



Chapter Five

ADMINISTRATION IN ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT: Approaching the Task Collectively

1. Exploring How Administration and Culture Mix – 2

1.1 Focus Group Discussions:

1.1.1 Format

This third form of conversation was structured as a group activity. Initially, and admittedly as an incentive, I arranged to start with a breakfast, to be followed by our discussion time. However, given the penchant for arriving late for appointments, we invariably started anything from 30 to 60 minutes late and spent another 30 to 50 minutes eating and chatting before getting down to business. After the fourth such session, a member of the group suggested that we use our time more wisely and, instead of a full breakfast, just have some tea and light snacks. This appealed to me, not only because it would allow us to steward our time better but the cost of the breakfasts were becoming prohibitive!

Initially, too, I had planned the sessions roughly on a monthly basis, assuming that we could cover the questions in a total of four sessions over as many months. However, in the first session it quickly became apparent that this time frame was likely to be unrealistic. Indeed, subsequent events – consistently starting late and the depth and breadth of discussion – showed this to be true. As it turned out, we needed nearly twice as many sessions just to deal with the issues pertaining to the nature of and approach to administration. (See also below on “Adjustments”.)

The questions themselves (See Appendix 3) were based on the overall framework, but with the addition of an eighth section on political considerations: How the colonial period may have impacted the approach to administration and the extent to which this may have changed since Independence. (I added this to the group dialogue as I felt this topic would be better discussed in such a setting, rather than individually.) This set of questions sought more deliberately to examine worldview issues at a somewhat deeper level. And, having gained some insight from the personal conversations, I was able to identify some additional issues needing further exploration. This set of questions was thus expanded to 128. (But see also below on “Adjustments”.)

1.1.2 Purpose

The intention of these focus group sessions was three-fold: (1) To highlight issues raised through the questionnaires and personal interviews and to discuss them collectively; (2) To



provide a sounding board for participants to share insights and thoughts together, with worldview factors as the core interest. My expectation here was that their varied backgrounds would bring a variety of insights to the conversation and thus flesh out the details. Also, I anticipated that this would both filter out the inconsequential and to solidify or confirm the main issues. (3) In collectively discussing key issues, the group may also consider possible solutions to problems identified.

1.1.3 Selection of Participants

The focus group initially comprised the six pastors whom I had finally selected for the personal interviews and the rest of the project. Subsequently, however, one of them (Ndebele, non-Pentecostal and low-density) emigrated to South Africa after four sessions (although he only attended two anyway.) Another (also Ndebele and non-Pentecostal but high-density) only attended one session and seemed uninterested and uncommitted for the rest; despite confirming his intent to attend, he did not. So, I felt I had to replace them as from the fifth session. (See below on “Adjustments”.)

1.1.4 Preparation

In my preliminary investigations and conversations, I had already identified several worldview factors – for example, the emphasis on relationships and the sense of community; the interplay with the spirit world; and the prominence of oral communications among others. These raised interesting questions relating to the factors of administration such as creativity and innovation, leadership style, decision-making and so on. The focus group discussions thus sought to explore these elements more fully and draw out other aspects not considered in the individual interviews.

Since I had already developed a grid of 150 worldview questions, I had to choose which ones to use; I was confident, however, that several would be answered tangentially in the course of the conversations without me necessarily having to ask them directly. The foundational questions were supplemented in the discussions with secondary questions as follow up to specific answers. In this instance, I prepared one three-column table, with the questions listed in the first and space left for the answers and supplementary questions in the second and third. The second column was divided into six rows, giving space for each respondent's answers, which I typed as they chatted back and forth.

I then planned the discussion sessions. To begin with, I had planned four monthly sessions of about three hours each, spread over the five months of October to February. Unfortunately, not only did we rarely achieve three hours of discussion – mainly because we always started



late and lost valuable recording time during the meal – I but also discovered that my time frame for discussing the issues was a woeful underestimation.

1.1.5 Adjustments

In travelling this journey, despite some careful planning beforehand, things have not always turned out as expected. As with the personal conversations, adjustments have had to be made with the group as well.

In addition to expanding the number of questions to include more issues, I quickly discovered in my first group session that the flow of the conversation and that of my questions would not necessarily match. This obvious detail had not occurred to me, so I had to make on-the-spot adjustments as the participants interacted. Related to this, it was again the case that some answers made some questions redundant, and so I did not waste time pursuing those. Instead of pressing home the set questions, I had to be selective. Where the group discussion had missed a point, I followed up with a supplementary question.

After two sessions in October and November, both of which had useful but animated and drawn-out discussion, I realised that, by January (the proposed third session), I would already be behind schedule and it was obvious that I would not finish the questions in four sessions. Nor was it feasible to think of monthly meetings. I was very aware of the sacrifice the team members were making (Monday is usually the pastor's day off) and that I was eating into their private time. Nevertheless, they were all committed to the enterprise and affirmed this was still the best time to meet. I then had to persuade them of the need to meet more frequently. I was very grateful for their sense of commitment.

At the sixth session, and in response to my concern about the time frame, the team agreed to dispense with the breakfast as much formal discussion time was lost during the meal, and that a simple tea with croissants or doughnuts be served instead. This also helped to reduce costs.

Having met twice in April, during which I was able to reassess a likely timeframe for covering the material for the remaining chapters, I apprehensively broached the possibility at the end of the seventh session of meeting fortnightly for the rest of the year. As expected, one in the group immediately commented that this would be difficult given increasing ministry demands. He suggested, instead, that we arrange to meet for a concerted effort, perhaps over a weekend, to address the remaining issues in one fell swoop. To be honest, I had not thought of this as an option. But with obvious assent from the rest of the team, it was clear that maintaining a longer schedule of meetings would probably be counterproductive. Such an



approach, too, would give me more flexibility with my writing schedule as I would not be restricted to the group's ability to meet. This would also obviate absences at any given session, as had been the case up to this point. (Subsequently, I arranged a two-day retreat at a guesthouse in Bulawayo. Six of us left on a Friday morning and returned on the Saturday evening, having covered considerable ground. It was a very productive time for all of us. Even so, it was not sufficient, and I had to arrange a second, follow-up session for the final topic on Theology.)

Significantly, by the end of the fourth session, I had become somewhat apprehensive of the danger of imposing my own preconceptions on the process. After all, the task was not so much to obtain their views on my concerns, but rather, to discuss their views on the issues as they see them. So I asked the group what they felt about the questions and suggested that they come up with their own instead. I reiterated the importance of them giving their insights as part of the social construction/narrative approach.

Interestingly, they said they would not know what questions to ask and that mine seemed good anyway. Frankly, I was a little surprised at this wholesale acquiescence but, at the same time, not completely bemused as it merely confirmed my perception that administration is not something that people typically think about concretely or are able to articulate without some prompting. They did propose, however, that I circulate the questions ahead of time for them to peruse and to adjust if necessary. This I readily agreed to and circulated questions for the fifth session 10 days beforehand. While there were no comments or suggested changes on these, on further consideration and to keep the number of interview sessions to a manageable number, I subsequently decided on a slightly amended approach. From the sixth session, I circulated a coalesced set of questions pertaining to the topic for discussion. These revised questions were more broadly framed and arranged to cover the narrower, more specific questions in umbrella fashion. I thus devised a much shorter list of questions for the remaining sections of the discussion for Chapter Five by extrapolating from the original list and, where necessary, merging or rephrasing questions in broader terms. This, in turn, necessitated me devising a second table to record the conversations.

The suggestion at the end of the seventh session to have a weekend retreat meant revising the list of questions yet again. Also, by that stage, I had not yet considered the material for the proposed Chapter Four (Theology), and so had to push forward to prepare for that before I had anticipated doing so. I then worked to coalesce the remaining questions before circulating them to the team for their consideration prior to the retreat.



A second major adjustment related to the participants. In pondering the replacements, it was suggested to me that, in addition to the other factors already outlined, I consider some gender balance as well, particularly since there are some denominations with women pastors. I then approached the same lady who had assisted with the trainer/trainee interview as I was confident she already knew the purpose of my project and understood the rationale of the exercise. Happily, she readily agreed. Thus, the remainder of the focus group interviews – to complete the focus group's sketch on administration (originally Chapter Two, now Five) and to consider the shaping of worldview (originally Chapter Three, now Six) – comprised five male pastors and the one lady in a para-church ministry who joined us at the end of the leadership discussion.

A third major adjustment came at the end of the retreat. My initial intention was that Chapter Three (Shona, Ndebele and Christian worldviews) would constitute the largest section of material. However, both the questions and the discussions were more extensive than I anticipated. Therefore, I decided to split Chapter Two on the nature and practice of administration into three: the survey (Chapter Three); the individual interviews (Chapter Four) and the group discussions (Chapter Five). This, I felt, would avoid a top-heavy, uneven presentation in terms of coverage and provide a more even-handed, balanced arrangement. The worldview material would now be covered in Chapter Six.

1.2 *The Dialogue:*

To reiterate, the intention of these focus group sessions was three-fold: (1) To highlight issues raised through the questionnaires and personal interviews and to discuss them collectively; (2) To provide a sounding board for participants to share insights and thoughts together, with worldview factors as the core interest, and (3) In collectively discussing key issues, the group may also consider possible solutions to problems identified.

Thus, apart from confirming a contextualised definition of administration and each of its components, the group questions also sought to explore more complex issues such as the socialisation of creativity and innovation, the impact of a rural, agrarian setting on an urban, industrial/technological one and the influence of the black African worldview philosophy of *Ubuntu/unhu*. An additional discussion item in this section dealt with the political/social dynamics that have impinged on the formation of worldview and the praxis of administration. Given the historical background of the Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe, together with our colonial history, I thought this subject would be better discussed collectively rather than individually.



The group interactions, while covering several of the questions from the personal interviews, sought to enhance those responses with collective insights and focussed more on worldview and cultural issues. The even mixture between Shona and Ndebele participants and from Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal churches provided for interesting interaction. The discussions on administration for the initial Chapter Two (later Chapters Three to Five) were held over eight months (late October to early June), having been interrupted by the Christmas break and College-related, end-of-term work demands in December and April respectively. By late March, the meetings had increased in frequency, but ended with a weekend retreat to finish the questions for Chapter Five and to cover those for Chapter Six (worldview factors). The discussions for Chapter Seven (Theology) took place in September, in a one-day retreat format.

Initially, I had intended to include in these discussions an additional component of proverbs from the participants relating to key elements of the administrative process. The rationale here was that proverbs summarise and speak pithily to a social lesson. They often express moral or ethical expectations or warnings of a society that are difficult to convey in simple terms. They are descriptive, appealing, easy to recall and reflect deep, philosophical concepts. Unfortunately, only one proverb was given at the first group session and, despite repeated requests in later sessions, nothing more was forthcoming. I realised afterwards that our use of proverbs is often related to specific issues where a particular proverb is appropriate; we do not normally connect a proverb to an abstract concept such as administration. Hence, I decided to incorporate some randomly selected proverbs as part of the training input in Chapter Eight.

To begin with, the focus groups involved those in pastoral ministry only and not the trainer respondents. This was for two reasons. First, I was conscious of the element – and cost – of time and recognised that non-Christian, commercial respondents would not have the time or the inclination to participate in such discussions. Second, I was not concerned with either their task assessment or views on administration in a Christian ministry context. I was primarily concerned with their attitudes and approach to training administrators and the issues arising from that role *vis-à-vis* the impact of worldview factors.

1.2.1 Responses:

Again, I will present these conversations in their broad categories, while incorporating my own 'story' in the process, where applicable. I will conclude the section with a brief summary of the



conversations and observations from them. Again, the chapter will end with an overall analysis of the discussions.

The focus group conversations will take the individual interviews a step further and seek to identify somewhat more concretely what worldview factors are involved and how. It is not my intention to discuss those in depth in this chapter, however. Rather, the particular worldview factors so identified, together with what helps to shape them in the process of socialisation, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

1.2.1.1 Background –

Having already discussed individual definitions of administration, I began this group session with two related questions concerning the clash of cultures in terms of approach and what, if anything makes administration difficult. Immediately, worldview factors came to the fore.

Chris, for example, highlighted the difference between the urban and rural approach: “For rural people, it’s the event, not the time; it doesn’t matter how long it takes. In the Western approach, there’s a finishing time.” That explains, in large measure, why it is perfectly acceptable to be “late” for a function – including a church worship service. I suspect, however, that the more important the occasion is perceived to be, and/or the more important the dignitary leading the event, the earlier people will tend to come. In the Church context, of course, that raises some interesting questions about the importance of meeting with God, listening to His Word through His messenger and so on. From my cultural perspective, being late communicates either a lack of interest or sense of importance in either the event or the speaker. Both would be considered rude. If the event is important or the speaker interesting, I would want to be there punctually so as not to miss anything of value. In my church, though, there are some people who regularly come 20 or even 30 minutes late.

Beki also highlighted this tension: “For the [black] African, relationships are more important than events. We’re more hospitable. But [now] I have a clash: I was invited to a friend’s funeral this morning, but had an appointment with you. If I went to the funeral, you would ask, ‘What’s wrong with Beki?’ Now, I’m here and my friend is asking the same question!” [Laughter and nodding heads in agreement from the others.] Oops – but you can’t be in too places at once. Yes, but the bottom line here is he has effectively told his friend someone else is more important than him – and their relationship! That could be a problem for their future. Some apologies and explanations are called for.

George introduced a different dynamic: “It’s all about appointments. [With the African way,] people just walk in. With the Western way, if you bump into someone, you’re not welcome.



You can't just walk in; you have to make an appointment." This is interesting. With an emphasis on the relationship, George – typical of many – sees the Western approach as event-oriented and anti-people. Yet, would it not be true to say that the very reason for having an appointment is precisely because both parties are sensitive to the other's commitments and needs? Is the focus here really on the event or is it on the people making the event?

Picking up on this, and in response to the difficulties faced with modern administration, Barnabas commented: "The guy comes, without a specific time mentioned, but he expects you to be there the whole day just for him." Here, the tension between "waiting to be hospitable" and having a complex range of responsibilities to see to manifests itself. This is probably exacerbated in the urban context since, in a rural setting, the visitor could quite easily, presumably, have a discussion in the fields. Alternatively, the farmer can leave his fields to entertain the guest without feeling that the crops will die without immediate attention. This, of course, cannot apply in the urban, technological world today where immediacy and promptness are often critical.

Chris chipped in: "When a rural guy phones, I don't bother to make an appointment because I know he won't keep it." In other words, the expectation and understanding of the rural mind-set tells him that making an appointment would be a frustrating waste. But, he still needs to organise his time so that when the visitor does eventually arrive, he can see him. Sometimes, that may not be very convenient. Beki affirmed this saying, "Time is an event, not minutes, hours and seconds. With appointments, when the guy shows up late, the rest of the day is affected."

For George, the tension is manifested in the area of planning. "As Africans, we lack vision and planning. That's our problem. We need to discard what doesn't help us. Africa is the richest continent, but the poorest. It's because we don't plan; we only look at arm's length." Dixon then jumped in, also highlighting the planning component as a problem: "[In] planning my daily schedule, I get frustrated if I don't complete this. [But the] African approach is much more relational. [It's about] prioritising with people, not tasks. [With] preaching, I get to Thursday and start to get worried about what I'm going to say. I need to make time for that. Something must lose out so I can prepare adequately. So, there must be a balance. Life is about balance."

Yes, and the clash of worldviews is about defining what that balance is. What, after all, are the priorities, and why? As dominant a priority as relationships are, there must come a time when other demands take precedence. Apparently not. Some years ago, I had a student who was pastoring a local church in Bulawayo. Late one Saturday night, a large lorry carrying a



coffin and relatives of the deceased arrived. The family members insisted that, as their pastor, he must accompany them immediately – in his pyjamas – to Masvingo (some 400 kilometres away) for the funeral. So he did! When he reported this to me the following Monday, I asked him why he didn't politely refuse. He said if he had, he would have been reported to his overseer and then to the Bishop. So, despite having already had a busy day, a preaching commitment the next morning and not being properly dressed for the occasion, he set out on a five-hour journey in the middle of the night all because, if he didn't, relationships would be affected!

In a follow-up question, I asked if we cannot do tasks for people. Dixon responded: "Yes, tasks do relate to people, but some don't. We have to talk about vision and objectives. If we don't see where we going, we'll waste our time." Again, that is true, but would the event not be understood more relationally if the value of it to the people is explained more clearly (rather than just the purpose) and if, in the process of assessing the potential value, it is planned effectively for maximum gain?

1.2.1.2 Time –

Noticing the emphasis on the time factor with the previous questions, I then moved on to this item. I asked, if time is not as important in a rural, agrarian setting, can we speak of a sense of failure about the "when" of something not being done? Is there a "right" or "wrong" time?

Dixon responded: "Yes, it's about how long it takes. In Western thinking, time is clearly blocked [off]. For Africans, the issue is not when it's done, but that it is. If someone has made an appointment, in the African set up, you have to start [the discussion] with basic stuff – the weather, and so on. If you don't, you offend. If the task takes a long time, you haven't failed. Eventually, you get to the point."

I narrated a story which the group readily identified with in which someone visited me in my office (without an appointment). We spent quite a while chatting about a wide variety of mutual interests. All along, I was wondering why he had come to see me; what was the real reason for the visit. Then, after more than an hour, he stood up to go. As his custom dictates, I accompanied him downstairs to the front door to wish him farewell. As we stood on the steps and he was about to leave, he turned and said, "By the way ..." I knew immediately that he was now going to explain the real reason for his visit. The whole group laughed.

