

Public management principles: The relevance of the 16th century reformation for public managers in the 21st century

M R Swart

Department of Marketing and Communication Management,
University of Pretoria
E-mail: regina.swart@up.ac.za

L P Malan

School of Public Management and Administration
University of Pretoria
E-mail: lp.malan.@up.ac.za

Abstract

In his controversial work, *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of Capitalism*, the German sociologist Max Weber (1852–1937) points to a positive relationship between Protestantism (especially Calvinism) and the rise of Capitalism. The 16th century Reformation in Europe coincided with the rise of early Capitalism (1500-1760). Since the church was such an integral part of society, many of the church leaders in the Low Countries also played a leading role in the rise of Capitalism. The results were religious, political and social reform and economic growth.

The Belgic Confession, as one of the three main creeds of the Protestant Reformation in the Netherlands, contained management principles that could be applied to both the household of faith and the management of the public sector. The aim of this article is to identify those principles of the Reformation, as expressed in the Belgic Confession (an important document of Calvinism in the Netherlands), and those principles contained in other church documents, such as the Rule of St Benedict, that are relevant to 21st century public management in South Africa.

This article will show that there are similarities between the Netherlands of the 16th century and post-apartheid South Africa, and question whether the management principles contained in the Belgic Confession are also relevant to society today.

Keywords: Public management principles; constitutional values; Reformation; Belgic Confession; professional ethics; accountability

I INTRODUCTION

Constitutional values and the principles of public administration (as outlined in Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) provide a useful framework through which capacity and performance in the public sector can be driven. The building of such capacity should have a long-term perspective and involves the making of choices and decisions, by public managers, on how to promote and sustain a positive workplace culture that is influenced and guided by the desire to serve. In addressing the capacity challenges in the public sector, dedicated leadership is required of public managers, and the constitutional values and principles of public administration can be used as a benchmark against which to assess capacity and performance. On 9 April 1998, Mr Thabo Mbeki, the then Deputy President of South Africa, asked the following question in his speech at the United Nations University: ‘How do we hope to emulate the great human achievements of the earlier Renaissance of Europe of the 15th and 16th centuries?’ This article attempts to respond to the abovementioned question by outlining selected management principles applied during the 16th century Reformation period, and focusing on their relevance for the public manager in South Africa today.

Three methods of investigation were used in this study, namely explorative, descriptive and comparative. The explorative study consisted of an overview of relevant literature and a research visit to Belgium and the Netherlands, during which time a number of scholars, historians, theologians and government officials, as well as leaders of political parties and labour unions were consulted. The descriptive study focused on the following topics: the origins, nature and development of the Reformation with special reference to Calvinism; the social political development of the Netherlands during the Reformation and the management principles contained in the Belgic Confession. The comparative study sought to establish how the management principles applied to the household of faith, and contained in the Belgic Confession, could be applied to the public sector household today.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The need for political, social and economic reform in the 15th and 16th centuries goes as far back as the reign of Emperor Constantine the Great (284–337 AD), when the state church was proclaimed and thus became an institution of the state, with the Emperor as its head. The result was that many people received money and estates, and some were even elevated to the aristocracy simply because they became members of the state church. So-called ‘heathen’ were forced by the sword to join the church, while others joined because of the benefits they stood to gain. All this led to division in the 4th century. Augustine (354–430 AD) attempted to restore unity in the church by proposing the concept of *Civitas Dei*, which implied that the kings of the world had to protect the welfare of the church, and that the institutionalised church had to oversee all areas of life. The result was a new religious–social order known as the *Corpus Christianum*,

a cultural transformation of the world under the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church (Kretzschmar 1998: 105; Buys 1970: 21). The ideal of one world empire and one world church reached its culmination under Carl the Great, in the 8th century. The results were disastrous: the church again became an institute of power, while the people were prevented from reaching their full potential without interference from the church. Sporadic protests against the institutionalism of the Roman Catholic Church grew stronger in the 14th century, but the movement was still too weak to have any meaningful impact on the absolute sovereignty of the church in society. However, with the Renaissance and the rise of Protestantism (particularly Calvinism) during the Reformation that followed, the strong protest against the domination of all areas of society by the church could no longer be ignored.

