this sense a penitent Church in what we have called the nitty-gritty, the defective affect of working the work of God.

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<sup>13</sup> *A Simple Form of Compline with Additional Prayers* (Cambridge. W. Heffer and Sons Ltd. 1934)

## **A SECOND ATTEMPT TO FORMULATE GUIDELINES FOR THE ORGANISATION AND STEWARDSHIP OF THE CHURCH**

The teaching of Dr. Deming has been regrouped under headings from the Christian theological tradition. The possible theological origins of the 14 points have been regrouped and included within these new sections. Deming's text has been omitted completely, though we do not think that it can be dispensed with. It can, of course, be referred to in Part 1. It is hoped that, eventually this Christian version will become as clear and crisp as Deming's original.

Although guidelines are grouped in this way they are clearly all interdependent.

### **Guideline 1. Identify, and stay focussed on, the role of your organisation in the overall mission of God in the Church of Christ.**

This is the fundamental task of your group, team or meeting, without the achievement of which you fail the rest of the Church and miss the opportunity to play your full part with God in the transformation of this world into the Kingdom of God as proclaimed and enabled by Jesus Christ.

## **METANOIA**

### **Guideline 2. Take seriously any awareness that something is wrong or might be wrong and assume that it is prompted by an as yet unidentified vision of what could be better that, in turn, is derived from *the real light that gives light to everyone* (St. John 1.9a).**

This is the *Fear of the Lord*, the realisation that things must change, a holy discontent with things as they are. Every cooperating community, from *two or three met in my name* to the universal Church, must have in place a system of monitoring its own working; what might be called its corporate memory and conscience.

*'To fear Yahweh' is an expression typifying faithfulness to the covenant. Henceforth, the fear at once combines love in response to God's love and absolute obedience to whatever God commands. The religious and moral content of this fear grows more and more refined as the centuries pass.*<sup>14</sup>

### **Guideline 3. Observe carefully how the cooperative community in which you are involved is working and how it could be improved to achieve its purpose more fully and in a more Godly way.**

*The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge; fools spurn wisdom and discipline* (Proverbs 1.7) finds many echoes in the Bible. Eventually St. Paul described the crucifixion of Christ as displaying the wisdom of God. The grace of Christ is the oil that enables the servant community to work and to survive. Grace enlightens our eyes, renews our hearing and all our perceptions, and puts our God-given love into action. Such wisdom has to be gained corporately in the actualities of Church organisation.

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<sup>14</sup> Footnote a in J.B. to Deuteronomy 6.6 with references omitted.



**Guideline 4. Learn from the secular world about how the world we live in works. Some lessons will be positive, others negative.**

*Let your minds be filled with everything that is true, everything that is honourable, everything that is upright and pure, everything that we love and admire – with whatever is good and praiseworthy. Keep doing everything that you learnt from me and were told by me and have heard or seen me doing. The God of peace be with you all. (Philippians 4.8-9)*

*For God will testify for me how much I long for you all with the warm longing of Christ Jesus; it is my prayer that your love for one another may grow more and more with the knowledge and complete understanding that will help you to come to true discernment, so that you will be innocent and free from any trace of guilt when the Day of Christ comes, entirely filled with the fruits of uprightness through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1.8-11)*

Remember that the Holy Spirit is *Lord and giver of life* as well as *speaking through the prophets* and the agent of incarnation of *the Son*.

## **HOLY POWER**

**Guideline 5. Before deciding on any action pause and consider whether you are depending on Holy Power or worldly power.**

Power in this sense is what you take for granted about the way things work. It is the pattern of assumptions about human nature, God's presence and guidance, what humans have learned from history, the nature of virtue in human action. (This is the notion of power described by the secular thinker Michel Foucault)<sup>15</sup>

*All who are guided by the Spirit of God are sons of God; for what you received was not the spirit of slavery to bring us back into fear; you received the spirit of adoption, enabling you to cry out 'Abba, Father!' The Spirit himself joins with our spirit to bear witness that we are children of God. (Romans 8.14-17)*

Listen to the advice of lay people who are used to similar work.