George agreed: "In the African sense, there is no failure. In the Western approach, it's defined. In Arab thinking, you don't have exams. What matters is whether you can do the thing, not whether it's within a set time. With Westerners, you get complaints; they want



delivery now, within a set time period.” He then related the story of a father who did not want his son running his shops. Yet the son was a marketing manager for big companies and obviously had the necessary expertise. Eventually, with the businesses going down, the father accepted the idea. The problem was fear of change. The time it took was a secondary concern, even though this affected profitability. George also told a personal story: “I wanted to marry a girl from Masvingo. The in-laws wanted to know my *mutupo* [his clan name]. When they found out, they weren’t interested. So I forced the issue by making her pregnant. They still refused. I stayed with her for 10 years before we were married. But then I became a Christian.” Again, time was not the issue: there was no desire to hurry.

Another identified time-related worldview factor affecting administration is the connection between yesterday, today and tomorrow. As the team explained, one’s understanding of today depends on what happened yesterday, and my thinking about tomorrow is based both on yesterday and today. All of which raises questions about the future. So, I next asked, When for you is ‘tomorrow’? How far into the future are you comfortable with? How do you respond to an “uncomfortable tomorrow”? This question speaks to both time and planning. I have heard some say, for instance, that they find it difficult to think more than a week to 10 days ahead. However, in our discussion, this apparent fear was eschewed, with George saying he has no problem thinking 10 years into the future. Others, while not setting any limits, tended to agree. Rather, the team focused on the dynamic of vision and strategic planning.

For the first part of the question, Dawson said, “[This] depends on the context. In Ndebele, it’s the same as English. [They are] not scared of the future. They still thought long-term in the village. Cattle were prepared with this in mind: For example, the father would prepare his *mombies* (cattle) for his son’s marriage.”

Dixon put this down to modernisation. “It’s not Western. Planning is necessary. Strategic planning – key result areas – must be given to the people. You can’t not do it.”

Then Dawson shifted gears. “We don’t understand ourselves. The general understanding is that the African leader’s role model is the chief. But why did the chief not lay down the vision? He just told the people. It’s the same in Church: you’re just told to do it. But I see something interesting here. The African Man has been so spiritually tuned. Therefore, the spirits should tell you, not him [the chief]. The spiritual world is real. So, we don’t articulate the vision clearly.”



Dixon quickly took this up: “The chief dies knowing everything. Therefore, we must be strategic. If we want to think about being effective, productive, we can’t do that now. We have to have the long-term clearly in mind.

George raised a related issue: “How does the Lord call you into ministry? Unless I say, ‘The Lord told me ...’ it’s not real.” Dixon responded: “There’s a problem in Pentecostal circles: who can argue with this [i.e. ‘The Holy Spirit told me.’]? But this can be blaspheming against the Spirit. There must be a clear dividing line. We must check ourselves to see if it is the Lord speaking.”

Beki chipped in: “I’d like us to do this [vision casting] for the Church. Vision is difficult. I wish we could leave a heritage for those we leave behind. When a visionary dies, everything collapses.”

1.2.1.3 *Planning* –

Shifting more deliberately from time to the planning component, and to clarify the matter further, I asked a follow-up question: Do you see this (modern planning) as a Western concept that you have had to accept, or was it already part of your African mindset? How so? Have you had to make any mental adjustments? To this, Beki strongly exclaimed, “No, Great Zimbabwe [a large, stone-walled city built c. 1100-1400 A.D.] shows planning. Our problem is we have to take a step back. We’ve been educated and trained using the Western model. [Originally] we’d meet under a tree “today”, not at 7:30. So, for instance, I can be involved with school (= a time table, fixed times for lessons) and then meet my peers – with a completely different approach to time, [one that is more] flexible. We’re liberated from diaries. [For] my Western colleague, his diary is his life; if he loses it, wow! For me, it doesn’t matter.”

Dixon followed up: “There’s something we can’t change. Our Africanness now is different from that of 100 years ago. We have to contextualise. Life without some of what we have would be unbearable. We need to redefine today’s African culture.” To which Dawson agreed, “We can’t divorce ourselves from globalisation. This is not colonisation (limiting people’s rights). But Westernisation has helped development. But this came with the colonisation package, which led to misunderstanding. I can’t live without a watch now. What is “tomorrow”? Westernisation is just civilisation. The Gospel didn’t come from the West.” Dixon ended the point with a question: “But demands today are different. [We] have meetings and so on. We may need to forego some “traditional” requirements. Can we still be “African” by making some changes? Does the modified context [not] require this? “



Clearly, then, while there is an identifiable tension as the two worlds collide, it is also recognised that modernisation (including urbanisation and technology) is creating new demands to change the way we do things. The 'new' world, changing as it is, requires culture and tradition to change too – which they do. Unless one is flexible and willing to adapt, it seems, the perceived tension is likely to remain problematic.

Probing deeper here, I sought to elicit a distinction between the two worlds: Does the industrialised/technological world require a different process of strategising from an agricultural one (for instance, strategising for crops or animals versus strategising for task development – for example, developing a machine to do the job as opposed to working with people)?

Dawson, interestingly, raised the important worldview factor of the spirit world: “The spirit world has a major influence. Strategic planning cannot be divorced [from this]. So, he leaves it open to change. Therefore, plan, set goals but keep alert to the Spirit. [We] must be flexible. This is good since it keeps us open to what the Lord may want.”

For George, though, the problems are selfishness and witchcraft: “Africa is selfish. I want it for myself. I don't want to pass it on. Take witchcraft. Look at the [Western] doctors: [they do] pathology to find out how things work. But Africans can't do this; only the *n'anga* knows. This is magic.” The implication here is that there can be no strategic planning because the ordinary person is not supposed to know how things work; that is the realm of the *n'anga*. I asked George what the basis of that selfishness is. “Ignorance. We don't want to take advantage of situations for the good of our people. People don't want to pass things on. They want to be secretive.” Almost as an afterthought, he added: “Things are done at night. We travel on special animals (hyena). We need to change the mind-set of witchcraft for the good of everyone.”

Dawson agreed, adding, “There's a lot in Africa that can be developed, but we lose it fast. All over the world, there are so many Africans at the forefront of industrialisation. We have the personnel, but we can't retain them. This is the key problem. We can do very well if we can do this.” Dixon affirmed this sentiment too: “Each country has gone through its “industrial revolution”. See Japan: They're making cars all over the world. We have all the resources which we extract – and pay 10 times the price to import the processed products. We have enough leaders – for example, Strive Masiyiwa [and] Mutumwa Mawere [two successful local businessmen]. We've got sharp guys. We can regain what we've lost. We have people overseas who are working on developing their skills, on projects.”



There is the recognition here that resources are accessible but need to be strategically prepared and positioned to gain maximum advantage from them. Inherent in these observations, however, is the tacit acknowledgement that this does not appear to have been done adequately up to now. And, while the above conversations tended to focus on strategic planning, there was no concrete solution suggested for the apparent widespread reluctance to plan in general. However, as noted earlier, this may well be due to the fact that these particular actors are principal leaders who have had to learn to plan if their enterprises are to succeed.

1.2.1.4 Organising –

Inherent in the above comments, too, is the indispensable link between planning and organising. Our earlier observation was that you cannot have one without the other. Planning is one form of organising; but you cannot organise without planning. We also noted that planning is structuring and tends towards paperwork, whereas organising is definitely about people.

I then asked the group how they would identify a good organiser; what attributes would they look for and why?

Chris, first off the mark, expressed the view that an organiser is “more of a manager: [he addresses the question] how can we get this done?” Yet, this is only part of the picture.

As a visionary, Dawson opined: “Results begin to show. [The organiser] has no hassle putting people together, by natural lifestyle. A leader must be able to manage and organise. The visionary puts the main structures together; that’s the limit of his organising.” But, again, this is merely a part of the whole.

George expressed a more comprehensive view: “[The organiser] must look at detail, before anything happens.” Why is this important? “So that he is prepared; he looks at the vision and sees how to get there. He is a leader, but he’s a specialist to do things he’s planned ahead. You have a triumvirate: the visionary, the manager and the organiser. The visionary shouldn’t be too involved in organising otherwise he’ll be bogged down by details.”

But Dixon then asked, “Is an organiser synonymous with leading and managing? Give them a concept and let them run with it.” [What is the similarity between leading, managing and organising?] “The visionary leader is different from the organising leader. Leadership is influence [quoting Maxwell again]; so an organiser puts things together to benefit the organisation. Every leader must be a visionary (but with varying degrees). He must have a good idea of the overall picture and the results of what he wants. He must be able to see



what kinds of people he needs to handle. He must ask how he can empower them. A good organiser can get rid of people who don't produce. If someone takes responsibility, there must be accountability. At the end of the day, failure is upon the delegated leader. A good organiser communicates – and he fires those who are not performing.”

Not everyone would agree with all of this. For instance, it may not be the administrator's role to hire and thus fire. But, in the sense that the manager must also organise people, this function may well overlap. So, again, we see the relation between organising, managing and leading here.

This takes us to the purpose of organising. Dixon maintains it is “To bring order, clarity to the vision. To identify the giftings, to place people in roles, to achieve the results. To bring [out the] maximum potential of the group.” Chris picked up on this, adding, “If you don't involve the people, you may not achieve your goals. If you have a big vision, you can't pay attention to the details.” In other words, you need people – who, in turn, need to be organised – to accomplish the tasks.

But how do you do it? How would you typically organise? Is there a difference between organising in the village and organising in the city? Said Dawson: “There will be a difference in the nitty gritty. But it's basically the same.” So what are the nitty gritty? “In the city, the type of training is different. You have to put people together, no matter where you are. But the way city people relate is different: [there is] sophistication, technology, [and] other points of reference.”

Dixon seemed to hit the nail on the head: “Your worldview affects how you organise. The way we put people together, delegate responsibilities, train them is different, but the concept is the same. Some leaders are very good at organising. The worldview is important here. If our worldview is [related to the idea of] chieftainship, we will try to control every facet of the operation; we are concerned with the details; this may bottleneck the system. If our worldview focuses on empowering, then everyone is a key player.”

Significantly, though, this speaks as much to worldview as it does to individual leadership style and personality/temperament. Not everyone thinks and functions like a chief; nor is every leader necessarily concerned with empowerment. Nevertheless, these comments highlight again the fact that one's perspective – based on worldview – shapes the approach to administration.

That said, however, we must address the general demeanour toward organising. It seems as if a common mindset says, “The event itself is what is important, so just let things happen,” or,



"When the people come, then we can start to organise," implying that aspects such as planning and organising are not seen as necessary or important. Would you agree? If so, why is this, do you think?

Clearly this is an area of struggle. Dawson illustrated the tension: "It's wrong to say, 'We can't start until the people come.' But you can't do anything without people! You have to start the process before the people come. [You] must always be ready to adjust." Dixon supported this: "This dynamic is always changing. You may have to change plans at the last minute. A leader who can organise can shift, but [still] take into account relationships. You [need to] look at the options; [you] need to decide which is best." The implication here, of course, that this does not happen every time. That underlines the skills factor.

Chris narrated an incident: "A classic example was going to a rural church for a meeting. But only the leader and his wife were there; the people were busy in the fields – so there was no service." In other words, the failure to organise properly meant the event did not happen at all. Chris also gave the example of a community leader who may have agreed to arrange a meeting but then is informed of a death. "He is obliged to go to the funeral as well. Therefore, he will have to adjust for the sake of keeping relationships [intact]." While the tension created by having two events at the same time is a universal phenomenon, perhaps it is true to say the response to that tension may be culturally determined. One critical factor in this case would be the ability to communicate with either party to arrange the adjustment.

To which George commented: You must always have Plan B. Many leaders are trained outside [their immediate context] and then come back and fail because the goalposts have shifted [that is, the context in which they function is different from the training context]. They are disadvantaged; it's better to train people in their context. For example, [have a] "block release" for a short time. [Also,] equipment is readily available in the cities; in the rural areas, this is a problem." And Chris quickly added: "Exposure is also important."

This then led naturally to the last question: What problems do you identify with organising and why? To what extent are these linked to a rural or urban setting?

Dixon gave an example of his Sunday School. "There are many meetings. To plan for these you have to arrange with people, gather the resources. You are putting people in place. And different people are organising at different levels at the same time. There are many bits and pieces to put together (leaders of 10s, 100s.) You often need to reinforce messages. For example, our Sunday School system changed because of insufficient teachers and less materials. But that meant the classes were too big. The teachers were not properly prepared



or planned. Gradually, the whole children's ministry was in a shambles, despite having a pastor responsible for it. But unless you go there and check, you don't know what's happening. So you need to monitor." Just in this one illustration we see a variety of skills called for: Adequate consideration of resources (in this case, people, teaching materials and space, among others), recruitment, training, supervision and monitoring.

On top of this, as Chris pointed out, "You need clear job descriptions. The key here is communication. Therefore, a good organiser must be a good communicator. Use verbal and written means." What is the best method for the circumstances? "For me, this is the biggest challenge. It depends on the particular meeting and its needs. The whole event must be considered for the results. I would rather invest time and effort to ensure that everything is understood beforehand, [what] the expectations, [are] and so on." How much influence does this provide? I asked. "I would hope that they would have learned from my [leadership] example and from on-the-job training. To make sure everything happens takes a lot of work." Again, without them being specified, we see a range of skills alluded to here: Communication, job descriptions, the (detailed) demands of the event, expectations of the participants, time management, training, example (which comes from character and exposure) and forethought.

George added a further dimension: "You must be influential, [one] who commands respect from people, otherwise they won't take you seriously." How is influence attained if Organising happens behind the scenes? I chipped in. "As you go through the details, influence helps you in organising the people. You need the skills of looking at the details – resources, time, who? But you must have Plan B to avoid wastage. The influence comes when the people see you have organised and have plan B; you also need to persuade the people to come. It's also important to take someone along with you; to share in the organising. For instance, I always take one of my elders on home visitation and gradually get them to do things. This will reduce mistakes. Delegation does not mean unaccountability." Several more skills are noted here: Influence, attention to details, having a back-up plan or arrangement, being careful to avoid wastage, mentoring, delegation and accountability.

Lastly, Dawson added yet more insight: "[There should be an] understanding [of] how to get people to do it. People must identify with what you're saying; if they don't, they won't respond. This is important for the organiser so that the details can be accomplished. People doing the details is the same as everyone reaching their final goal. If people don't buy into the details, we won't get to the final goal. I agree with Dixon: [You] always need to check. When people don't have the vision themselves – they may not catch it properly – they lack ownership; this remains with the visionary. You must keep in touch. The carrier of the vision has the bigger



burden. This is often why, when the founder dies, things disintegrate: the guys don't seem to carry the same degree of burden and vision as you do.”

Here we see aspects such as understanding people (psychology), motivation, selling the vision, monitoring and verification. While the role of worldview is recognised, we also see individual personality and expertise too.

1.2.1.5 Leading –

The interviews for this topic were changed in approach somewhat to facilitate easier discussion. Instead of a wide range of very specific questions, I proffered a smaller, coalesced series of broader, representative questions selected from the original list. This was with the hope that the conversations would cover more ground and that the interaction of the responses – following the flow of the conversation – would be less problematic to record.

At the request of the group, I also circulated the questions in advance. The idea here was that they would monitor the style and if they were not ‘culturally appropriate’, they would rephrase them accordingly. As it turned out, however, they made no adjustments, and used the advance copies instead to reflect on their answers beforehand.

Thus, under a set of representative questions on decision-making, judgement, logic and risk, we first discussed seven questions. In this particular interview, only three members of the group were present. I began by asking what skills a good leader needs.

George, obviously influenced by John Maxwell, said, “Leadership is about influence. Thus, if you have good influence, you become a good leader. Then there’s communication. And planning.” Why do some have influence and others don’t? I prompted. “Some think leaders are born; but this isn’t true; good leaders are trained.” So, is influence innate? “You can be trained into it.”

I disagree partly with George here. Yes, I think that, because leadership involves a variety of skills, training can improve ability. But I also think there are definite innate qualities of leadership that are not produced by training as such. This is evidenced by the interactions we see, for instance where, in a crowd, a decision must suddenly be made (often in a crisis). Usually, it is merely a few minutes before someone “rises to the top” so to speak and begins to take charge. Invariably, the rest of the group is willing to follow – until such time as they consider the decision to be wrong or ill-informed; then someone else may take the lead. This is not the result, necessarily, of training. Character, poise, communication, judgement skills and decisiveness all play a part here.



Chris added another dimension: “You should include the organisational part; that’s another skill – the ability to put things together.” As we have already noted, there is a clear overlap with organisation and leadership.

Looking at an alternative view, Dixon said, “A leader can be bad. It depends what you’re leading them to. You can have sound influence even though you’re leading badly. I think it’s both: leaders are both born and made. Leaders are always thinking of how to get things done. You can lead by fear, intimidation, and oppression. [Primarily, leading is about] putting people and things together for an intended purpose.” Interestingly, that sounds very much like organising!

Having at this point, as a group, covered several issues in dealing with the factors of time, planning and organising, I was intrigued that very little had been mentioned directly about anything to do with the underlying philosophy behind much of Shona and Ndebele worldview. The group’s answers had focused quite narrowly, really, on the specificity of the questions rather than on a consideration of background factors. Since leading, arguably, is the critical component in the whole administrative/management process, I felt it important to raise the philosophical background as an element in the analysis process. After all, a key point of the research in the first place is to ascertain the influence of such philosophical underpinnings.