The Renaissance that started in Italy during the 14th century, but spread particularly to northern Europe (approximately during the 14th to 16th centuries) was part of the transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern period. Renaissance means 'regeneration' or 'renewal' (Green 1974: 29; Wegener 1965: 143). This period was characterised by a renewed enthusiasm in Europe for the antique cultures of the classical Greek and Roman civilisations. The authors of antiquity were read, studied and translated. Roman law was welcomed in Germany and its adherence spread throughout Europe. Humanism emphasised the freedom and dignity of humankind. The sciences and arts blossomed. The Renaissance produced artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo and Signorelli. Among the popes of the Roman Catholic Church were generous promoters of the arts, but also fine statesmen and impressive militarists.

Many scholars of classical literature rediscovered a moral philosophy that promoted civil virtue, yet the social theory of the time was unsympathetic towards the restrictiveness of the Middle Ages. This philosophy led to a more secular view of society and promoted an active way of life, compared with the asceticism of the Middle Ages. The Renaissance, which was characterised by individualism and competition, was also accompanied by an economic revolution. A spirit of optimism, unknown during the Middle Ages, arose. Explorers such as Marco Polo, Josaphat Barbaro, Nicolo Conti, Magellan, Vasco da Gama and Columbus gave new meaning to the world of learning. The rise of world trade caused some commoners in the cities to become rich and, owing to the influence of the Renaissance and Humanism, to strive for their political and religious freedom. In turn, the peasants became more rebellious – the Peasant's war of 1525 was a typical example of their striving for freedom.

Theology also benefited from the Humanism of the Renaissance. One of the slogans of Humanism was: *Back to the sources (ad fontes)* (Berkhof & De Jong 1973: 121). For the biblical humanists in Germany and France, the original source to 'return to', was the Bible. New translations of the Bible appeared and the works of church fathers, such as Augustine, were reinterpreted. The biblical humanists also played a major role in placing the Bible in the hands of ordinary people, which promoted the priesthood of all believers. This paved the way for the religious Reformation of the 16th century.

The Reformation ‘officially’ started on 31 October 1517, when Martin Luther (1483–1546) attached his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church in Germany. However, the most prominent leader of the Reformation was undoubtedly John Calvin (1509–1564) who had the ability to combine faith and action, and also became known for his systematic thinking and organised government structures. Under his leadership (1541–1564) Geneva became a model for political, economic, social and cultural reform. Calvin was also known as the *international reformer* and he exercised a strong influence over the Protestant Reformation in the Netherlands. Guido De Bres, the compiler of the Belgic Confession, was one of his students. Although De Bres was recognised by friends and opponents alike as an independent thinker, he based the Belgic Confession on the Bible, Calvin’s *Christianae religionis* (Institutions of the Christian faith) and *Confession Galicana* (French Confession). At the Synod of Dordt (1618–1619) the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt were approved as the three Formularies of Unity of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands.

Since the church was such an integral part of European society, the Reformation also led to political, social and economic reform. Both Luther and Calvin believed in a Creator-God, and therefore they believed that the principles of the Bible had to find universal application in all areas of life. Calvin saw the law not only as a moral law, but also as a natural law that should find application in the life of the state (Woldring 1996: 92). Calvinists therefore argued that the Belgic Confession, as one of the three main creeds of the Protestant Reformation in the Netherlands, contained management principles that could be applied in both the household of faith, and the public and private sectors. Although Europe was already regarded as being post-Christian halfway through the 20th century, many of the practical guidelines contained in Calvinism (such as the work ethic) still remain an integral part of the social, political and economic practices of Western society. Landes (1998: 35) mentions property rights, the right to negotiate and petition, and the ‘duty of good practice and proper procedure’ as examples of how ‘Judaic-Christian tradition entered explicitly into the European political consciousness’. Another of the specifically European phenomena that stemmed from the Reformation was the semi-autonomous cities that came to acquire great importance both as markets and as administrative centres. The essence of these cities lay, firstly, in their economic function: they were ‘governments of the merchants, by the merchants, and for the merchants’ (ibid: 36). Secondly, they were characterised by considerable civil power: they conferred social status and political rights on their residents, thereby enabling them to do business, free from outside interference. ‘Here the initiative came from below, and this too was an essentially European pattern’ (ibid: 37).