Learn from the history of the Church and from the history of the particular system or meeting in which you are engaged (e.g. careful study of the minutes of past meetings and examination of the agenda of present meeting). Do your 'homework'.

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<sup>15</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power* (Penguin Books 2002). For example page 233, ...*how can one analyze the connection between ways of distinguishing true and false and ways of governing oneself and others? The search for a new foundation for each of these practices, in itself and relative to the other, the will to discover a different way of governing oneself through a different way of dividing up true and false – this is what I would call "political spirituality".* Page 273, ...*Couldn't it be concluded that the Enlightenment's promise of attaining freedom through the exercise of reason has been turned upside down, resulting in a domination by reason itself, which increasingly usurps the place of freedom? This is a fundamental problem we're all struggling with, which many people have in common ... and has it not been claimed that in Marx there was the idea of a classless society that resembled an enormous factory?*

**Guideline 6. Combine Christian hope with meticulous planning and use of time. Detect and eliminate all waste.**

The ultimate power is always available. The human problem is how to receive it more fully and not distort it with human sin.

## **GODLY ORGANISATION**

**Guideline 7. Recognise every meeting as a ‘solemn assembly’ [Biblical *ekklesia* or *qahal* of the People of God for cooperative action with Christ.**

God in Christ is present during the whole meeting, not just in the formal prayer at the beginning and end. This calls for exercise of the fruits of the spirit in all relationship and communication.

All work is part of the sacrifice of reasonable service to God and should be of the best *without blemish*. Give joyfully and humbly.

**Guideline 8. Train and learn as an organisational unit. Understand the need for maintenance of your particular part of the total organisation in order to carry out your task with maximum effect.**

Use the best training methods including awareness of the psychological and spiritual processes taking place during meetings.

**Guideline 9. Keep transparent records of decisions. Keep up to date instructions of how the organisation works. Listen to the advice of those doing the work on how to improve the overall functioning of your organisation.**

## **SERVANT LEADERS**

**Guideline 10. All leaders are primarily followers answering the call of Christ. Secondly they are to provide what their followers need to do the work required of them. All intention is directed to the edge of the organisation where it is in the world, but not of the world, and where the fundamental call to *metanoia* is made to the world in word and example.**

They should practice the Christian virtues, seek constantly to improve the effectiveness of the organisation, and find the best ways of assessing results.

**Guideline 11. Institute overall education and edification in order that all members of the organisation know what they are responsible for and why; how they fit in with the whole.**

This involves keeping accurate, constantly improved and up-dated documents describing and explaining the work of the organisation.<sup>16</sup> We review to learn and improve the systems, not to blame individuals.

**Guideline 12. Maintain good personal relations and communication with those above, below and beside in the ‘hierarchy’. Ensure that it is a hierarchy of service enabled by *grace*, ultimately to the world for which Christ died and was raised to new life.**

This is a transformation of the worldly hierarchy of command and coercion into mutual help and support in achieving the common task in shared responsibility.

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<sup>16</sup> *I keep six honest serving men  
(They taught me all I knew);  
Their names are What and Why and When  
And How and Where and Who.*

*Rudyard Kipling.*

## APPENDIX

### Veni, Creator Spiritus

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
*And lighten with celestial fire.*

Thou the anointing Spirit art,  
*Who dost thy seven-fold gifts impart.*

Thy blessed Unction from above,  
*Is comfort, life, and fire of love.*

Enable with perpetual light  
*The dullness of our blinded sight.*

Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
*With the abundance of thy grace.*

Keep far our foes, give peace at home:  
*Where thou art guide, no ill can come.*

Teach us to know the Father, Son,  
*And thee, of both, to be but One.*

That, through the ages all along,  
*This may be our endless song:*

Praise to thy eternal merit,  
*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

Hymn from the 9<sup>th</sup> century; this translation by Bishop J. Cosin from the Book of Common Prayer, Ordination of Priests and of Bishops.

*The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are: (1) Wisdom; (2) Understanding; (3) Counsel; (4) Fortitude; (5) Knowledge; (6) Piety; (7) Fear of the Lord.*

*The list is taken from Isaiah 11.2 (Vulgate translation). There are only six in the King James version.*

*[The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5.22-23) is love, joy, peace, patience, Kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control.]*