So my next question introduced the philosophical issue of *ubuntu/unhu*. A quick explanation of this is obviously necessary here, but a deeper discussion will be covered in Chapter Six. *Ubuntu* (Ndebele) or *unhu* (Shona) is a philosophical concept lying behind much of social interaction. It is rarely deliberately articulated, being taken as a given, a norm an expectation. Mbigi (1995: 1-2) outlines this philosophy. He says it is “a metaphor that describes the significance of group solidarity. ... It is a concept of brotherhood and collective unity for survival among the poor in every society.” As such, he suggests, “*ubuntu* is a universal concept that can be applicable to all poor communities.” In summary, he says, “the cardinal belief of *ubuntu* is that *a man can only be a man through others*. [Hence Mbiti’s well-known statement about African worldview: ‘I am because we are.’] In its most fundamental sense it stands for *personhood* and *morality*.” According to Mbigi, the key values of *ubuntu* are: Group solidarity, conformity, compassion, respect, human dignity and collective unity. While these concepts have been alluded to several times in various ways in our discussions thus far, no-one in either the individual or group sessions mentioned or identified this expressly up to this point. Perhaps, though, the sentiment behind it can be summarised with the all-pervading idea that relationships are key. Plainly, that summation has come through loud and clear.



Thence to the next question: Does the philosophy of *ubuntu/unhu* shape the way you make decisions or seek to solve problems or resolve conflict? Does it say anything about the use/abuse of power or of conflict resolution? This immediately provoked some animation and general banter; the atmosphere quickly became ‘interesting’.

Dixon was quite clear: “This shapes the African worldview. It speaks of community, of respect; [of] a good character that is acceptable, a role model. It’s the glue that builds and binds the community. Therefore, this is everything. Society is bound together: there is harmony, support (emotionally, physically), a sense of belonging. It makes a community very strong. They are morally good. There’s no selfishness. Resolving conflict is always fair; [there’s always] consideration for the other person. It gives a good balance; guides our moral values; reduces selfishness.”

George quickly chipped in: “Everything I do must be dignified. It must command respect. If people despise you, they will despise your God. So I must do good for humanity.” Chris added: “It takes away the idea of oppression because you’re dealing with people.”

Interestingly, no-one here actually answered the question directly. All three responses imply an affirmation; the underlying assumption is: ‘It’s obvious, isn’t it? Of course *ubuntu/unhu* plays a pivotal role in making decisions, resolving conflict and handling the abuse of power!’ But if that is the case, we must ask: why do some leaders, then, make selfish decisions; why do some abuse power? The obvious inconsistency here between philosophy and action was not recognised or answered directly.

So, then, I asked, ‘What pressures/limitations do you feel most acutely in the decision-making process? Why? Are these personality/temperament factors, or can you link any of them to worldview factors? If so, which?’

In addressing this question, George used his study at an inter-denominational Bible college as an example: “My organisational structure demands that I get approval from the top [to study there]; there are policies one is expected to follow – and sometimes they limit. When I was applying, I bypassed the usual group [of decision-makers] and went straight to the Bishop, who gave me his blessing. So, courage separates the men from the boys. You don’t want to get your fingers burnt.” In this case, George’s Pentecostal denomination tends to be rather autocratic in its decision-making systems. Indeed, several pastors have resigned in frustration over similar situations. For George, courage and determination are necessary to beat the organisational limitations he feels.



For Chris, the struggle is more interactive: “When someone else sees things differently from you – because of a different mind-set – things are not done properly so that the plan goes ahead. There’s need for understanding, communication and planning. This will help to avoid failure. *Ubuntu/unhu* comes in because I’m looking to the people I’m working with to be part of the decision. For me, consultation is key. This avoids further conflict down the line.”

By contrast, Dixon is frustrated by issues revolving around “financial resources, manpower (and training) – I’m reluctant if there’s failure. So I look at what I’m hoping to achieve with this decision; how will it enhance the organisation? If I need to prepare before I make the decision, I focus on planning.” This naturally fits with his ‘results-oriented’ philosophy.

From there we moved to typical approaches used for problem-solving and whether any of these are affected by worldview. Significantly, all three respondents understood the question in terms of people-problems and conflict (c.f. their answers to the last question in this section).

Chris commented in a way that most people do not automatically think of, although it is much more obvious in a cross-cultural setting. “If a problem involves people, you have to come to terms with their worldview: [that requires] consultation. For example, [if you’re] counselling a wife in the absence of the husband, people can come to the wrong conclusion. Or, after a death there’s [often] a conflict with some property the late husband left with his sister that the wife only discovers later. In one such case, I was quick to jump in to suggest things; the husband jumped on me, calling me all sorts of names. But there are some issues you cannot resolve; they aren’t your responsibility. Some can be resolved by the family, rather than you as a pastor. You need to be aware of other alternatives. The tendency is to think: ‘I’m the chief here, I have to resolve everything.’ But that’s not the case.” For Chris, then, a primary issue is being aware of the other person’s mind-set. Yet, in a cross-cultural setting, that’s not always possible.

For George, it seems, the answer is quite simple: “If it’s about resources, consultation isn’t necessary if you have them; if you don’t, then you need to consult. Then the people will accept what you’re trying to do.” But he went on, “Similar to Chris’s example, I have a case now where, five years after the death of the first wife, the husband married; [that was] two years ago. The younger sister of the first wife is refusing to work with the “new” couple. It’s an issue now!” His illustration is not clear on how the resources come in to play, but he was highlighting the importance of communication and consultation.

And, like Chris, Dixon also affirmed: “Any problem-solving will involve our worldview: that’s our life. It depends on the problem. Sensitive issues need special care. This is wisdom: the



correct application of knowledge; what we know. When a problem is solved well, everyone is happy.”

The underlying assumption here appears to be that problems typically involve people; people means relationships and relationships have to be maintained at all costs. So, communication, understanding, sympathy and other people-related dynamics are important for problem-solving. Does that suggest that non-people related problems are not important or that important problems are only so because people are involved?

The next question was about thinking processes. What is “logic” for you? How do you typically measure something as logical? Do you see any difference here between men and women? Are there worldview factors involved? With your exposure to Western culture and worldview factors, do you see any difference?

For Dixon, logic is, “A sense of wisdom. It has to do with an argument, a rational philosophy. Our worldview is clearly seen. It’s the way we think, see life, and live it. When I went to the US, twice someone asked: ‘Is this the way Africans think?’ I thought, ‘Am I thinking differently from these guys?’ The lenses through which I see the world may be different from others; it’s ingrained in my system.” As an afterthought, “This can be different for men and women; African and European; Zimbabwean and South African.” He points out that logic is a factor in one’s worldview and that there are differences, but he did not actually describe what is logical for him. Understandably, this is difficult to articulate. His example of a conversation in the United States brought home to him the fact of such differences, but describing what they are is tricky.

George responded: “To me, this is *unhu* – the sense of thinking. Western thinking has affected us so much. We used to think of women as constant dependents; now we think they are equals. I now listen to my wife; I ask if her approach won’t lead to the same result.” Referring to the topical issue of gender and rights, George tries to illustrate how logic may change or adjust to suit the current social environment. Even, so, this does not describe the nub of the question: How are decisions made in the light of one’s worldview?

But George’s comment elicited some further discussion from the others on equal rights for women. At present, this topic is in the embryonic debate stage as far as the general public is concerned (although civic organisations have been working in this area for several years now.) George’s shift in thinking (regarding his approach to his wife) would definitely raise eyebrows in some circles. For Dixon and Chris, it was not a problem. Dixon also commented that he tries to help his wife with the cooking when she’s had a particularly busy day. While



not related directly to administration issues, this conversation illustrates the clash of two worlds and the cross-cultural dynamics at play, with the changes that some people are making as part of what is seen as modernity.

Related to thinking was the question on what helps to develop judgement skills?

None of the participants, it seems, appeared to appreciate the significance of this aspect. Both George and Dixon kept it simple: “Trial and error; advice from elders” [George] and “Education, learning, research, and consultation” [Dixon]. Chris did not comment, nor did any of them attempt to illustrate.

Related that question was the response to risk. On what basis do you weigh up the alternatives to come to the best choice? What “costs” do you typically consider (especially non-economic)?

Chris was quick off the mark: “Looking at the end result: [asking] is it worth it? Should I take the risk? Some of us go out of our way to take risk because they want to be seen. Even if the decision is not the best, you don’t want to lose sight of the *ubuntu/unhu*. I’ll be seen as the man of the hour. It also has to do with the motive; who’s getting the glory? In a typical community setting, will the community benefit (for example, with projects)? [The idea that] if there are individual benefits for me, I’ll take the risk is wrong for me. If the community will benefit, [then] I’m prepared to take the risk. I also struggle with failure. I’m looking at success (reputation).” For Chris, then, there are several related elements: relationships, the motive (good versus bad), whether others will benefit or not. While others may not consider it, he is personally willing to take a risk even if it harms him but helps the community. He was honest too: there is sometimes a risk of failure – and he is afraid of that. If his reputation will be injured, he might think twice about doing something; if it will be enhanced, he perceives the risk as worth it.

As far as George is concerned, responding to risk varies: “It depends on what you want to achieve. If the rest of the group hasn’t been exposed [to the idea], you are prepared to take the risk. You know the end result, even if others don’t. In our family when children were born, there were some rituals. But when I became a Christian I said ‘no’ to that; there was opposition, but I knew my God. Now everyone believes.” As a follow up to his final comment, Chris chipped in here: “If it’s not going to succeed, why bother?” This points to the common fear that often stops people from trying.

In the second interview on Leading, all six of the participants were present. We discussed questions relating first to power, then to creativity, innovation, change and conflict. We began



with how authority and power affect decision-making. Why do some people want the power, position and prestige, yet are unwilling to accept the accountability that goes with it?

As an illustration of one aspect of this issue, I related a story from several years ago in Harare where I went to a local newspaper office to get the circulation figures. Even though such information is legally required to be made available, I had to go through three managers before finally getting the information. The lady at the Circulation Desk referred me to the Circulation Manager who, in turn, referred me 'upstairs'. Neither of them was willing to do what their job description clearly empowered them to do. The third manager simply gave me a printed paper with the figures on without even asking me why I wanted the details. The first two were afraid of the consequences – whatever they were.

In response, Dawson quickly said, “[This is] laziness. This is the mark of someone who is not a leader. Procrastination is not a quality for leaders. But training might be part of this. But there must be self-motivation.” While linking the mental attitude to laziness, procrastination and a lack of motivation, he did think training (or better, instruction?) would help. However, this does not fully address the apparent fear factor.

To this, Chris responded: “To deal with the fear factor, we need training. The leader needs to know how far he can go; what expectations are there; the parameters.” But are these not typically outlined, at least in a professional setting? I ventured. “Yes,” he admitted, “often the details are not given.” So, while the position and prestige are clear and attractive, the concomitant responsibility and levels of authority are not always explained adequately.

George responded with: “Authority and power give prestige; you always have the final say – but if there are any repercussions, you want to pass them on to others. These are disgraceful; you don’t want to be disgraced.” But, I asked, doesn’t the position inherently carry with it responsibility? “Most of us want to have the glory of God. When criticism comes, we shy away. We try to come up with all sorts of stories.” Again, he was alluding to the fear factor. “Yes, fear is a factor.”

Joyce, with a corporate view, said, “You have to get permission from the ‘leader’; if he’s happy, then everything is OK. From an NGO [non-governmental organisation] perspective, while you have a job description, we are inherently afraid to do things; so we put it off. They don’t develop benchmarks, targets.” Why? I asked. “Laziness. So the senior leader must develop goals with his junior.” Once more, then, in addition to the fear, we see laziness as a problem.



Dixon then added several extra insights: “There are two levels: the leader and followers. Sometimes the followers don’t know, so they go along with what you say. Why the unwillingness to be accountable? Everyone likes a nice position, but we don’t like criticism. Some though don’t know what comes along with the position – so they need training; for example, job descriptions. When you know why you’re doing what you are, you can measure yourself. Another reason is that the perks become THE issue, never mind my ability to do the job. The ‘3 Cs’ – cash, a car and a cell phone.” And, in response to the others, he added: “Sometimes we label people as ‘failures’ when we haven’t explained the vision properly and what the expectations are. When we spell these out, then we can find out if he’s a leader or not. We’ve given him the power to do it; now let’s see if he can. If he’s not a leader, he will be coming every minute to me to check whether he can do it or not. While there is fear of failure, there is also the fear of people – what will they say? Anyone one afraid of failure will never lead. As Christians, we have the Holy Spirit. So we should never be afraid of what He has asked us to do. I have one of my team leaders who constantly needs special attention. But a lot of this is also personality and self-image.”

We see a number of themes here. For one thing, followers it seems do not always know how to follow. If the leader is not sure where to go, that could be a double problem. As Maxwell (1998: 20) says, “He who thinks he leads but has no followers is merely taking a walk!” Next, is the issue of training, mentioned already as a weak area. In some cases, says Dixon, the prestige of the position and the drug of power take the leader’s focus off the main thing and superficials become the hub of everything. We also see another reference to the fear factor – along with personality dynamics of a lack of self-image and self-confidence. As we know, in some cases, these weaknesses are then compensated for in the abuse of power.

Beki added another important element: “Leadership style and personality also play a part – for instance, the *laissez faire* approach.” One’s leadership style is inherently tied to personality, temperament, one’s view of people and how to interact with them, as well as the perception of the demands and authority of the job. While several styles have been enunciated in different ways by numerous authors (Voges, 1985; and Means, 1989), those such as Engstrom and Dayton (1976) who identify a *laissez faire* style, speak of being casual, laid back, indifferent, relaxed. In extreme cases, they may even appear uncaring and heartless. But other styles – for example, the Dictatorial, Autocratic, Democratic and Participative (Malphurs, 1995) – also reflect personality and temperament traits, as well as one’s view of others. As we observe leaders in varying situations, we see this is a universal dynamic. Hence, as noted earlier, it cannot be argued that Leading is only or, even mainly, determined by one’s worldview.



From the issue of power, we moved to creativity. I asked the group how they feel about improvement, difference, change and uniqueness. I have asked my students previously about improving something just for the sake of improvement. I have been surprised at how little interest this has evoked. “No, we don’t see any point in that,” is a typical response. Some years ago, I asked a class why all the street vendors selling vegetables on the pavement sell the same goods as everyone else – for instance, tomatoes – and often, in the same way (for example in the same size plastic bags)? Why doesn’t someone come along and sell something different from the others – and make more income in the process? Their answer was intriguing. It’s because of fear, they said. Why? “Because if my neighbour is doing better than me, I will automatically be suspicious that they may have put a curse on me not to sell so much or do so well. Instead of being falsely accused and have a bad relationship as a result, I would rather sell the same things as they do even if that means less income overall in the end.” So, again, the dynamics of fear and relationships come clearly to the surface.

Dixon had an interesting comment at this point: “Leaders always seem to be doing the same thing the same way because they don’t change. How do you ensure creativity? Every leader needs time each day to think. Change is the key that leads to freshness. As leaders, we need to be thinkers. People notice changes – even the small ones. I once crushed some papers and threw them by the door. Some people just kicked them; others picked them up; others moved them. Some didn’t even notice.”

Beki followed up: “Sometimes we see things as leaders but we avoid them. We notice a problem, but I’m afraid of the repercussions if I do something. For me, my approach is, if things aren’t right, let’s fight, let’s cry, but don’t leave things to deteriorate. The traditional approach is to maintain things as they are; don’t rock the boat. Change comes with its challenges. My leaders criticise me for being too ‘bookish’ – too many meetings. One individual wants to “go for it” – let’s be practical. But when I gave him some responsibility, he didn’t do it! Sometimes we have to ignore such criticism. One time, I looked after an orphan [at the Church] who then tried to poison the janitor. I was crushed. I thought about it and decided I had to carry on – I was doing something to help the community.”

Although his observations shift from creativity to criticism, again, we see several issues mentioned. He admits to a different attitude and approach to dealing with problems and tensions: he likes to get things out in the open, discussed and amicably resolved, contrary to many who feel comfortable doing nothing, hoping the situation will clear itself. He personally prefers joint decisions with planning and preparation. But one of his team, by contrast, thinks it is better to ‘just do it’ – yet, when given the responsibility, found out the hard way that



planning and preparation are necessary. Beki was also clearly hurt by the response by the orphan to his help, but saw the larger picture and determined to carry on.

Dixon then asked, “How do you deal with difficult people? People feel it when you sideline them. Actions speak louder than words. Sometimes it’s counterproductive. They can feel your anger. They then become the devil’s evangelist. We need [Maxwell’s Law of] the Buy-in: people need to be persuaded as to why something needs to be done. It’s good to throw people in the deep end. They will understand why the pastor is saying things and they come back to find out how to do it properly. I thrive under criticism.”

Responding to Beki’s team mate who criticised but then did nothing, Dixon suggests the leader, rather than getting angry, should seek to point out the advantages of doing something. But, sometimes, people have to learn the hard way. And, while criticism can often be hurtful, it is often useful.