The aim of this article is to identify some of the principles of the Reformation – as expressed in the Belgic Confession – that are relevant to public management in 21st century South Africa. Reference will also be made to the *Rule of St Benedict* that came into being at the end of the Roman Empire (5th century AD). Like the Belgic Confession, the *Rule of St Benedict* was an instrument of order in a society characterised by great

changes and accompanying chaos. Although the *Rule of St Benedict* originated from mysticism, and the Calvinists and mystics did not see eye-to-eye, Benedict (480–550 AD) and De Bres came to the same conclusions with regard to a number of management principles identified in the Belgic Confession. Both groups contributed to aspects such as social reform and upliftment, economic development, the efficient utilisation of the factors of production and the promotion of education, science and technology.

Public managers in South Africa today are primarily involved with designing and implementing policies and programmes that aim to fulfil the government's broad social and economic development objectives. A feature of the South African public sector is that many individuals and groups have an interest in what it does and it is therefore characterised by a multiplicity of different stakeholders, all of whom have a legitimate view of the performance of public managers. The profile of the 21st century public sector workplace is undergoing immense changes: greater efficiency and flexibility are demanded, teams have become building blocks, and participative, transparent and accountable management as well as empowerment are key issues influencing the behaviour of managers. Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens (2002: 8) define 'management' as the process of working with and through others to achieve organisational objectives in an efficient and ethical manner. If the abovementioned definition is to inform the behaviour of public managers in South Africa, adherence to the nine values and principles of public administration, as outlined in Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, is essential.

In the following paragraphs, a number of guiding values and principles of public administration will be outlined and the possible influence of the 16th century Reformation period will be highlighted.

3 PRINCIPLES GOVERNING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Section 195 (1) of the Constitution, 1996, identifies nine values and principles governing public administration. This article will only focus on four of these principles.

3.1 Promotion and maintenance of a high standard of professional ethics

Maintaining a high standard of professional ethics involves the promotion and implementation of ethical frameworks for the public sector (Section 195 [1][a] of the Constitution, 1996). It is therefore important for departments in the public sector to not only ensure that the necessary ethics/misconduct-related policies, processes and procedures are clearly captured in manuals and guidelines, but also that these are effectively implemented. The capacity to adhere to this principle is vital for building and sustaining credibility in the public service and for the protection of its integrity and

efficacy. This principle led to the publication, *inter alia*, of the *Code of Conduct* for public officials.

The job specifications for office-bearers in the church (elders and deacons) were taken from the Bible (Titus 1:6–9; 1 Timothy 3: 2–13; Belgic Confession: Section 31; Calvin's *Institute*, 4.3). Among the requirements for leadership were the following: the leader has to be 'above reproach, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well ... (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ... He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace ...' (*Bible*, New International Version, 1 Timothy 3: 2–7). It is interesting to note how many similarities there are between the list of requirements for office-bearers in the church and the following definition of ethics in the public sector: 'Ethics is the overarching term describing the standards or principles which should underpin all decisions and behaviour of public officials. These principles aim to place public interest before all other interests. They include selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership' (Nolan 1995: 5). The office-bearers in the church had to lead by example. This is in line with the integrity-based approach to ethics management, which combines a regard for the law (compliance-based ethics) with an emphasis on managerial responsibility for ethical behaviour in organisations (Sharp-Paine 1994: 106).

Furthermore, the office-bearer had to have the ability to teach (empower) others: 'And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others' (*Bible*, New International Version, 2 Timothy 2: 2). Thus the concepts of mentoring and delegation of authority were recognised means of empowering people for greater responsibility.