Picking up on the idea of checking people’s reactions, George described a situation he created: “I opened the tap [at Church] just a little and stood back to watch. The ones who noticed the dripping tap and turned it off, I then wrote their names down. These will be good leaders. [There’s] another test, like a competition: the one who comes tops, I give an opportunity to lead. Most of my ‘guys’ are good leaders now. Creativity is the fuel that keeps us moving.”

Responding to this and Dixon’s earlier comment, Dawson said, “I have a problem when people don’t see that changes have been made. They’re not leadership material. The effective leader needs to notice things. Even if it’s only for correction. A good sign of leadership is to be prepared to move in spite of criticism. Criticism also makes us check ourselves.

Joyce stressed the recurring emphasis on relationships, almost at the expense of everything else: “This is also related to relationships. The organisation [itself] becomes less important than these.” This would explain, for instance, why senior and middle managers sometimes do not do what they are required to in certain situations, even though they know they should and are harming the organisation by not doing so. But relationships are paramount!

Chris added yet a related dimension of fear: “Some people are afraid of risk – of harming relationships; it’s all about influence.” The suggestion here is that, while the risk and fear factors are present, effective, properly motivated influence can minimise the perceived damage.



Although much of this last question was answered in the context of criticism and problems, I followed it with the next obvious issue: How is creativity developed? Are deliberate links between creativity and problem-solving presented to facilitate skills-building? I tried to illustrate the fundamental point with a story. Several years ago, a missionary colleague related an interesting account of how his four-year-old son and the four-year-old daughter of some Shona friends were occupying themselves on the lounge carpet while the adults chatted over tea. He observed that his son, engrossed in his toys and constantly active, was exploring, testing and curious. Meanwhile, his 'girlfriend' merely sat on the carpet doing nothing; she didn't even attempt to play with the toys. The son's father pondered this distinctly different approach and attitude to play by the children. I, too, have often wondered, then, what drives inquisitiveness, challenge and questioning. As I asked the group, there were several responses.

George commented, "The old Africans didn't allow their children to venture out, to explore. When mother looked at you, you knew what it meant. As children, we were never allowed our rights. But now you have a 4-year-old child telling her father that she will stay in South Africa – without her parents! I wish I'd grown up in these days! We were so oppressed. Creativity has to be encouraged," he went on. "When you repress it today, tomorrow they will be reluctant. If they mess up, tell them nicely." I added that in my father's generation, the philosophy was: 'Children should be seen and not heard' to which he readily agreed.

But Chris was not satisfied: "But why did your parents do that to you, George?" "This was dignity," he said. Chris went on, "Children today ask questions we would never ask." He gave an example of his son playing with a water pistol and he tried to explain about the wastage. "Why, Dad, what's wrong – there's plenty of water," his son responded. "So we sat down and had a discussion to explain the shortage of water. When they grow up, they're better able to understand."

Dawson agreed that play is one of the factors. "Creativity in the rural areas is developed in the same way. We'd make wire toys; you start from scratch and make what you want. Girls would do "cooking" from mud. We'd make all sorts of things from nothing."

Beki, acknowledging the value of modernity, was nevertheless cautious: "Technology is also affecting creativity. I value it, but if we allow it to bring up our children, at the end of the day, they won't be the best that we want them to be. For example, you get into a home situation [where you see] the parents are busy doing their own things while the children are doing their thing. There's no communication. Creativity comes from nature. We need to take the children out to see nature. Today, kids can tell you the latest movie or Internet thing, but they



don't know the local wildlife. They're growing up very fast, and we become afraid of what will happen tomorrow. We need to learn from what is there – the natural world. But [this technology] is also a problem – look at pornography on the Internet – we need to monitor them.”

Joyce, with a different perspective, said, “As a mother, I've discovered a child can be creative using anything in the house. The important thing is for parents to realise they have a role to play. Give them responsibility; show them things.”

In wrapping up this point, Dawson commented: “Culture is also very dynamic. We need to treat our children in this context. In today's world, if I don't structure a proper holiday with my family, I'm in trouble. The traditional 'holiday' in the rural areas makes me more tired because I'm constantly solving other people's problems, working in the fields and so on. My wife is working [in town] and sometimes, she comes home very tired and I offer to do the cooking. Sometimes, we have to go away as a family. Everyone looks forward to that. But in ministry, it takes discipline. We shouldn't raise our children in the way we grew up, but we need to change with the times.”

Beki and Dawson, in particular, drew out the need to adapt to the times. Culture should be dynamic; it should help the current situation, not hinder it. This, of course, means that worldviews change as well.

Moving on from there, and picking up on the prior emphasis on people and relationships, I next asked: In a relation-oriented environment, are people “used” – considered a ‘return on investment’? Is this considered an abuse and, if so, is that sense of abuse minimised in any way because of the emphasis on relationships? I raised this question because, despite the stated value of relationships in so many instances, my own experience is that some people abuse the relationships they have for their own ends. I related how I worked for a Christian man in Harare some 20 years ago. His philosophy was: Because the person I'm dealing with is a fellow Christian, he is obliged to give me a special deal. He based that on Scripture (e.g. Gal. 6:10), but I understood his approach as misconstruing the intent; such an attitude is an abuse of the relationship.

George picked that up: “There's no free Christmas party. If you're invited, there's always a pay back.” He then related how people in the business world are often invited to parties with the express intent – especially at Christmas – of buying them presents and flattering them to elicit contracts or business deals. “But it should be different in the Christian realm. We should love the other person without any hidden agendas.”



Joyce tried to balance the perspective: “But you also have God-given wisdom. There is opportunity for others to assist me.” While that is true for the Body of Christ, when the relationship is deliberately sought with a scheming motive for gain, it comes very close to abusing the other person.

Beki related his experience: “Even pastors get into this; they get alongside someone; [they think,] ‘As soon as I have what I want, that’s the end of the relationship.’ I once refused to do a funeral. My senior pastor was this person’s friend. I told him, ‘You should go to help; he is your friend.’”

In summing up, Dawson commented: “I’m in a multi-cultural church. We use English. One of our (white) leaders had a close relative who died. I went to see him [just] because I knew him. But someone may have thought I had an ulterior motive in doing so. We have such communities all over the world. Depending on your view, you can assume that one group is taking advantage of another. This requires spiritual maturity. We can be carnal if we’re not careful.”

The last question in this section was an attempt to explore some of the negative aspects of leading; in particular, conflict and criticism. In asking how they react to conflict, I laid out three typical approaches:

- a. Traditional – it’s dysfunctional, therefore avoid or eliminate it
- b. Behavioural – organisational conflict is inevitable; accept it;
- c. Interaction – deliberately stimulate it to promote improvement, change

Dawson said: “(a) is not good leadership; you’ll never correct things [that way]. [But, often, we think:] ‘We are ‘men of God’ – we don’t want to listen to others because we think God has spoken to us.”

Dixon chose b and c. “C needs to be done very carefully; when you stimulate you should be able to manage it. If you overstep, you may create more disaster. People have different backgrounds. Your choice here depends on the type of leadership you have. If it’s dictatorial, you’ll tend to use the traditional approach. But if you see this as building people, you’ll have a different approach. You should separate the idea from the person. I accept constructive criticism.”

Beki added another dimension: “Sometimes, people get involved in cold wars or silent wars. They’re not verbally communicating. They’re avoiding each other, but they’re pained. For *makiwas* [whites], they’re honest. For example, if you give a bad sermon, they’ll tell you, but in our culture, I won’t say anything directly, but I’ll not give them another opportunity to preach



again. That's the traditional approach." He then explained a conflict situation at his church. "We had children join the worship team (uninvited). As I thought about it, I realised it wasn't right. As we discussed it, some supported it; some were against. Now, the team leader wasn't happy about the children leaving. I wanted them out (after all, can children be expected to understand the deeper purposes of worship?) But the pastor's wife (a Sunday School teacher) didn't like that, so she influenced her class. So there was this conflict between her and the children. Then the children's families got involved and it ended up [with them] taking their children elsewhere. They saw the leadership as using the children to fight their battles. But simply moving away won't help; nothing will be sorted out by itself. You can't sweep things under the carpet; you need to confront."

The group, generally, was agreeable that the 'traditional approach' is not appropriate. Yet, why, then, is it "traditional"?

The issues presented in the Leading discourse, show once more a primary concern for relationships, together with a fear that these will somehow be harmed. We also see worldview and personality working hand in hand.

1.2.1.6 Controlling –

Given the primacy of relationships in both Shona and Ndebele cultures, together with the fear factor as identified earlier, the issues of supervising, monitoring, evaluating and measuring take on extra significance. It is questionable, however, whether these technically belong under Leading, since the normal expectation is that the 'leader' would do them. I have chosen to place supervision under Leading (see previous responses to this topic above) and have left monitoring, evaluating and measuring under the factor of Controlling because I think these are more administrative than about leading. Again, however, I accept that, depending on the need, the 'leader' may well be obliged to take corrective action – even, perhaps, against the administrator! Therefore, I recognise this is a moot point, and would not want to be dogmatic about it.

Questions come to mind such as: Are these elements incorrectly understood or merely poorly defined? Are these dynamics adequately communicated as expectations? If not, why not? Given the fear factor, enhanced by the strong, inherent desire not to harm relationships at any cost – even when the organisation, apparently, will suffer – how are these dynamics tackled? What are the underlying assumptions – and how are these shaped by worldview?

Again, this segment of the dialogue was changed from the original intention. I had intended to approach it as a topic on its own as one of the group sessions. But, as noted earlier, the



group suggested a change in approach to a single, retreat session. Since I had not finished this topic by then, it was covered in the single session along with the last topic of this Chapter and the material for the next two Chapters. Also, rather than discuss the specific questions as in the first topics, I coalesced them for this one as well and sought, through the broader queries, to uncover the more specific issues as they came up in the dialogue. Hence, there were three segments to this topic: monitoring, measuring and evaluating. At the same time, there are some general, background issues needing clarification first before we could look at any details. Hence, I began with some miscellaneous questions as an introduction to this factor.

Moreover, I had not given as much attention to the topic of Control in the individual conversations because I felt the responses would be more helpful if I garnered them within a group setting. Thus, I merely 'introduced' the factor then, expecting to draw out more discussion later from the group meeting. I also wanted to confirm the primacy of relationships, recognising the impact of this aspect on this particular factor, yet without assuming it as a given. This explains the 'new' questions in this part of the dialogue that were not covered in the individual interviews. In the first part of this interview (covering 10 of 18 questions on the topic), only four of the group were present.

We began with some general questions about job satisfaction, authority and professionalism. In order to establish some connection with worldview, I began by asking whether the element of appeasing the spirits shapes the ways we measure, monitor and evaluate. At first, this caused some confusion and I had to explain the question a little further, differentiating between appeasing the spirits in ceremonies or in terms of daily interaction and decisions. It was the latter I was referring to and after this clarification, Dawson commented:

"Everyone believes in the spirit world, but we believe differently. I believe they exist but, as a Christian, I'm not obedient to them. To answer the question: No. The spirits are there, but I'm not affected by them. But my neighbour would probably be influenced [by them]. Because of their [the neighbour's] obedience to them [or] faith in them, the way you measure, monitor or evaluate would be affected. With a leader, the assumption is that he realises the people are influenced and so he takes that into consideration. Whatever happens on the ground influences what happens; the spirit world influences the physical world. The spirits are forceful, aggressive and dictatorial. They don't allow people to use their mind. You cannot negotiate with them. But the Spirit of God is a gentleman; He doesn't force himself on man. If you didn't do your assignment because of the Spirit of God, I can't accept that. But if you are under the control of the spirits, then I have nothing to say." In other words, for the African



Christian, there is a clear distinction between being aware of the spirit world and being influenced by that world on the one hand and being influenced by the Holy Spirit on the other.

With that in mind, I then asked whether *ubuntu/unhu* says anything in this area. Dawson again jumped in: “Suppose you say to me as a leader, ‘Does *ubuntu wami* control these, my subjects?’ Then, yes, this says something. Sometimes a leader fails to control because he feels it will compromise his [sense of] *ubuntu*. If his personality is ‘cool’ he will approach it a certain way.”

But, once more, there was some confusion, as it became apparent that all four of the team understood the question to refer to a group (or congregation) setting. This natural assumption on their part highlights the almost automatic, subconscious focus on community, a crowd, a collection of people. But when I explained that I was referring to measuring, monitoring and evaluating individual workers they collectively reassessed the question and their intended answers. (Perhaps I should point out here that I was not deliberately thinking about my own worldview but about the work setting between the ‘employer’ and the ‘employee’.) At this point, Dawson said, “Personality determines how I approach the person,” while Joyce commented, “Culture is involved. Western [culture] is individualistic; [the] African is group-oriented. We treasure the relationship rather than performance.”

George then chipped in with an illustration from a recent conversation on an E.T. (emergency taxi, or kombi). He related how one person was arguing that only rich people get bank loans. If your father is wealthy, you are likely to get the loan. But if you have a good idea but come from a poor family, you won’t get the loan. Everyone seemed to agree with this conclusion – that the relationship counts – until the other person, getting out of the vehicle said, “OK, I’ll just buy the bank!” [Laughter] Dawson added: “So, it’s the idea, not the relationship [that counts].” Interestingly, this remark did not elicit any other response.

We then moved on to needs and job satisfaction. I asked, how important is it to satisfy needs? What needs do you typically seek to satisfy (a) Your own? (b) Others? Do you agree or disagree with, for example, Maslow’s hierarchy? Or other approaches? Why? Is there a link between satisfying personal needs and ethics toward the job/organisation?

Speaking generally, Chris observed that “There must be some acknowledgement [of the work done]. For example, at the end of the year, [you should] sit down with the person and give them some encouragement – perhaps a letter – it means a lot.”

More specifically about her own needs and satisfaction, Joyce said, “This is about reaching self-actualisation [*a la* Maslow]. That would affect performance on the job. For others, the



tendency has been to focus on basics (for example, bus fare, household needs and so on.) But when you analyse your workers, you can have some who will stay for years despite low salaries because they have a sense of being needed; being wanted is important.”

Dawson affirmed this: “It’s good to love them and show appreciation, even in front of the congregation. The vision is yours, but they’re supporting you in that. It’s good to support and encourage them.”

George added another dimension: “In the cults, people are so committed that they sacrifice themselves for the cult because their needs are met. So, if you know how to meet these needs, people commit themselves.” There was general agreement with this notion. The recognition, then, of the importance of meeting needs and of satisfaction was clear.

Turning the conversation to the spiritual, I then asked whether as a Christian, the need to satisfy God and being satisfied by Him comes in here. Chris volunteered: “It depends on the leader – how you set the standard for people to follow. If I do things in a lax way, people will follow, [but] not necessarily agreeing with the way I’m doing it. As a leader you have to set the standards. So, we talk about training. But much of this is about your own conviction as a leader. What do you use to measure, to evaluate? The Bible talks about the pastors and teachers being gifted to equip others to do the work. So the way you pass on the skills and motivate others to do the work is crucial.

Following this up, Dawson noted: “Sometimes, Christians in general want to satisfy God, but I was thinking that the average Christian is thinking more about getting from God than serving God. He serves God more on the basis of benefits to or for himself. Even our commitment [is questionable at times]. We serve God, we are committed to Church and God, not because of Him, but because we hope to get from Him.”

George: “Once you have the sense of satisfying God, you become an apostle.” [Laughter.] He was saying that a personal sense of being satisfied can sometimes be used (or abused) to claim unwarranted position, power or prestige – and few people are willing to question it.

Next, I asked about the appropriateness of rejecting requests or orders. ‘When might it be appropriate not to accept someone’s authority/orders? When is rejection of authority inappropriate?’ I raised this issue in the light of some (Western) business thinking that suggests the person who can respond (to a superior’s request) has the real power because they can refuse. Given the worldview factor of relationships, I wanted to check whether this is culturally acceptable. Almost universally, the group responded negatively. Dawson reacted strongly: “[It’s] very inappropriate. Only when it contradicts the faith. But when we are



together, this is very inappropriate. Rather than direct rejection, you can offer alternatives. In a church set-up, there are other factors. This situation would require other things to be done (for instance, discipleship; [or] step them down from that leadership because they are hindering growth – which I am responsible for before God. So, we discuss, negotiate.” Chris quickly added: “The key here is negotiation. Let’s talk about your skills.”

George contributed a personal illustration: “When I was in secular work, I was over many who were older than me. They refused to do something, so I fired them. But when we went for the Church service, we had problems [with some of them who were there]. [Laughter.] So, I confessed to God and decided not to fire them. The following day, they had all gathered and I forgave them. (See below, on ‘Monitoring’.) [But] if the order is against my conscience, then I have to refuse.” He went on to suggest that, in an important situation, such as a fire, there would be an expectation to help put it out.

Joyce added further insight: “Where someone has a specific gifting, you may refuse because you don’t want to be a square peg in a round hole.” In other words, where the request is inappropriate and the person’s expertise suggests an alternative approach or a better decision would be more beneficial, a (polite) refusal may be in order.

Then I moved to another important issue in sound administration: professionalism. I asked if this is only a modern (that is, urban/office) concept? Interestingly, the group was unsure about what this entails – despite all of them being in professional positions. George began by speaking about types of work as ‘professional’. When I prompted that attitude has more to say to this factor than the type of work, the group all agreed. Joyce then defined professionalism as “Doing the right things in the right way at the right time.” The rest of the group concurred. For confirmation, I asked whether there would be the same attitude and sense of expectation in a village setting as in an urban one; is this relatively determined? The group all agreed that the attitude is all-embracing, irrespective of the type of work or the environment.

This observation, of course, raises some important questions about expectations of both leaders and followers. If the general attitude behind professionalism is understood and expected, why does it seem to be lacking in so many instances where administration is weak or problematic? What can be done to strengthen this area? Given the group’s response, I suspect that the twin dimensions of education or awareness and of personality are the major factors at play here.



From there, we moved to the theme of measuring and I asked a related question about quality. Are there worldview factors determining quality? Is this defined culturally? Does the concept and definition of quality change as one shifts from an agrarian setting to an urban, technical one? Is quality relative?

Joyce opened the discussion on this one: “This depends on what you’re talking about. If you’re talking about a laptop, there will be specifications so [that] it works the way it’s supposed to. When you’re talking of people, you’re talking of productivity; of discipleship. It [quality] also has to do with excellence.”

Dawson quickly followed up: “It’s not relative, although the things we measure may be different. The rural guys can make a fence using poles and branches and do a very good job. But you can’t have this in town; you have to do it differently. But still quality is there.” However, while he pointed to the setting and resources impacting on how a job is done, he did not consider the factor of sophistication or, even, better quality materials in an urban setting (often because there tends to be more money available and a better choice.)

In considering the question of what quality is, George responding to Joyce’s comment, proffered: “Excellence is a higher value. For example, you can have two farmers: one produces poor quality maize – you can see it’s not good; the other produces maize of a higher quality and you can notice the difference.” He added: “Quality is about meeting the standards.” The group affirmed this illustration and there was general agreement that quality is measurable, even though what is measured and how may differ from setting to setting.

This led naturally to the question of how one measures, both activities and people, both formally and informally. I also asked about perfectionism and whether any of this shaped by worldview.

Chris said he looks at the outcome. “I want to see something that is well organised, performed according to plan; [that is] orderly. I tend to be more of a perfectionist. I want to see high standards. [How do you handle people who do less than expected?] I have to admit I have struggled. As a Christian, I have to respond accordingly. I’ve had to learn there are other factors to take into account. What kind of people are you working with; what qualifications and skills do they have? Are my expectations in line with their abilities? You just have to know the people you’re working with. Otherwise it’s difficult to measure the quality of activities. You would expect more from those who have been trained and have the skills.” For Chris, as a perfectionist, his measurement of others would be against himself and his own expectations – but at least he recognises this may not be a fair estimation since skills



and abilities differ. While he acknowledges the difficulties in measuring, this is probably due to a lack of clear-cut, deliberate standards. For most people, this is a problem since, unless one's work demands such conscious, deliberate evaluation on a regular basis, we do not typically think about the specifics of how to measure any given situation.

By contrast, Dawson said he is not a perfectionist. "But I do get offended if things are not done perfectly. If you are not a perfectionist, you are aware of the issues affecting the performance and there would be flexibility." He added that he is not lax, but he is happy to work towards perfection rather than demanding it. This highlights the fine distinction between perfectionism and demanding high standards. The former tends toward an attitude about one's self and others (and, usually, their inabilities to match up), while the latter is performance based. Equally, both can be frustrating for those doing the work and being evaluated.

Joyce then commented: "A *laissez faire* leader [that is, casual, unconcerned] needs to be balanced." In other words, the laid-back approach should not be indifferent to quality. [So, is quality about personality rather than worldview? I asked.] Dawson suggested both are involved; one affects the other.

From there, we moved to the issue of monitoring and I asked whether the emphasis on relationships enhances or inhibits the responsibility to monitor job performance? Why does it appear that some people are afraid to monitor – even allowing the situation to reach crisis point? Interestingly, the group affirmed that the desire to maintain good relationships at the expense of correcting the wayward worker(s) may well lead to a decline in standards and performance over the whole. [See George's earlier illustration – on rejecting orders – when he fired some workers and then reversed his decision.]

However, Dawson drew a distinction between the purposes of the relationships: "There's an individual relationship and a 'political' relationship. [In other words, the value of the relationship and maintaining it can vary depending on the purpose.] This is about personality and leadership style. Bad leadership will bring repercussions later." While emphasising the importance of the relationship, he was nevertheless acknowledging that bad leadership – a matter of both personality and style – can lead to further complications. For further clarification, I then asked if any consideration would be given to the fact that, as the overall situation deteriorates (because of poor performance), the relationships themselves would also deteriorate. This was accepted, but it was clear from the general response that this aspect was not a main consideration.



Joyce commented: “It depends how the leader wants to be viewed. This will affect the way he [does or] doesn’t want to ruffle feathers. If you’re not afraid, then in the end, you do what you have to.” George then retorted: “This is where training comes in: when you have a problem, you know what to do.” Chris followed up with: “When people benefit from the situation, they will want it to continue.” And Dawson added: “When you have an elite benefiting, they will always benefit from the majority. This even happens in church.” This points, again, to the factor of motive in the relationship highlighted earlier.

Next, we looked at the process of monitoring and how this is done, both in terms of the leader of followers and followers of the leader. I also asked whether the followers are satisfied with what they see.

Chris spoke to an important trait in today’s leadership: “The key is accountability. [We often think,] we are Christians doing God’s work, so why should we be monitored; God knows, so why bother? But if we’re operating as a team, we need to be accountable to those who are part of the system and whom you are serving. I find it helpful to inform others of what I’m doing and where I’m going.”

Dawson followed this up: “Many times, seniors don’t want to be monitored; they want to protect something. I’ve noticed it’s difficult for my juniors to monitor me. It takes strong discipline for the senior to do all that he is supposed to because few would confront him. I wish there was a better system for monitoring seniors. There needs to be teamwork and accountability. This will always keep God’s work on track.”

Joyce agreed: “What happens now is a loose system that doesn’t demand accountability. We need a systematised way of evaluating.” [Is this a social, developmental phase, or are there issues blocking a move in this direction?] “It’s an educational issue. It’s also good for those in top leadership to be opened up; evaluation should be by consensus. When a leader is not open to the congregation for monitoring, then it’s easy not to be accountable.” To which George added: “Let people know what you’re doing – [give them] your weekly schedule.”

Although no-one actually answered the question directly, they all pointed to two fundamental issues in the monitoring process, particularly in Christian ministry contexts: That accountability is not as strong as it should be in many quarters and that more education is needed in this area to help both leaders and followers to be better stewards. It may well be that there are theological undertones here that militate against full accountability and the process of monitoring. This will be explored in Chapters Six and Seven.



I then raised a worldview dimension that has created problems in different ways: that of age and its concomitant of respect. This is particularly evident for younger leaders who, having just qualified from college, must assume the mantle of leadership over people who are older than them. In essence, it is their position that ‘keeps’ them in leadership until such time as they gain natural respect through the way they conduct themselves. A second major problem that many young leaders face is that their seniors often feel threatened and refuse to have them serve with them. While this particular issue is complex and has more to do with a proper sense of call, a correct theology of ministry in the first place, as well as personality and self-image, it raises significant questions about measuring and monitoring.

Beki commented, “In terms of attracting elderly people, this has meant some work. You have to convince them that there is something to learn. ‘What can this youngster teach us?’ In ministry, our authority comes from God.” He then gave an example of a funeral he led as a young pastor. “Some older folk were sceptical that I would cope and thought it was going to be a disaster; but afterwards they asked, ‘Can we come to your church?’ They won’t talk about it openly, but in public they appear not to worry. It surfaces when it comes to commitment with the older people in the Church. Sometimes they object to a certain activity as being ‘childish’. But the idea of the Gospel is to challenge those cultural dynamics that get in the way. We need to be sensitive.”

For George, it’s a matter of position and education: “When Jesus came back to his home town, they couldn’t respect Him because they thought they knew who He was. But you should respect and obey those who are over you. We need some education. Age gives power, but position also has power. The old man should assist the pastor, not the other way round.”

Joyce chipped in: “If a pastor is younger, he will tend to attract younger people. From a commercial context, it’s the systems that safeguard the young ‘boss’. From an African context, when you have someone put in leadership when they are younger, the title or position has authority.”

George quickly added: “My mother-in-law is also a pastor like me and my father. Sometimes, we may be talking about something and I notice my mother-in-law sneaking out because it’s her son-in-law speaking. I also face the issue that I am now better educated than they are.” To this, Beki added, “It’s a struggle. My father-in-law and mother-in-law declined to stand for leadership in the church. But afterwards, he admitted that cultural issues got in the way. There is always resistance to change.”



Picking up on his earlier story of firing workers, George observed, “When I was managing, I was overseeing three shifts of 45. There came a time when they rebelled. I had to put my foot down. I fired them, but then reinstated them. From then on, they respected me.”

Beki then related knowing a pastor who, when he started, wasn’t supported by the Board and four years went by. He then fired the Board and introduced new, younger people. The Church then moved forward.

Speaking of his denomination, George added: “We discovered that it takes two years before a pastor is fully accepted. We used to transfer pastors after every three years. Now we are saying he should be there for five years.”

The remaining eight questions were subsequently covered as part of the group retreat referred to earlier and for which there were five participants. Again, this change in the conversational dynamic provided not just additional comments from the fifth person, but more dialogue among the group.

In the context of monitoring, another dimension is that of time management. When a job is not done in time, such that there are unfortunate consequences, what happens in a worldview setting where time is secondary anyway? What is the role of deadlines in such cases? Is there, particularly in the agrarian setting, the concept of “hurry”?

One of my students illustrated this question recently. Together with other students, we were on our way to another student’s house to share our condolences in the loss of their two-year-old son. We left at 2:15 p.m. The first student remarked: “We have to be there by 2:30.” Given the distance, that was not possible. So I asked him why. He said we needed to leave the house by 3:00 p.m. (It was anticipated that the ‘service’ would take about 30 minutes.) That sounded like a deadline, I suggested, and asked what it was for. He responded by explaining that there was a major championship soccer game on and he needed to be back to catch the second half at least. We all laughed. I said: “So, if you live in the city, you have deadlines, but if you live in the village, there are no deadlines – unless you’re also watching the soccer.” “Yes,” my student stated matter-of-factly without realising the significance of it, “there’s no such thing as deadlines in the village.” “Oh,” I suggested, “it seems that technology changes one’s worldview and culture.” Silence.

In response to the question, George related the following: “My grandfather used to say, ‘When the first rains come and the ground is still warm, we must plant the seeds. If we wait and allow the soil to get cold, the seeds, won’t germinate.’ There was never a year when he didn’t harvest. So the deadline for us was to plant quickly before the soil got cold.



To this, Joyce added, “The rural areas do have deadlines – they are looser,” and Beki affirmed, “In the rural context, time is loose. You first do one thing and finish it before doing something else. The urban worldview doesn’t apply. You are event oriented; as long as it’s done, it doesn’t matter when.”

And George interjected, “Don’t have commitments on the same day. Educate the people politely, gently – and they will change. Then you can hold a stick to them. It’s the way you approach them.”

The last segment of Controlling has to do with evaluation and discipline. Evaluation (either formally or informally reporting the monitoring or measuring) necessarily must involve some degree of judgement or criticism of others. Where the worldview emphasis is on community and relationships, to what extent is such evaluation hindered or, even, evaded – to the eventual detriment of the person and/or organisation? If this is so, how does it negatively impact on quality and productivity control? What might be done to minimise the loss of benefit from, and enhance the benefit to, the person and organisation?

Joyce was first off the mark: “It’s a skill you have to develop. From my experience, someone who is honest and candid tends to be more respected.” The others agreed with this, with George relating an incident of “guys and girls having ‘disappeared’ [from Church] when I put my foot down about lax living. Those who came for counselling are now happily married. The others are starting to come back because they’ve realised the value of the discipline and counselling. Not all our leaders understand discipline properly: it’s not to tear down but to build up. When I put someone under discipline, I give them a mentor to work with. This is benefiting the congregation who is also learning about discipline and its value. It helps when we discipline in love.”

But what about when someone makes a mistake, how do you (a) as a superior; (b) as a junior, typically approach the situation? Are you primarily concerned with the person or the work that needs correcting? How do you evaluate (a) formally and (b) informally?

George quickly chipped in: “The problem is, we look at the person not at the wrong done. When we see the person tomorrow, we still see what they did, not taking account that he has changed. I believe the Gospel changes people. Having repented, we shouldn’t dwell on the past.” To which Joyce asked, “What about elders who do wrong?” “I haven’t had any situation like that, but there are others above me who would probably deal with that,” George responded. Joyce asked about senior pastors. Said George, “Seniors are always difficult. If you are senior, that’s OK, but if you’re junior it’s very difficult.”



“But it will be the organisation that suffers,” commented Beki. “Rumours go around about our leaders that create problems. We need to find a way out. Perhaps use the back door approach to talk about it: without making it specific who you’re talking about.”

Related to this is the reverse aspect: How does one respond when they are evaluated – or even criticised? Again, there are different levels: (a) by a superior; (b) by an equal, (c) by a junior? How might one’s worldview affect this?

Dawson was first to answer: “It depends how they approach me. Usually, we are defensive. If they approach me “well” – start from the positive and then show me where I’ve missed it – then it won’t be difficult to acknowledge. But most people start with the negative. But then I feel my efforts are being watered down; my integrity is being attacked, so I’ll be defensive.”

“I agree,” affirmed Chris. “It depends on the approach. It’s also important to distinguish between the person and the mistake. If you don’t, you make things worse.” To which Joyce added, “It also depends how you say it.”

“Yes,” continued Beki: “It should be three compliments and one criticism. Build up their self-esteem first. If they feel they’re a failure, they won’t try again. Help them to be better in the future. Maybe perfectionists are too hard: if you blow it, you don’t get a second chance.” He then related the following story: “I was doing survey work for a Christian organisation. Our leaders asked me how one person was doing; I told them I couldn’t work with him – he was results-oriented rather than people-oriented. I [also] told him. Later, he reported that I had done a good job – but he never told me.” At which point George chipped in: “He needed training. Both the leader and the subordinates.”

Picking up the last thought, Dawson recounted: “One time my daughter was very offended. She complained that I only see her wrongs and not her rights. At first, I was upset, but then I thought about the times I have complimented her and I realised it wasn’t very often. I learnt a lesson that day.”

Here, I raised a specifically ‘Christian’ question: Is there a distinction between the “secular” way you might discipline someone and the “Christian” (that is, pastoral) way? What worldviews come in to play in these two approaches?

Dawson responded: “Yes, there’s a difference. From a pastoral point of view, discipline is important because it upholds the standards of a holy God. It also tells people that [the behaviour] is not acceptable. It is for restoration and correction. There was a lady in our Church who got pregnant but didn’t tell anyone. My wife saw her after some time, three days before the wedding. We discovered she was pregnant. We only had time for one counselling



session. The service was planned during a Sunday service. I told her that we would discipline them then marry them. The boy is not a Christian, so we couldn't discipline him. We publicly announced it and asked the congregation what to do about her." The idea here, of course, was to demonstrate that the behaviour was unacceptable; action was needed, otherwise the wrong signals would be given. Yet, the approach was not harsh, punitive and exclusive but, rather, it was aimed at restoration. George added: "In our Church, even for a private sin, we announce it in the Church once it is sorted out." In such cases, the congregation can be disciplined about right and wrong behaviour. While this 'public' approach – where appropriate in a church setting – may not apply in an office or organisational context, the pastoral, restorative dimension is clear.

While we are dealing here with Christian ministry and the expectation is that everything works smoothly because people generally do what they are asked to when they have to, experience tells us that, nevertheless, there are times when instructions are not carried out properly or promptly. So we must ask: What do you do if the person (junior/senior) does not accept the discipline or doesn't change? What dynamics concern you at this point?

George related two stories: "One of my deacons who had been promoted in his ministry, no longer reported to me. I tried to talk to him, but he couldn't change. I tried a second time, but nothing; so I kept quiet. Last night, he asked me, 'Pastor, why don't you talk to me?' I said, 'I've tried to correct you with the wrongs you've done, but you don't respond. That shows you don't accept my leadership. So why should I bother?' We talked some more and he repented. He told me about gossip and rumours about me. We showed that wasn't true. So now we're back to normal."

Then he gave a second account: "In a secular setting, if you don't do what I say, you're fired. I have a maid whom I encouraged to finish her O-levels. One day, she was offended because I hadn't told her I was going away. She started putting extra salt in my food (to which I am allergic). When we found out, we had to dismiss her because we could no longer trust her."

Following on from this, and bringing the dialogue on Controlling to an end, is the matter of force. This is pertinent in the Christian ministry context not just in general terms but particularly because most of the workers or followers are volunteers. When is coercion (for example, "If you don't do this, you're fired!") considered legitimate and, therefore, acceptable? What problems do you have with it and why?



Ensuing from the previous discussion, George retorted: “It would be different in the Church. If they are still adamant, you do it politely, but in the end it’s the same. If you let the person continue, it will be very difficult later.”

Beki suggested, “In a Church setting, firing is a last resort. Emotions and attitudes shouldn’t be involved. It should be done in love. Some leaders hold grudges; they wait for an opportunity to get rid of the person. You should do it prayerfully and thoughtfully: If I was in their position, how would I like them to treat me? [Make sure you] have all the evidence. Discipline should be part of discipleship. After discipline, what’s the next step? Relationships should remain.”