The central idea in the leadership style of Christ and his followers is the concept of 'servant leadership'. This does not imply that the leader should *not* have power, since power is essential for the effective and efficient functioning of a leader. Instead, this power or authority should flow from the leader's qualities as a human being and a leader, rather than from 'power games'. For the Reformers, leadership was about serving one's neighbour as if you were doing this for God (Section 24 of the Belgic Confession; Bible, Colossians 3: 23). The office-bearer was there for the sake of the congregation, and not vice versa (Van't Spijker 1986: 135). Blue (1993: 139) points to various portions of the Bible to distinguish between abusive leadership and servant leadership: Abusive leaders

- demand authority and power on the basis of position and office (Matthew 23: 2–7), while servant leaders are concerned about the effective and efficient fulfilment of their duties in order to serve the interests of the group of which they are the leaders.
- oppress and manipulate people and put heavy and unbearable burdens on their shoulders (Matthew 23: 4); servant leaders set realistic goals and have reasonable expectations of their followers (Matthew 11: 28–30).

- are concerned about outward appearances (Matthew 23: 5) and claim special titles and benefits for themselves whilst applying a different set of rules to those who are close to them (Matthew 23: 6–7). Good leaders strive towards simplicity and transparency in their behaviour and can be counted on to do what they promise (Matthew 5: 37).

Blue (1993: 140) points to the fact that abusive leadership is often the result of a personal need, accompanied by fear and uncertainty. Balanced leaders are able to accept, love and serve people out of a position of strength. Love – in this context – refers to the ability to appreciate the true value of people (Bonhoefer 1995: 127; Rees 1956: 32) and a willingness to meet the needs – and not the wants – of others (Matthew 20: 1–16). Thus, the importance of careful selection and the intellectual, spiritual and emotional nurturing of people becomes apparent, as it is explained in the behavioural sciences and human relations approach to management (Robbins 1991: 21) as well as the *Code of Conduct*.

Leaders who bossed around their congregations were not allowed (1 Peter 5: 3–10). Church leaders were called to be stewards who had to take care of the flock on behalf of the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5: 2–3) – they did not own the flock. In the same way, management in a public sector organisation cannot treat employees as their property, to deal with as they please.

On the other hand, leaders had to accept responsibility and had to be accountable for the way in which they exercised their power and authority. A democratic process was therefore necessary to remove from office those who abused their power or did not properly carry out their responsibilities (Section 32 of the Belgic Confession).

However, ethics is not the responsibility of management only. In Colossians 3: 23–25, Paul the apostle states that employees should serve not only when their employers are watching, or to win their favour, ‘but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord’. Van’t Spijker (1986: 16) refers to the biblical concept of ‘covenant communities’, where a high premium is placed on relationships and one’s commitment to a particular group. This is a reminder of the concept of systemic leadership, where every member of the organisation becomes a steward, accepting individual responsibility for decisions and actions that he or she takes, but also sharing responsibility for the consequences of decisions and actions taken by the team of which he/she is a member (Hoffman, Driscoll & Painter-Morland 2003: 20). Systemic leadership assumes that the values that are important to the organisation and its stakeholders are in place (such as openness in communication, transparency in decision making and actions, mutual trust and accountability). Linked to moral stewardship is the whole issue of whistle-blowing which, if understood correctly, is not about ‘informing’ in the negative sense, but about ‘raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation’ (Institute for Security Studies 2005: 2).

3.2 Efficient, economic and effective use of resources

Section 195 (1)(b) of the Constitution, 1996, highlights the importance of the efficient, economic and effective use of resources, and thus, in effect promotes the principle of stewardship. In the context of the public sector, where resources are limited and in demand, huge pressure is placed on public managers to use these resources efficiently, economically and effectively to create a better life for all. Efficiency requires the capacity to clearly understand the priorities of government and to be able to ensure that resources are deployed in line with those priorities (Public Service Commission 2006: 26). Utilising resources economically and effectively requires public managers to determine the impact of resource allocation in the course of service delivery and, over and above allocating money appropriately, to critically establish and maintain integrated and consistent systems for monitoring. Some lessons pertaining to the use of resources in the past, are described in the following paragraphs.