Dawson, to nods of agreement, affirmed a prevalent observation: “Christians also take others for granted: believers take advantage of each other. They accept mediocrity; they don’t perform to standards. But good ethics should be taught to staff of Christian organisations. Christian ministry is not a licence for slackness and poor performance.” To which Beki added: “Even spelling mistakes in documents. They can’t even be bothered to correct their mistakes.”

Joyce (explaining a discipline case) responded: “We also went through that. As a Christian organisation, we had to go through our ethos and explain it to our staff. We had to make some major changes. First and foremost, we had to ensure the organisation is achieving its objectives; this was more important than the relationships we were keen to maintain. We realised that Christianity is a way of hiding things that need to be dealt with. By doing that, we were actually conforming to Biblical standards. We need to put in systems.” Dawson quickly chipped in: “That’s why the Bible says, ‘Hold the rod and spoil the child’. We have allowed non-performing people to bring the Church into disrepute. In many Christian organisations, things are just not done properly and it’s accepted.”

George, tongue-in-cheek, suggested: “We should make our wives our secretaries” to which Dawson flashed back: “Then they’ll hinder our ministry!” “But,” he quickly added, “my wife knows me.” Then, as a wife herself, Joyce commented: “But we think we are interfering in God’s work if we say anything.” “No,” said Dawson, “You are our ‘help-meet.’ The man needs the woman’s help; you are stronger than him in some respects. We have to let you help us. My wife says, ‘I will never say anything to you unless it’s to help you!’”

In wrapping up this particular conversation, George seriously observed, “If it wasn’t for my wife, I couldn’t be doing today what I am. I know where my strength comes from – my wife.” [Nods all round and a coy smile from Joyce.]



Having considered the five-fold framework of administration, we now come to one more important dynamic that impacts how administration may be perceived and practised, especially cross-culturally in modern day Zimbabwe.

1.2.1.7 Political/Social –

This section of the dialogue sought to explore the impact of colonialism on the development of worldview, together with the potential changes after 26 years of Independence. As mentioned earlier, Africa is in social transition. These changes are largely because of developments in the political and social arenas and so we must investigate the extent to which these have influenced the shaping of the Shona and Ndebele worldviews in Zimbabwe.

The political and social history of Zimbabwe mirrors that of most of Africa and can be classified broadly into three epochs: early migration and settlement, with wars and slavery; a colonial period, often ending in guerrilla war in the struggle for self-rule; and the Independence era. Since my study is a consideration of contemporary approaches to administration, I will explore the impact of the latter two only. These are important dimensions, since the colonial period was typically the imposition of one culture and worldview upon another through both socialisation and education. Then, with the advent of Independence, there has come the opportunity to reassert one's own worldview on the way things are done. The fact that much of the colonial influence remains in this sense is not to suggest that everything about colonialism is wrong or negative.

For Zimbabwe, the colonial period can be said to have begun, informally, with the first European settlement by missionaries (such as Robert Moffat at Inyati in 1859) and hunters and traders (Courtney Selous, Henry Hartley) and others. The formal, more legislated stage could be said to have begun with the arrival of the Pioneer Column, under the aegis of Cecil John Rhodes and the British South Africa Company, that reached the capital, Salisbury (now Harare), on September 12, 1890. This phase of Zimbabwe's colonial history ended some 90 years later in 1980. This was after 15 years of a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain in 1965 and a 13-year guerrilla war (accompanied by international sanctions) and the granting of Independence by Britain on April 18.

From an administration point of view, we now have an interesting social dynamic: those currently in senior and semi-senior management roles are old enough to have experienced the negative elements of the colonial period and to have been impacted accordingly (both in terms of socialisation and their educational background). On the other hand, those born shortly before and after Independence, who are now entering positions of junior and middle



management, do not have the colonial influence behind them. While the older generation can speak with personal knowledge of colonialism and the liberation war, the younger generation cannot. This has created two groups: those with colonial experience of systems, policies and procedures (some of which they have wanted to get rid of because of the perceived connection to colonialism) and those who are now looking further afield – particularly to the West and technology – desperate to build structures that will provide the lifestyle that Independence promised. Then, again, on the one hand, we have the older generation who have some experience of village life, while on the other, many urban youngsters cannot identify with such an environment. Moreover, the drive for more education at Independence (the introduction of free primary schooling and the building of more schools) dramatically raised the literacy rate and, consequently, the acceptance of and drive for more sophisticated lifestyles. All these dynamics have an impact on attitudes toward and the consequent praxis of administration. That these expectations at Independence have not been fulfilled for many due to the collapse of governance and, concomitantly, of the rule of law and the economy, as well as the endemic rise of corruption within the last seven years has no material effect on the praxis of administration. Yet, they illustrate many of the macro-issues we have been dealing with in this study.

A fundamental question at this point is, why? Why has governance collapsed? Why has there been a seeming rejection of *ubuntu/unhu*, to be replaced by selfishness, greed, corruption and a lack of respect and dignity? Why have financial institutions – as one very visible illustration of business – been allowed to get to the point where curators are called in for insolvency (with millions of pensioners' hard-won life-savings lost in the process)? Where were the laid-down policies and procedures, checks and balances and professionalism that should have prevented these crimes? What has happened in the national psyche to let the situation slide inexorably to this collapsed state? What administrative principles have been ignored and why? As we examine these and other questions, can we avoid a repetition in the future? And, can we, indeed, prevent a repeat in the Church?

As with the latter part of the discourse on Controlling, this segment of the dialogue also took place within the retreat session and the questions were framed with that in mind. We began with the colonial period.

The first question was aimed at exploring the basis for the fundamental work ethic. And so I asked to what extent the original colonial work ethic (that is, working to pay hut tax; working to pay rent or send things to the family back home) has developed a negative attitude to work



that hinders productivity? Why do people work? How many are “just doing a job” vs. developing a career? How has the colonial era shaped *your* work ethic?

Dawson commented first: “One of the reasons we don’t like work is that we have developed a stereotype of work: black workers were trained to work, whereas the master was trained to employ. People are upset because their lives are being exchanged. When my work makes you stinking rich, it makes me very angry and I won’t work well. But if our people can be trained to work in line with their talent and skills, their attitude will change. They won’t be worried about the watch; but they’ll be prepared to sweat.”

Following on, Beki said, “Work is not employment per se. But through the colonial influence, for me to be productive and get returns, I have to be employed. But this mentality is killing people. People should know where their giftings are, [in] the city or the rural. So indigenisation has helped: they have realised they can do things themselves.”

Joyce concurred with Dawson: “Ownership is a problem: Africans have been taught that they are not owners, therefore they don’t have the right sense of responsibility. A job is working for someone else, not for themselves. Empowerment is crucial. It will take a lot to change the mentality. There is a tendency to do the minimum, as long as I do enough to survive.”

This prompted Dawson, who followed up: “When a black businessman gets something, he spends it immediately. I must have things – so I remain at zero. Most whites are rich because of development, reinvestment. Our minds have been trained to get. Our generation is part of the system; the younger generation may come with new thinking.”

But George had a different view: “Work is holy. After the Fall [Gen. 3], work became stressful. The lack of enjoyment reduced returns to the minimum. Come the colonial era, the thinking was same: no matter your effort, you were never rewarded [adequately]. For instance, America benefited from Africans [as slaves], so now we need to be reimbursed through reparations. The problem is, when we have an extra dollar, we think of getting an extra wife.” [Laughter.]

The next question was sensitive and the group responded carefully. I asked: “One of the frequent criticisms of colonialism in Africa is that it reduced self-worth, self-image and self-awareness. How might this have impacted the administrative process? And did it stifle innovation and creativity in any way?”

Joyce began: “This is a major problem. I was watching a movie on TV on early colonialism. There was a rubber plantation in West Africa. Those that didn’t work had their limbs cut off as



an example. Even in industry, the work doesn't give you a sense of self-worth. It categorises you. To come out of it takes a lot."

Dawson affirmed: "This is especially since you don't know what the end product is and its ultimate value. You see the 'others' driving fancy cars, but you know it's because of me [the worker]. That destroys self-worth."

"When you look at the colonial era, those who did the work were blacks. But it's the [white] manager who does all the thinking," said Chris.

Dawson acknowledged this: "Yes, but we're doing the same thing. I have been taught that I have to pressurise the workers. All my bitterness that's been building up must be vented against my workers. An angry man is a dangerous man to work with. Now, blacks are practicing more brutality than previous guys."

George then related his saga: "When I started work, I was paid \$8 a week, out of which I paid \$3 to college. My friend was then promoted above me and he pressured and harassed me. He didn't like me paying the amount to college. I wrote my exams and passed. One day, the white's toilet was messed and I was blamed and had to clean it up. Previously, I had rejected ancestral worship at home, but now I began thinking about it. I applied for leave and went home with my two new certificates. During the three weeks I was away, I was promoted four times. During this period, I also became a Christian. When I returned to work, I had to use a different entrance and, when I got back, the security guard wouldn't let me in. In the end, I eventually became the General Manager. In the meantime, my friend had begun stealing and I was short in my stocks; I had to fire him. When he was convicted, I paid his fine and found him another job elsewhere. [Two whites – George's former bosses – died after he shouted at them for accusing him and blaming him for being black because they had been passed over for the promotions.] Then the workers accused me of getting magic while I was away on leave in the Eastern Highlands. Then the foreman died. [With all the pressure,] I wanted to transfer to another company. A white manager was instantly dismissed shortly after this interview. Now, on this particular day, my boss, the General Manager, called me in and shouted at me. Following the next weekend, he was struck with a terminal illness and again I was blamed. He accused me of doing all this since I became a Christian. I was accused of not forgiving people, so they were dying. I went to my pastor after work. He counselled me not to say negative things to people because such things will happen. He encouraged me to pray for my former boss not to die." Naturally, this story was met with some amazement. The immediate thought of the spirit's involvement (*ngozi*) was apparent with the rest of the group. While relating this story, George testified that, in the midst of these work pressures, he decided he



would shoot his former bosses but on the Sunday before he was able to get ammunition for a gun he had bought, he was led to accept Christ. That radically changed his mindset about his situation.

Responding to the Pastor's advice, Dawson asked: "Why? Yes, the power of the tongue, but not to that extent. So, why? How do we explain that?"

George attempted to answer: "I don't respond in anger now. While I was studying for my degree, a man in a church I was recently sent to wrote a letter suggesting that I should be transferred because I was at college while my wife was also working (this was supposedly against Church policy). Some other elders wrote another letter accusing this man of manipulating to get me. Later, he called me and asked for forgiveness. The 'hullabaloo' in the Church situation then died down." Here, George was indicating how his Christian faith altered his approach to both people and situations. Despite antagonism and unjust criticism, he had learned to respond in more positive, helpful ways.

The third question followed on: "Did colonialism in any way reshape the factors of planning, organising, leading and controlling as the social emphasis shifted from rural to urban?"

George began: "Our administration today is aligned to the colonial era. We don't know anything else; that's the norm." The rest of the group affirmed this as Dawson quickly explained: "Yes. But colonialism is usually seen negatively. Yet there is a positive element of development that may not be labelled as colonialism. The white man didn't only bring oppression; he also brought education. Is there a necessity to draw a line in colonialism? The Portuguese were definitely colonialists. But the British colonialism, while it had its negative side, there were positive elements, especially on the social development side." To this, George added: "The British didn't colonise you physically, but mentally. We were proud of 'my British'."

There is a sense here, it would seem, of 'better colonialism' versus 'worse colonialism' and recognition of some values of what was done in the former cases. From an administration point of view, the general agreement of the group was that the philosophical bases of the current systems, although initially foreign, are now understood, accepted and practiced as the norm.

We then moved to another topical issue: "Since the "born-frees" [a colloquial term for those born after Independence in 1980 but now unfortunately in some circles carrying derisive political connotations] are now in a position to develop their own work ethic, how do they



perceive productivity? Are the main goals the acquisition of things and the expansion of materialism? Does this enhance or inhibit the administrative process in any way?"

Dawson opened the conversation: "Materialism is difficult to deal with these days. But it's also part of the Biblical prophetic word about being caught up *"in the last days"* (see 2 Tim. 3:1-5). What I watch a man in London doing, I want to do too; I get caught up. We live in a global village. Today's born-frees have a major problem: materialism is a major spiritual problem."

Added Joyce: "It stretches beyond Independence. There are examples coming up of entrepreneurs and productivity. When I entered college, we experimented with many things. The Government wanted graduates who wanted owners of productivity. There have been several like this; they are focussed; they want to move. Many are CEOs. The period after colonialism has produced a new ethic and they are getting better by the day." To this, Dawson quickly added: "We must give Government credit for [the policy of] education with productivity. There was a good emphasis on working in this." [This emphasis, known as "education with production" was an attempt by the first President of Zimbabwe, Rev. Canaan Banana, to redress some of the imbalances of the colonial educational system that appeared to stress intellectual acumen over practical ability. Numerous projects, especially in the agriculture, were launched.]

Beki observed a slightly different perspective: "It's more of an issue of how we measure 'success'. The born-frees [tend to] put things up front: the size of the bank account and so on, instead of developing the person himself to be innovative, creative, with home-grown ideas. We see people sacrificing good jobs in Zimbabwe for street sweeping in the UK so they can get luxuries back home. Isn't that some kind of new slavery? I'm not against immigration, but we should move for the right reasons." [This comment was in response to the nearly three million Zimbabweans now domiciled outside the country in the *"Diaspora"* because of the political, economic and social crisis gripping the nation. Many families have emigrated temporarily to the United Kingdom while a growing number of spouses are relocating to find peace jobs to provide hard currency to send home to support their families struggling under hyperinflation.] His basic point was to suggest that the young adults of today are more concerned with materialism and the acquisition of things; this drives their innovation, decision-making, assumptions and desired results. Indeed, life in Zimbabwe today is about survival: every day people need to make plans to get the basic necessities of life; one's day has to be planned around incessant queues, shortages and having to make do. We are a nation of planners!



Hence, to the next question I proffered: “To what extent has the colonial work ethic hindered the drive to higher achievement? Does this still apply to today’s urban young generation? What about the rural young generation and the development of higher achievement with them?”

Dawson started by suggesting that Colonialism doesn’t affect today’s generation, while Beki, bearing in mind the current socio-political crisis, submitted, “The key question is: Where is the country going to?”

George, following State propaganda, opined that it is the media that highlight the negatives rather than the positives. [This conveniently ignores the fact the media merely record and mirror what is happening, how people are feeling and what they are saying; if much of that is negative, then that is what will be reported.] He went on, “With today’s generation, few of us feel loyal to the country. The media is always negative about ourselves and our country. Our young people are affected by the media.” While it is certainly true that young people are affected by the media in powerful ways, it is not the media that makes situations negative. Nevertheless, negative perceptions can influence the way people approach situations, make decisions and respond to others around them. So, planning, organising and leading may be affected by the environment.

Taking this a step further, Joyce commented: “There are limited opportunities. There are too many restrictions in Zimbabwe. So people see going abroad as a way of achieving what they cannot here.” In other words, the socio-political crisis in many ways is inhibiting people from doing what they want in the way(s) they want. Many professionals, for instance, have emigrated out of frustration at not being able to do their work the way they feel it should be done because of the shortages of equipment, supplies, spares and so on. They are either unable or unwilling to make the mental, emotional and, in some cases, physical adjustments necessary to do their work. Standards have been compromised and, as professionals, they are not prepared to accept that. Under these trying circumstances, they have three options: (1) Continue as best they can, becoming more frustrated in the process; (2) Quit altogether and do something else; or (3) Leave the country to go somewhere where their career can move forward and they gain both satisfaction and expertise.

Speaking from experience, Dawson picked up on this: “While there are genuine reasons for leaving, 90% are moaning. I also went out for a short period and my wife was in the UK for three years. I didn’t want it that way, but my need to get across to point B was urgent. My allegiance to the country remains unquestionable. Our people are outside the country not because they want to be. People may think this is not patriotism. But when you sweep a



street in the UK and get 10 times what a general manager gets in Zimbabwe, what do you do? But that makes them materialistic and they don't come back. It's a real problem. You work hard to achieve what you want and then you come back; but others get caught up in the materialism and then cannot come back. The economy is persisting because of the people outside the country sending money back to the country. But why has this happened? Why has the nation vomited its inhabitants? When you go outside, you leave lots of people behind."

George made another generalised comment: "Our leaders were educated overseas, without consideration of our context. Now they don't have the resources to use their training." This, of course, begs the question, Why not? Why be trained in the first place if it is not for the benefit of society as a whole (as well as yourself in the first instance)? Can this be explained away as selfishness, short-sightedness or a lack of social consciousness?

Following on, Beki observed: "It's not about the education but about implementation. Education is a means to an end. I must apply or modify what I've learned." That, too, begs the question: Why is the implementation not there? Does that demonstrate a lack of planning, organising or leading?

Related to this is the propensity, especially evident in our politicians, to eschew accountability. Said Dawson: "Have you heard how our guys blame everyone else but themselves? But at the end of the day, it's me who chooses what to do with my education. It's very sad that we've developed this thinking." To which George quickly added: "Blame-shifting started with Adam."

He reiterated the importance of patriotism and loyalty and I followed up to suggest that the Church has a role to play, particularly in inculcating a new, positive culture and mentality of responsibility to society. I suggested that, as a God-ordained institution, the Church has an obligation to help lead society in the right direction, morally and ethically.