During the Reformation, as is usually the case during a time of spiritual renewal, a need for a more personal and practical religion arose. From a neo-classical economic perspective, 'Economics is the study of how scarce resources are allocated among alternative uses to satisfy human wants' (Monsma 1998b: 22). Against the view that people are entitled to strive to satisfy their own wants, the Belgic Confession (Sections 1 and 13) claims that God, as the creator and ruler of humanity, made in his image, calls us all to be responsible stewards. This implies that the resources that are entrusted to people should be appropriated out of love for God and one's neighbour, to take care of nature (environmental responsibility) and bring about justice on earth. Justice in society requires that all families and individuals have access to essential means of living. They must have the opportunity to work in order to provide for their own needs, and to make responsible decisions regarding their own labour and their share of the earth's resources. Striving towards maximum efficiency is reconcilable with responsible stewardship, but social justice and responsibility should always be kept in mind.

The premise of responsible stewardship formed the basis of the Reformers' philosophy of life and work. This viewpoint is still maintained by the Reformed churches in South Africa, as is clearly illustrated in *Geloofsverklaring 2000* (Gaum), which was published in *Die Kerkbode*, the official newspaper of the Dutch Reformed church, when the paper celebrated its 150th birthday. In this declaration of faith, it is stated that God wants *all* people to have dignity and to do meaningful work.

The believers were looking for principles or a code of conduct that would enable them to be responsible stewards. Barth (1978: 66) emphasises that the Belgic Confession found much favour amongst ordinary people and became an integral part of their faith and religion – as a matter of fact, people such as Guido de Bres were prepared to risk their lives for their faith. Calvin wanted to create a totally new structure for church and society out of the chaos that accompanied the changes that took place in Europe during the 16th century. Considering the central place that the church occupied in society, it is not far-fetched to accept that the principles that applied to the household of faith would

also find application in other sections of society, such as public sector households and the state.

Axters (1956: 92) refers to the more urban character of Calvinism and argues that Calvinism specifically addressed the concerns of the rising middle classes, that is, the people who were involved in trade and industry. Thus, the code of conduct or principles of Christian stewardship would also be applied to business households and enterprises. Monsma (1998[a]: 2) suggests that Christ's parable of the talents points to the fact that a person is not an autonomous consumer of the resources at his/her disposal, but that these resources should be utilised according to God's directions. In other words, in a fair and responsible way so that the needs of all are met and resources are available for posterity (substantial and social responsibility). Inefficiency is an indication of a waste of scarce resources that could have been utilised elsewhere to meet humanity's unlimited needs and is therefore an injustice to the whole of society.

3.3 Accountable public administration

Accountability requires managers in the public sector to be subject to public scrutiny and to be answerable for their conduct and activities (Section 195 [1][f] of the Constitution, 1996). Accountability in the public sector is fostered through the public managers (especially the heads of departments), because public institutions have been delegated important management and regulatory powers and are expected to exercise these powers within the context of accountability. According to the Public Service Commission (2006: 42), '... the notion of accountability has profound capacity implications for the public service and [that] it is effectively challenged to ensure that it designs and implements appropriate systems that can facilitate responsiveness to the demands for accountability'. Benedict's approach towards accountability is based on the important principles of motivation and empowerment. The psychologists Cloud and Townsend (1992: 84) also derived these same principles from the Bible (Galatians 6: 7–8) and called it the 'Law of Sowing and Reaping': 'When God tells us that we will reap what we sow, He is not punishing us; He's telling us how things really are'. The same psychologists' 'Law of responsibility' (Cloud & Townsend 1992: 86) is also linked to the first law in that it emphasises that everybody is called to love their neighbour (John 15: 12; Galatians 6: 22), but that we are not called to accept responsibility for another person's behaviour by trying to live his/her life for him or her (Philippians 2:12–13; Galatians 6: 5). However, in the context of management, the manager or office-bearer will still be held accountable for the actions and performance of the people under his or her supervision, and this accountability cannot be delegated (*Rule of St Benedict*, 2: 39–40).

One example of a situation where the abovementioned two 'laws' have particular relevance, is when a manager covers up the wrongdoing of an official. It may appear as if the manager 'cares' for the subordinate, but in reality the official is denied the opportunity to be empowered by taking responsibility for his or her actions and obtaining the necessary skills and competencies to avoid making similar mistakes in

future. Furthermore, such behaviour on the part of a manager and his or her subordinates may result in an unhealthy, co-dependent relationship (Carson & Butcher 1992: 306; Cloud & Townsend 1992: 85).

Section 32 of the Belgic Confession emphasises that discipline is about maintaining order, which is the opposite of disorder. Waldron (1995: 327) explains that the church is a religious order characterised by mutual accountability. Calvin (1984: 40) emphasises that both church officials and members should know and understand the rules and laws that regulate behaviour in the church, and that these laws should lead people to Christ. This corresponds with the view that disciplinary and grievance policies, procedures and regulations should be made clear to all parties concerned, and that they should contribute to attaining the goals and objectives of the particular organisation. Reference is also made to preventive (the catechesis) and negative discipline (censorship and excommunication). According to Calvin (French Confession, Sections 32 and 33), order had to be maintained by means determined through consensus. No unnecessary burdens had to be placed on people, who had to be allowed to retain their initiative (Colossians 4: 21). De Waal (1995: 267) points out that the interests of the community (the greater good), and not the rights of the individual, were given priority in the exercising of church discipline. Yet the ultimate purpose of discipline was restoration and reconciliation, not estrangement.

3.4 Good human resource management and career development practices

Section 195 (1)(h) of the Constitution, 1996, promotes the principles of good human resource management and career development practices. The human resource capacity required for managers in the public sector today is very different from what was expected before 1994. Since then, transformation processes have led managers to focus on the development of sound human resource management strategies in order to promote and encourage the personal growth of officials in the public sector. Public managers and leaders are required to manage large numbers of people in a diverse society, and leadership and managerial capacity need to be developed in order to sustain and manage change and cultural diversity while also promoting an awareness of the centrality of citizens in service delivery. In the following paragraphs, a number of factors that will have an influence on good human resource management practices will be outlined, and influences from the past will be highlighted.

3.4.1 Establishing an organisational culture

Sections 33 to 35 of the Belgic Confession present a practical illustration of some principles which are important in the establishment of an organisational culture. From a public administration point of view, the sacraments (baptism and communion) can be regarded as rituals and symbols introduced by Christ as the Founder and Head of the

church, to establish and maintain its organisational culture. Baptism and communion meet the six key aspects of rituals that were mentioned by Imber-Black, Roberts and Whiting (1988: 7), adapted from Rappaport, namely: repetition of actions, content and form; actions instead of mere words or thoughts; special behaviour or styles that gives a different meaning to everyday actions or actions; order – an introduction and conclusion and continued spontaneity; evocation (in other words the thoughts of the participants are focused and a particular event is called to mind); and a collective dimension. In countries such as South Africa, that have a variety of cultures, it is important to create an organisational culture that unites management and subordinates, and indicates a common goal.

In the Bible, Paul states: ‘Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ’. This statement also implies that ministers and other elders of the church are equals who have to submit to one another to prevent a struggle for power or self-exaltation. In *The Rule of St Benedict* (Chapter 2) considerable authority was given to the abbot, but he nevertheless remained accountable to the other monks, who had to evaluate his life and teachings. Foster (1989: 139) refers to the freedom that mutual submission brings:

It is the ability to lay down the terrible burden of always needing to get our own way ... Only submission can free us sufficiently to enable us to distinguish between genuine issues and stubborn self-will ... The biblical teaching on submission focuses primarily on the spirit with which we view other people ... the real issue is the spirit of consideration and respect we have for each other. In submission we are at least free to value other people ... We have entered into a new, wonderful, glorious freedom – the freedom to give up our own rights for the good of others ... It means that at last you are able to break that vicious law of commerce that says, “You scratch my back, I’ll scratch your back; you bloody my nose, I’ll bloody your nose”. It means that for the first time you understand how it is possible to surrender the right to retaliate ...

3.4.2 Conflict resolution

Much conflict could be prevented or resolved if the principles of mutual submission and assertiveness are applied. In other words, if colleagues could regard each other as members of the same organisation (organism), by putting the interests of the other members and the organisation above their own selfish motives. Members of a household or organisation could benefit by recognising that what is in the interest of the organisation to which they belong, will eventually be to the advantage of the individual members of that organisation. For example, an unfair practice on the part of a manager, or the calling of a strike by an employee organisation will impact negatively on the productivity of the organisation, and will eventually be to the detriment of all stakeholders. Leaders should, by implication, also have the ability to resolve conflict in a peaceful manner through negotiation (Matthew 18:15–17).