Commented Dawson: "One of our problems is that we have personalised it for a few individuals. If I don't sing the ZANU (PF) [the current ruling party's] song, I'm rejected. If I don't belong to them, I'm rejected. When someone goes outside the country and accepts me and my ideas, I support them. The Government has unwittingly created people who are unpatriotic. If no-one wants my work, I'll go elsewhere. This even happens in the Church, because of insecurity in our calling, in our understanding of the Gospel. So we lean on others. We must be confident of our calling and who called us. If I'm secure in my calling, I won't be threatened when someone disagrees."



Joyce picked up the theme of the Church's role in development: "I have noticed the Church has a very big role to play in terms of development; encouraging the young generation. The rural young are really needy. While people need the Gospel, we also need to be wholistic to help people to reach for higher achievement. There are several para-church ministries in the rural areas; this is one sector that has access to the rural areas right now. Christians need to work with these organisations to bring about improvement in schooling. Our calling now is to work to raise hope, to help those who are discouraged; to bring in resources so rural people can develop themselves."

But Dawson asked: "How does the Church fit in to that, alongside Government? According to Scripture, [the] Government is the custodian of what God wants them to do. So, is the Church supposed to do these kinds of works as local congregations, or should the Church serve through para-church agencies like World Vision?" Suggested Joyce: "It's a responsibility that we have within the Body of Christ; it's not about a particular channel."

Closing this particular conversation, Chris remarked: "I would like to ask our ministers: Why are they in that job? Is it selfishness and materialism? When my grandfather was working, did he have a nation in mind, or just his family? So what about our politicians – do they have a nation at heart?"

The fundamental point here, I think, is the recognition – on a variety of levels – of the importance of leadership, both within the Church and as the Church influences society. At the same time, the lack of action points to a lack of planning and organising for this; the necessary culture, expectation and consciousness appear not to be present.

So, from there, I moved on to a broader but related topic. I suggested that Africa has missed the Industrial Revolution with its evolving emphasis on design, precision and order. I asked: "To what extent has this played a part in her perceived underdevelopment?"

George was first off the mark: "Underdevelopment is deliberately done by the West. They are afraid of competition and want to keep us under their thumb. They take our resources and then sell back the finished product. You will not be able to buy the machinery to make the finished product." While this widely held perception is understandable, it is not factually correct. The question of Africa taking the initiative and turning her resources to her own advantage in such a way that the West can acknowledge the need for partnership on equal terms often does not seem to be considered here.

Dawson was quick to pick this up: "Yes, the Westerners have been very cruel in that respect. But shouldn't we dictate how we sell our materials?" Joyce then hit the nail on the head: "This



is something that really needs to be addressed to African leaders.” Responded Dawson: “You are very right. But what about us? [Because] this is also in the Church. You see a missionary: he gathers us together and aligns himself to the soft one whom he uses to exploit the rest of us. He will give a ‘token of appreciation’ to him. We think things are working well. We don’t see the exploitation. While we are being used, he is eating with the missionary.” And George concurred: “That’s why there are leadership conflicts. There is a Westerner behind the leader; he is blowing on the embers.” Added Dawson: “This happens in the Church too. We need to teach our people to be honest.” To which George concluded: “So our crisis in Africa is about leadership. We need leaders who when they say “yes’ mean yes and not no.”

Again, the issue here, perceived correctly I believe, is one of leadership. When leaders properly understand their role, the organisation (or the nation) is more likely to do and be what it should; what should be done is likely to be done fully and correctly. Obversely, when a leader does not do their job properly, the organisation (or nation) cannot be and do what it should. But it was interesting to note that, while the group focussed on the West’s exploitation and on leadership, there was actually little consideration of the cognitive influences of the Industrial Revolution in terms of prompting innovation, planning and organising through design and precision.

I followed up that question with another, related one: Did Africa miss the preciseness of maths and so the ability to think exactly (you have to be exact, otherwise you are wrong; ‘it’ doesn’t work)? If so, how may this have been mitigated through the Western educational system?

George commented first: “Development is a process. We must be careful about categorising Africa; other continents were also undeveloped at one time.” While that is true, the question is still pertinent, however.

Joyce had a surprising rejoinder and supplementary questions: “Where would Africa be if there hadn’t been colonialism? What do we mean by development?” As Dawson had pointed out earlier, Colonialism had both positive and negative elements and, although the negative must rightly be commented upon and, where necessary, condemned, the positive elements rather than being recognised, are often ignored altogether. He observed: “But the good thing is that, when I have the Gospel, my self-confidence is restored.”

Commenting on a cultural practice, George noted: “The rich people [referring euphemistically to whites] talk about how to make money when they are eating at the table. But the poor people [that is, blacks] leave the children and wives to eat separately. [He was suggesting



that this cultural practice inhibits growth and development because there is insufficient exposure to ideas.] The Church should educate our people to talk together about the holiness of God, and then move to other things. Who is teaching our children? Our maids. The Church should help our people to teach these things. About manhood, about womanhood. For instance, I started bathing with my son; I talked to him. At first, he was very tight and shy; now he is free and he is learning. We need to help our churches to educate our children.”

Dawson: “But what do poor people talk about? Poor people are poor because they lack innovation.” Interestingly, in previous discussion, I had raised the question of whether innovation and creativity is impeded in a rural setting because of the lack of resources and opportunity for exposure that urban children more readily have access to. Then, the response was that rural children do have such opportunities and are innovative and creative. So Dawson’s latest comment begs the question, Does poverty limit innovation or does the lack of innovation necessarily lead to poverty?

My next question fitted in with this: Has technology and materialism propelled the younger generation into a more innovative mind-set than their parents? Does every new generation plunge forward in “development” the same way?

Dawson affirmed: “Yes, it’s a combination of both. Technology helps to do it; materialism comes because I want it.”

Beki agreed that technology has fostered innovation: “There’s a negative side to technology, but the positive side has helped people to be more innovative and creative. You can do things much quicker.” George added, but without elaborating: “Technology is a challenge for us.”

Next, I followed up with influences on worldview: How might social and technological changes impact one’s worldview? For example, how does the modern generation, exposed to computer technology and sexual promiscuity, respond to worldview factors that clash with the values and expectations that these changes bring?

Beki responded: “Young people today look for the ‘label’. This is not just clothes. We are part of the global village.” In other words, they want identity, genuineness, choice and a sense of being part of the world.

Commented Dawson: “That influence comes from the media, especially the electronic. And most of this is Western. But this Westernisation does not change his [the young person’s] identity as a Zimbabwean or African.”

So how, I asked, do you think all this has impacted the Church?



Following on from the previous question, Beki elaborated: “Technology has changed the way we do ministry. As a pastor, we have to be in line with what is happening, especially in terms of young people. The Church is 10 years behind. So the way we do ministry should change so we can reach out. When I was doing Grade 7, I had no problem with girl friends. But today, they are asking about dates, going to the movies. Young children are involved (sexually).”

Dawson retorted: “That makes me sick. There’s nothing wrong with technology. But tied in with it are moral issues. But if it creeps into the faith, it becomes a moral issue. We often put technology and morality in the same package; we should separate them. This is why there is no power, no effectiveness. It affects the pastor and all the leaders – including those who are parents who have the same problem at home as at church. So the whole Church is affected; it cannot produce the power of God; it’s become like a club.” Added George: “Our children’s friends teach them; it’s peer education.”

Joyce also acknowledged the depth of the problem: “There seems to a generation of parents who are unwilling to speak into the lives of their children. So the young ones are getting lost. Yesterday, our grade one son came to me to say a girl told him she loved him. I asked him what he said. He told her he didn’t want her to hear anything like that again. Last year, three boys at crèche were talking about French kissing and lying on top of each other. So I get really worried.”

George counselled: “We need to be very careful. Not taking care is being completely irresponsible. What kind of children are we building? What parents are these who just allow their children to watch anything while I sleep? Leadership has a lot to do about being in charge of our families.” To which Beki prompted: “What are we as pastors doing in our homes?”

In response, George related the following story: “I have a young daughter. She told me one day that I was too strict. One day there was a movie on TV (our children don’t watch if we don’t watch it). This particular time, there was a very strict father who raised a daughter. She took it but it was difficult. One time, she sneaked out with a boy who tried to kiss her but she refused. But he told his friends that he had kissed her. The father was angry. Later, she got married. My daughter was watching; I was watching my daughter as well. She told me I was just like that father. But I think your strictness will work out well in the end. I told her that parents care for their children. Getting rid of this problem is so big because the peer pressure is so strong.”



Highlighting the problem in a different way, Beki noted: “We have a group who are solid Highlanders [a local soccer club] supporters. They left a seminar in Church to go and watch a game.”

Clearly, then, there is a chasm between what is normally expected of Church and the average Christian on the one hand and what some (many?) are actually doing on the other. Also, some (many?) pastors are worried about these developments. The issue, of course, is not the presence or absence of technology but, rather, the teaching of the Church and how successfully that is put across. Is the Church, then, fulfilling her role adequately in this regard?

We have explored some political/social issues, both from the Colonial era and currently, and have identified some problem areas impacting the underlying philosophies of and approaches to the administrative enterprise. As I suspected, we have discovered that our environment plays an important role in the actions of planning, organising, leading and controlling and how we approach them. These environmental factors are subtle yet pervasive and not easily noticed.

Before moving to an analysis of our group conversations thus far and to conclude this investigation of the administrative enterprise in a Christian ministry context, I shall comment briefly on one last important element in our enquiry (to be explored in more detail in Chapter Seven.)

1.2.1.8 *Theology* –

I had originally intended to cover this topic as part of the initial group sessions as the last segment of the dialogue and in preparation for a more detailed Chapter on this topic. However, with the group’s suggestion to change the format of the conversations from the series of short interviews to one comprehensive session, and since Chapter Seven will focus specifically on the development of a theology of administration anyway, I subsequently decided to drop the responses from this section and move them to that chapter.

At the same time, two other contiguous reasons occurred to me for the change. First, I realised that the single retreat session we had planned would be insufficient to cover all the remaining questions. Second, since we had already discussed this individually (see Chapter Four, “Theology”), it had become clear from the shallowness of those responses that a more comprehensive input was needed to do justice to this section of our enquiry. Thus, I subsequently thought it would be more advantageous to have a second, albeit shorter, ‘retreat’ session just on this topic. That would allow for more in-depth discussion and provide



more substantive material for identifying and dealing with possible solutions (to be discussed in Chapter Eight). Thus, a second ‘retreat’ session was planned with separate questions on this topic. The responses to a theology of administration given in the individual interviews were picked up and explored in more depth.

1.2.2 Reflections on the Dialogue –

Having travelled down the collective road called “Exploring How Administration and Culture Mix”, it is time now to look back and reflect. Where have we come from? What are some of the obstacles we encountered along the way? What were some of the low points in our journey? What were some of the highlights so far? What have we noticed and learned?

These conversations provided an integrated, cross-ethnic opportunity to share insights, feelings and perceptions about administration, its praxis and the related worldview dynamics in a group setting. The group was fairly balanced between younger and older, Shona and Ndebele; Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal leaders. Having started with an all-male group, one of whom left mid-way, we ended this part of the dialogue with five men and one lady.

The intention of these focus group sessions was three-fold: (1) To highlight issues raised through the questionnaires and personal interviews and to discuss them collectively; (2) To provide a sounding board for participants to share insights and thoughts together, with worldview factors as the core interest. My expectation here was that their varied backgrounds would bring a variety of insights to the conversation and thus flesh out the details. Also, I anticipated that this would both filter out the inconsequential and to solidify or confirm the main issues. (3) In collectively discussing key issues, the group may also consider possible solutions to problems identified.

On the negative side, I struggled methodologically in recording the first discussion. I had approached this part of the dialogue with the same assumptions as the individual discourses, forgetting that conversations are not directed but free-ranging, with a statement by one sparking a tangential thought by another which leads a third to mention something else related but not duplicating the initial point. Trying to match the comments with my questions was somewhat awkward. Later, I amended the approach by focusing the questions and thus directing the conversation more narrowly. Later still, I coalesced related questions into a much smaller selection and used the group’s answers to stimulate more follow-up questions related to my original interests. This helped significantly as, on the one hand, I was able to focus more clearly on relating the answers to the questions while, on the other, the group was more focused on discussing the issue at hand.



Another difficulty I had was reckoning the sheer volume of interaction in the group discussions. Initially, I had considered four interview sessions of about two to three hours each, dividing them between the core facets plus the Politics/Social and Theology topics. The breakfasts – an incentive to get busy pastors to take time from their day off and to participate in the project – while enjoyable, did not allow for the “formal” discussion/recording and so, although pleasant enough, were not adequately productive. Later, after I had recognised the folly of my first endeavour, the group suggested a different, more valuable approach. Later still, they suggested a joint retreat. Concomitant with these, I changed the strategy of my questions from very specific to very general. Decidedly, there was an improvement in both the usefulness of the dialogue and my ability to keep track of it.

A third limitation I experienced in terms of methodology was the assessment of the comments. I had no idea how to sequence the responses and interact with them. I thus chose to follow my questioning outline and simply recorded the answers as they came in the conversations. Since it has not been my aim to analyse the responses methodologically, I was not unduly concerned with that anyway. Moreover, my purpose in Chapter Two was to explore assumptions and the praxis of administration and so simply recording the answers met this need adequately. Later, for Chapters Four and Five, I changed the format considerably and allowed the group to “speak” to the issues they raised.

Positively, there were three major advantages to this approach. First, the make-up of the group – balanced in terms of age, ethnicity and denominational background – helped to achieve broader insight, contrast and, in some cases, interesting diversity. Although similar in most respects in terms of worldview, the points of differentiation and praxis were compared and contrasted more fully. This forced the participants to explain themselves more cogently, which enhanced the logic behind their explanations. By the time we reached the Chapter Five discourses, the group had a solid grasp of administration issues and were able to overlay their worldviews on those.

A second positive dynamic was that the group interaction broadened individual perspective, not only on administration itself but also on the interplay of worldview with it. The combination of administration and worldview was clearly not something that the participants had thought deeply about beforehand and, by being deliberately drawn to contemplate, explain and interact with others, their own understanding and appreciation was enhanced. A related advantage was the cross-ethnic exposure. While African worldview has many commonalities across its range of ethnic groups, there are significant differences to make comparison interesting. The conversations thus highlighted alternatives and personal preferences and



enhanced the recognition for sensitivity. Then again, the varied ages – and later, the gender component – made for yet another layer of appealing interaction and insight. All of this spurred motivation to participate in the project.

A third major plus of the group dialogue was the way it forced a change in approach to the conversations. Initially, I had planned very directive, select questions. As the group gelled and began to warm to the overall theme, their ownership of participation became evident as they suggested alternative ways of approaching the sessions. These ended with a weekend retreat that allowed us to concentrate quite intensely and uninterruptedly on the subject at hand. During this retreat, the (planned) shift in methodology between Chapter Four (first specific, then general but personal questions) and Chapter Five (group members responding to my questions and reacting to their peers' answers and stories, with a focus on worldview, plus my interjecting items of interest from time to time), proved most beneficial.

Having looked at the group methodology, we move now to a brief review of the conversations themselves. What, in essence, did we discuss together?

The first dynamic, of course, was Time. Here it was evident that there is no such thing as 'failure' in the use of time. Everything takes as long as it will. Nor is there any need to rush or hurry. After all, what is "late" if you are merely going to participate in an event anyway: as long as you get there before it finishes, you cannot claim to be late. Obviously, in an urban context, however, this mind-set has major implications and, understandably, creates some tension and frustration. It also helps a little to explain, somewhat, the *laissez faire* approach to planning. Another dimension covered was that of sequence: the focus on the past and the present impacts the interpretation of and approach to the future. I was surprised that most in the group did not seem to have as much of a problem with the long-term future as I had expected. Again, this may be connected to the nature of their leadership, although I am aware of others whose sense of future is very short and for whom strategic planning is difficult.

Planning, notably, was understood to be linked to the spirit world. Things are done in relation to or with, and not in isolation from, the ancestors and the spirits. Yet, there was also the recognition that the African world has shifted: the modern is not the old; the situations and settings have changed and, with them, the way we must do things. This calls for adjustments in thinking and actions. Alongside this, the group noted the availability of resources and the related need to tap into them to produce the desired results. The awareness of successful role models helped to confirm the point and provide encouragement that it can be done.



From there, we moved to Organising. It was significant that, collectively, a variety of skills were identified: An adequate consideration of resources (for example, people, materials and space, among others), recruitment, training, supervision and monitoring, communication, job descriptions, the (detailed) demands of the event, expectations of the participants, time management, training, example (coming from character and exposure) and forethought, attention to details, having a back-up plan or arrangement and being careful to avoid wastage. In this, we see related aspects such as understanding people (psychology), motivation, selling the vision, monitoring, verification and evaluation. The mentioning of this range of issues exposes the underlying recognition of the complexity of Organising. That, in turn, highlights potential difficulties as there is no guarantee that every leader has all or most of these skills or, even, is aware of them. Furthermore, while the role of worldview is acknowledged, we also see individual personality as part of the process.