3.4.3 Flexibility and justice

In the Bible (1 Peter 5:1–4) and *The Rule of St Benedict* (2: 7–10), we are given the picture of the shepherd who knows his sheep by name (John 10: 14). Flexibility is an important component of leadership style. Subordinates' needs, their level of maturity, and their knowledge and experience, should determine the manager's leadership style, as is suggested in contingency theories of leadership (Robbins 1991: 55). Benedict reflects this view when he says that the abbot should use discretion in managing the monastery (*Rule of St Benedict*, 2: 22–29). The leader must decide what would be appropriate in a particular situation (ibid 2: 31), and acknowledge 'that there is a level at which they will work best' (De Waal 1995, 23).

He must behave differently at different times, sometimes using threats, sometimes encouragement. He must show the tough attitude of a master, and also the loving affection of a father. Thus he should sternly reprimand the undisciplined and unruly, but entreat the obedient, the meek and the patient to go forward in virtue; as for the careless and the scornful, we instruct him to rebuke and correct them (*Rule of St Benedict*, 2: 24–25).

St Benedict's view corresponds with the path–goal theory developed by Evans and House in the 1970s, which states that leadership style can be adjusted to a particular situation (Robbins 1991: 60).

However, St Benedict certainly did not condone favouritism. He recommended that the abbot should show 'equal love' to all members of the community (Romans 2: 11; *Rule of St Benedict*, 2: 16–22). In the monastery the monks had to be treated on merit and according to the demands of fairness and justice, regardless of their background or the social status of their families. When people entered through the doors of the monastery, no differentiation was allowed on the ground of background, birth or level of education (Galatians 3: 28; *Rule of St Benedict*, 2: 19, 21–22).

4 CONCLUSION

While Public Administration and Management deals with the management of the public sector and related institutions as regards promoting service delivery for the benefit of all, the Belgic Confession, as one of the statements of faith of the Protestant Reformation (especially Sections 30–32), deals with the management and organisation of the household of faith. Both the public sector establishment and the church are living organisms that need to be organised in order to be effective and efficient. Thus the deduction can be made that the principles contained in the Belgic Confession of Faith could also be applied to the public sector household.

It could, of course, be argued that any similarity between the organisational principles contained in the Belgic Confession and those of management as a science is a mere coincidence, since the Belgic Confession was never meant to be a learning guide for management, and because public management as a science only developed much later.

However, the Calvinist believer would argue that this is no coincidence, since the God who is portrayed in Sections 1 and 13 of the Belgic Confession as the creator and ruler of all things also determined the principles according to which his creation would function. These principles could therefore be regarded as universal and applicable to every household, whether it is a family, the church as the household of faith, or the establishment (a public sector household).