Similarly, the issues presented in the Leading discourse reflect a complex raft of factors and skills connected to both worldview and personality. We looked at decision-making, judgement, logic, risk, bad leaders, *ubuntu/unhu*, power, creativity, innovation, change and conflict. The philosophical background of *ubuntu/unhu* became an immediate and major interest point, sparking animated discussion. Significantly, this was not introduced by any in the group, but once I had broached the topic, it clearly became the cornerstone of all future dialogue. This clearly confirms the notion that one's attitudes and actions are often dictated by an underlying philosophy (as part of one's worldview) that is taken for granted, not regularly articulated and assumed by everyone to be understood. Hence, the rationale for decisions and actions is not always explained. And, because of the complexity of the process, there may be problems intra-culturally, which are aggravated, of course, in cross-cultural situations. From a worldview perspective, once more we saw a primary concern for relationships, together with a fear that these will somehow be harmed. That worldview and personality work hand in hand was also evident.

The fifth dynamic, that of Controlling, covered the three aspects of measuring, monitoring and evaluating. In the first two, and as expected for this, it was clear that relationships govern the general approaches. At the same time, both worldview and personality help to shape the way a person does them. It was significant that the perceived need to maintain a healthy relationship may override the need to maintain a healthy organisation. While the group accepted this perspective, they were not as averse to it, nor did they seem to see the negativity of it, to the extent that I had expected. This may help to explain the apparent *laissez faire* attitude toward the larger whole (that is, the organisation), proportionate to the



prominence attached to the relationship(s). Related to this, it was agreed that accountability and education about it require more emphasis.

Likewise, it was also clear that both worldview and personality play a part in how the leader effects control. While *ubuntu/unhu* shapes some of the responses, it is also dependent on the individual. There are universal ‘people traits’ – the desire for harmony, the matter of self-esteem, the need for careful criticism – so as not to offend. These are not specifically worldview factors. But, it was clear that, in their dealings with others, the issues affecting relationships were, again, of primary concern.

The last area was the broader perspective of the political/social environment. Here, we explored some issues from the Colonial and current eras, and identified some problem themes impacting the underlying philosophies of and approaches to the administrative enterprise. Their influence on the four main components of planning, organising, leading and controlling are subtle yet pervasive and profound. From a negative point of view, this influence is aggravated by their subtlety as we rarely consciously consider how our social environment affects our administrative praxis. It was noticeable that several questions in this section were not addressed directly; instead, personal experience was used to illustrate concerns in round-about ways to avoid causing offence. I was aware that, as a white Zimbabwean, I was automatically perceived as part of the problems of the past; yet my friendship with the group – as well as the formality of this investigation – allowed them to approach the questions more objectively and with less concern about how I might feel personally. On a positive note, these conversations were obviously also cathartic, since it was probably the first opportunity the participants have had to vent such feelings and opinions, doubtless shared by many Zimbabweans. As such, they were releasing frustration (and probably some entrenched bitterness) as well as raising internal issues and questions long ago repressed. They also had a chance to speak to several social concerns that, while impacting them either personally or for ministry, they clearly had not reflected on before. In such an environment, expecting them to clearly articulate “secondary” factors of administration while speaking to deeply emotional primary issues would, perhaps, be asking too much. All the same, the elements of planning, organising, leading and controlling came through in their stories and responses, albeit in subtle ways, impacted to some extent by their worldviews.

In this and the previous two chapters, we have dialogued – first through a survey (Chapter Three) and then individual (Chapter Four) and collective (Chapter Five) discussion – on the nature and practice of administration. In the last two chapters, we have attempted to address



the specific question: What does administration ‘look’ like, both in general terms and, specifically, in the Shona and Ndebele Christian ministry contexts?

While “worldview” was briefly defined in Chapter One, we have referred extensively in these chapters to various reflections of it. Thus, we must now turn to a deeper consideration of this phenomenon. What is worldview in more detail and, more particularly, what do the Shona and Ndebele worldviews look like? Moreover, what is the Christian worldview and how does that interface with one’s “natural” worldview? For these and other questions, we come to Chapter Six.



Appendix 3: Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Questions

1. What do you understand by, and how would you define, administration?
2. In your line of work, how often do you feel a tension between what you perceive to be the Western approach to the demands of administration and some typical African concepts and/or underlying assumptions? If you feel there is a tension, how does this typically manifest itself?
3. What concepts or values that you typically associate as “African” make modern administration difficult for you?
4. What concepts or values that you typically associate as “African” make modern administration easy for you?
5. Are there any concepts in modern administration with which you are comfortable?
6. Do you sense any differences between a rural, agrarian approach to admin and that of an urban, industrialised approach? If so, what are they?
7. What is efficiency for you? Why?
8. How would you define effectiveness?
9. Is it generally true that the ancestors are “in charge” so to speak? If so, does this not breed fatalism – that is that I can’t change things, so why bother even trying? Is there a deep-seated, hidden fear that I shouldn’t do anything until and unless it’s absolutely necessary – just in case an ancestor (the spirits) direct/s otherwise or is/are offended? In other words, does my sense of the ancestors affect my decision-making in any way? Does this impact the way I view relationships in any way and, therefore, what decisions I make with or for others?
10. How important is the past for you? Your roots? Is it possible to see where you are going without knowing where you have come from?
11. What is the basis for the emphasis on the past? To what extent is this shaped by the presence and influence of the ancestors? Do the ancestors have any role in looking to the future?
12. In an agrarian worldview, time is much less precise than in an urban setting. But just how important is time in an agrarian situation?
13. If time is not as important in a rural, agrarian setting, can we speak of a sense of failure about the “when” of something not being done? Is there a “right” or “wrong” time?
14. Do you feel your use/stewardship of time has been influenced by an urban mind-set/lifestyle? How?
15. Are you aware of any proverbs that speak to the issue of time?
16. What makes a good planner? Why? Would you describe yourself as one? Why?
17. When for you is “tomorrow”? How far into the future are you comfortable? How do you respond to an “uncomfortable tomorrow”?
18. Since planning is largely a future-oriented activity, how do you typically cope with this aspect, especially long-term planning? Do you think this makes planning difficult for you?
19. Do you see this (planning) as a Western concept that you have had to accept, or was it already part of your African mindset? If the former, have you had to make any mental adjustments? If the latter, has this helped in doing it any better?
20. How do you personally approach the task of planning (fairly large project)? [I.e. Do you identify any steps, procedures or factors needing consideration?]



21. How might worldview affect strategising especially in the light of anticipating events, occurrences, tasks? Does the industrialised/technological world require a different process of strategising from an agricultural one (c.f. strategising for crops/animals vs. strategising for task development – e.g. developing a machine to do the job; working with people)?
22. Strategic planning [planning in view of competition, opposition] presupposes that planning as a concept is necessary and that competition exists to drive this planning. Is that a correct presupposition for other worldviews?
23. Strategic planning speaks of strategising and planning in a competitive environment. What does your worldview say about competition? If your worldview questions the success of others (e.g. going to the n’anga either to find out why your neighbour is succeeding where you are not, or to curse him so that he fails), how do you view strategising in this context? (If you are in business and see no problem with it because of your business training, to what extent have you been influenced by such Western worldview thinking at this point and how does this square with your African worldview thinking – for instance, in terms of *ubuntu/unhu*?)
24. Are there any proverbs on planning?
25. What skills make a good leader? Why?
26. How much weight do you put on subjective, intuitive factors in the decision making process? What factors do you recognise here?
27. What personal issues/factors do you recognise as limitations to your decision-making process? (How are these related to/affected by worldview?)
28. On what basis do you make efficient decisions? What “pressures” (e.g. of time) do you feel most acutely here?
29. Are there typical approaches you use for problem-solving? Why?
30. Many seem to view improvement for the sake of it as strange? Do you agree? Why?
31. How do you feel about uniqueness? Why?
32. Decision-making is about analysing alternatives. Can you say on what basis you do this and why?
33. What is logic for you? How do you typically measure something as “logical”?
34. How far do you see this differing from Western logic?
35. Are there elements in administration that frustrate you because they don’t seem “logical”?
36. How important for you is the cost-ratio factor in making decisions? If you consider this issue, why? What non-economic factors do you take into account as part of the cost in making a certain decision? Why?
37. How do you respond to risk in decision-making? Do you typically take the “easiest” route to always avoid confronting risk? How do you assess risk and on what basis? How do you seek to minimise it? Does risk challenge you in any way? How/why? Which types of decisions do you consider risky?
38. What helps you to develop judgement skills? How?
39. If the community plays such a large part in decision-making, would it be right to suggest that management/administration, in some sense, is a collective exercise? Why?
40. In a traditional, rural setting, is decision-making by the chief a top-down “boss telling the people” situation, such that participation and innovation are suppressed? Or does the chief make decisions based on investigations of what the community actually wants, where they have an opportunity to think creatively about issues? How is creativity encouraged and/or acknowledged in this setting?



41. Does a rural environment, with its limited resources and opportunities, thereby limit alternatives and creativity? (c.f. children's toys & playing)
42. If past experience is the most common way of approaching decisions, does the transition from an agrarian lifestyle and worldview to an urban, technological one limit creativity because there is no experience to draw upon? In other words, is there one form of "creativity" in one social setting (e.g. agrarian, rural) and another form of "creativity" in a different setting (e.g. urban, technological)? Is the development of creativity limited because of the inherent limitations of the social setting?
43. To what extent has the colonial work ethic (working to pay hut tax; working to pay rent or send things to the family back home) developed a negative attitude to work that hinders creativity?
44. How much innovation is encouraged by an agrarian lifestyle and worldview? In a context where the spirits dictate much of life, does this not militate against innovative thinking to some extent?
45. How important is perception (i.e. the ability to creatively formulate problems)? How is it developed as part of the socialisation process (either as a child or as an adult)?
46. What helps you to develop creativity? How?
47. In moving from "traditional" rules and procedures to modern (neo-colonial, industrial) ones, how big a part did the colonial assumptions and policies toward Blacks affect their attitude to work and tasks, especially in the areas of innovation and creativity?
48. How do you feel about change? (Do you generally resist it, fear it or welcome it?) Why?
49. To what extent has the colonial work ethic hindered the drive to higher achievement? Does this still apply to today's urban young generation? What about the rural young generation and the development of higher achievement with them?
50. If productivity is viewed as a means to one's personal goals, has the colonial work ethic created an attitude that productivity is negative because it benefits the master? Since the "born-frees" are now in a position to develop their own work ethic, how do they perceive productivity? Is the main goal for the expansion of materialism?
51. Do you think the *Ubuntu/unhu* idea of conformity limits creativity? If so, what is the way around that problem?
52. To change the thinking about the way organisations function requires social innovation and change. How do you think this can be best achieved?
53. Can you think of any proverbs that talk about leadership and encouraging people how to make decisions?
54. What about proverbs about being creative?
55. How are various skills identified and encouraged in childhood? How are administration skills identified, encouraged and developed?
56. How do you feel about uniqueness? What encourages you/limits you in thinking unique thoughts?
57. What is your understanding of a supervisor's role: to facilitate the subordinate to do the work effectively and efficiently, or to direct the subordinate in performing the work itself (i.e. "interference", etc.)? Are there worldview factors that demand a show of power/authority here?
58. How do you view the elements of power/authority? Are these elements an asset or a hindrance in supervision? Why?
59. How do you feel about satisfying needs? Do you agree or disagree with Maslow's hierarchy? Why? What aspects in your work satisfy which needs?



- Why? As a Christian, where do you see the need to satisfy God and being satisfied by Him coming in?
60. Does authority come from above because the superior person says (or has the position to say) something, or does it come from the subordinate who chooses to accept it or not? When might it be appropriate not to accept someone's authority? When is rejection of authority inappropriate?
 61. Is the problem of an unwillingness to accept responsibility, while wanting the authority, a failure to understand and implement delegation correctly, or is it a worldview issue related to a lack of self-confidence (exacerbated by colonialism)?
 62. How does the issue of norms and conformity relate to the worldview idea of the force of 'community'? What typically happens if the leader feels he is right but the group is wrong? Has the general approach to this changed/been affected by modern education and urbanisation?
 63. If the concept of kinship [with upward and downward status] is strong, what does this say for the "boss" who may be younger or in a minor position socially but who, because of work position, must be obeyed? Does this idea allow for the ignoring of orders, rules, or policies because "I'm not supposed to respect this person"? How has the urban idea of the manager over-ridden the cultural idea and does this cause some tension? How does an older person relate to his younger boss socially (away from work)?
 64. Does the subordination of chiefs to the paramount chief, and the patronage that comes with that, influence patronage in other areas too?
 65. Is the system of patronage the result of the abuse of power or does the abuse of power result in patronage? Which comes first?
 66. Does "legitimate" power always come from one's position? Why?
 67. What role does reward play in enhancing power (relate this to nepotism & patronage)?
 68. When is coercion (e.g. "If you don't do this, you're fired!") considered legitimate and, therefore, acceptable? What problems do you have with it and why?
 69. To what extent would you say it is quite common for people to think of relationships and connections in terms of a possible "return on investment"? In a relational environment, are people "used"?
 70. How do you respond to "political" manoeuvres, given the strong impact of relationships in your worldview? How do you typically deal with inappropriate conduct? How much of an issue is this for you in the decision-making process? Why? How do you relate to this in the Church context?
 71. Are oral-oriented people automatically good listeners – or do they also need "assistance" (e.g., after a sermon or speech, someone usually summarises what was said.)? How has the introduction of writing (through colonialism) hindered or enhanced these listening skills?
 72. Which approach to conflict do you feel most comfortable with and why? (Does it work?)
 - a. The traditional approach – it is dysfunctional, therefore eliminate it
 - b. The behavioural approach – accept organisational conflict as inevitable
 - c. The interactionist approach – deliberately stimulate it to promote improvement
 73. Which conflict resolution techniques are you most comfortable with and why?
 - d. Problem solving
 - e. Super-ordinate goals
 - f. Expansion of resources



- g. Avoidance
 - h. Smoothing
 - i. Compromise
 - j. Authoritative command
 - k. Altering the human variable
 - l. Altering the structural variable
74. Do you know any proverbs that talk about the use/abuse of power? Of control? Are there any proverbs that suggest how discipline should be done?
 75. Are there worldview factors determining quality? How is this defined in different cultural contexts? Does the concept and definition of quality change as one shifts from an agrarian setting to an urban, technical one? Is quality relative (i.e. what constitutes a good quality [as opposed to quantity] crop vs. what is required for professional performance of a [technical] project)?
 76. In evaluating performance, the characteristic of time is an important measure. In a context where time (at least mentally) is not considered important, what is the response to and understanding of the importance of deadlines? Where time is not important, what does “hurry” mean? In an agrarian setting where time is much looser and less specific, what is a “deadline”?
 77. Evaluating, of necessity, must involve some degree of judgement or criticism of others. Where there is a worldview emphasis on community and relationships, to what extent is such evaluation hindered, shirked, evaded or played down – to the eventual detriment of the person and/or organisation? If this is so, how does it negatively impact on quality and productivity control? What might be done to minimise the loss of benefit from, and enhance the benefit to, the person and organisation?
 78. If the ancestors govern the daily life of the living, and must be appeased for blessing and a fruitful life, how is this harmony restored/maintained if the ancestor was offended – perhaps even murdered?
 79. Africa has missed the Industrial Revolution with its emphasis on design, precision and order. To what extent does this play a part in her perceived underdevelopment? [See the “psychology of change”.]
 80. Has Africa missed the preciseness of maths (you have to be exact, otherwise you are wrong; ‘it’ doesn’t work) and so the ability to think exactly?
 81. Might the attitudinal (worldview) factors that helped shift Western Europe from a subsistence agricultural society to an industrialised one be used in Africa? (Designing, building and using a machine takes a different mindset from that of planting seeds and nurturing animals.)
 82. Would you agree that the five aspects of Respect, Dignity, Solidarity, Compassion and Survival constitute the basic idea of *Ubuntu/unhu*?
 83. Would you agree that the four aspects of Morality, Interdependence, the Spirit of Man and Totality properly reflect the tribal values of the village community?
 84. Do you think *Ubuntu/unhhu* is unique to Africa, or is it manifest in different ways in other cultures?
 85. Do you identify these cultural values with the respective spirits:

Morality and dignity:	Rainmaker (<i>Gobwa</i>)
Performance and enterprise:	Hunter (<i>Shavi Reudzimba</i>)
Authority (know the truth)	Divination (<i>Sangoma/N’anga</i>)
Power and conflict:	War (<i>Majukwa</i>)
Survival of self and one’s group/Clan:	(<i>Mudzimu/Wemusha</i>)
Particular obsession, ability and creativity:	Wandering (<i>Shave</i>)



Bitterness, anger and revenge:

Avenging (*Ngozi*)

Cynicism, negativity, destruction:

Witch (*Mutakati*)

86. Do you think the concepts represented here play a role in our approach to work, people, things and how we relate to each of these? How?
87. What managerial/administrative/entrepreneurial opportunities and education (i.e. hunting) did you get as a child? Have they helped you in any way in today's modern world?
88. Could you articulate a theology of administration?
89. To what extent do you think this might be shaped by your worldview as opposed to Scripture alone?
90. Do you have any sense that your theology of administration is actually shaping your practice of it?
91. How might the issues we have discussed cause you to change the way you administer? What advice might you give to fellow Christian administrators?
92. Where does the Christian with his worldview fit in here?
93. Does the Christian worldview not have a role to play in helping to reduce negative perceptions and attitudes? If so, what does that say about the millions of Christians who are dissatisfied at work and need motivation because their Christian worldview is not being properly applied to their work environment? Is the Church, in fact, helping to inculcate a proper view of work from a Christian perspective? [This relates to the "Protestant work ethic" – but what is that, precisely; did it come from a Christian background to begin with, or was it something developed by "Protestants"?)]