REFERENCES

- Axters, S.G. 1956. *Geschiedenis van de Vroomheid in de Nederlanden*. Vol 3, *De moderne devotie 1380–1550*. Antwerpen: Sikkell.
- Barth, J.D. 1978. *Onze Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenisgeschriften: verklaring van de 37 artikelen waarbij opegenomen een korte doch zakelijke verklaring van de Heidelbergse Catechismus en Dordtse Leerregels*. Veenendaal: Kool.
- Benedict, Abbot of Monte Cassino. 1990. *The rule of Saint Benedict*. D. Parry (trans). Commentary by E. de Waal. Herefordshire, UK: Gracewing.
- Berkhof, H. and O.J. De Jong. 1973. *Geschiedenis der Kerk*. 8ste, herziene druk. Nijkerk: Callenbach.
- Bible, The New International Version*. 1985. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan.
- Blue, K. 1993. *Healing spiritual abuse: how to break free from bad church experiences*. Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press.
- Bonhoefer, D. 1995. *The cost of discipleship*. New York: Touchstone.
- Buys, P.W. 1970. *Die ekklesiologiese onderskeiding organisme en instituut as antwoord op die problematiek van die volkskerk: 'n historiese, prinsipiële en praktiese studie*. Doktorale proefskrif, Potchefstroomse Universiteit van Christelike Hoër Onderwys, Potchefstroom.
- Calvyn, J. 1984. *Institusie van die Christelike Godsdienst*, vol 1. H.W. Simpson (trans). Potchefstroom: Calvyn Jubileum Boekefonds.
- Calvyn, J. 1984. *Institusie van die Christelike Godsdienst*, vol 2. H.W. Simpson (trans). Potchefstroom: Calvyn Jubileum Boekefonds.
- Calvyn, J. 1984. *Institusie van die Christelike Godsdienst*, vol 3. H.W. Simpson (trans). Potchefstroom: Calvyn Jubileum Boekefonds.
- Calvyn, J. 1984. *Institusie van die Christelike Godsdienst*, vol 4. H.W. Simpson. Potchefstroom: Calvyn Jubileum Boekefonds.
- Carson, R.C. and J.N. Butcher. 1992. *Abnormal psychology and modern life*. 9th edition. New York: Harper Collins.
- Cloud, H. and J. Townsend. 1992. *Boundaries: when to say yes: when to say no; to take control of your life*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan.
- De Waal, E. 1984. *Seeking God: the way of St Benedict*. London: Harper Collins.
- De Waal, E. 1995. *A life-giving way: a commentary on the Rule of St Benedict*. London: Chapman.
- Foster, R.J. 1989. *Celebration of discipline*. Revised edition. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Geloofsverklaring 2000*. 1999. Bylae tot Die Kerkbode 163(14), 3 Des.
- Green, V.H.H. 1974. *Renaissance and reformation: a survey of European history between 1450 and 1660*. 2nd edition. London: Edward Arnold.

- Hoffman, W.M., D. Driscoll and M. Painter-Morland. 2003. Integrating ethics into organisational cultures. In *Reader for BPE 251: Business ethics*, compiled by E. De Villiers and M. Painter-Morland. University of Pretoria. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Imber-Black, E., J. Roberts and R.A. Whiting. 1988. *Rituals in families and family therapy*. New York: Norton.
- Institute for Security Studies. 2005. *Whistle-blowing*. Pretoria: Public Service Commission.
- Kreitner, R., A. Kinicki, and M. Buelens. 2002. *Organisational behaviour*. 2nd European edition. London: McGraw-Hill.
- Kretzschmar, L. 1998. *Privatization of the Christian faith: mission, social ethics and the South African Baptists*. Ecclesial studies, part 1. Legon, Ghana: Legon Theological Studies Series.
- Landes, D. 1998. *The wealth and poverty of nations: why some are so rich and some so poor*. London: Little, Brown.
- Monsma, GN. 1998a. Economic theory and practice in biblical perspective. In *Institute for Reformational studies*, February, study pamphlet no. 362. Potchefstroom: University for Christian Higher Education: 1–14.
- Monsma, G.N. 1998b. Christian faith and economic theorizing. In *Institute for Reformational Studies*, February, study pamphlet no. 362. Potchefstroom: University for Christian Higher Education: 15–26.
- Nolan, L. 1995. *Ethics: the key to good management*. Sydney: Independent Commission Against Corruption.
- Public Service Commission. 2006. *State of the Public Service Report*. April. Pretoria.
- Rees, P.S. 1956. *Prayer and life's highest*. London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott.
- Robbins, SP. 1991. *Organizational behaviour: concepts, controversies, and applications*. 5th edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall.
- Sharp-Paine, L. 1994. Managing for organizational integrity. In *Harvard Business Review*, March–April: 106–117.
- South Africa. 1996. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 108 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Van't Spijker, W. 1986. Bijbelse motieven in Bucers opvatting van het kerkrecht. In *In gehoorsaamheid: opgedra aan prof. dr G.P.L. van der Linde*, samesteller, C.J. Smit. Potchefstroom: Teologiese skool: 125–141.
- Waldron, S.E. 1995. *A modern exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*. Darlington: Evangelical Press.
- Wegener, G.S. 1965. *De lewende kerk*. Afrikaanse uitgawe, geredigeer en aangevul deur T.N. Hanekom. Kaapstad: Human & Rousseau.
- Woldring, H.E.S. 1996. *De Christen Democratie: Een kritisch onderzoek naar haar politieke filosofie*. Utrecht: Het Spectrum B.V.