
CHAPTER 8: THE “ALONGSIDE” RELATIONAL IDENTITIES OF EQUIPPING LEADERS

“Mentoring brings us together – across generation, class, and often race – in a manner that forces us to acknowledge our interdependence, to appreciate, in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s words, that ‘we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied to a single garment of destiny.’ In this way, mentoring enables us to participate in the essential but unfinished drama of reinventing community, while reaffirming that there is an important role for each of us in it”

- Marc Freedman

“Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry” – 2 Timothy 4:11, KJV.

Introduction

The fourth and final Relational Equipping Identity of Equipping leaders is the “Alongside” Relational Equipping Identity. The “Alongside” Relational Equipping Identity introduces an approach to equipping in which leaders exercise influence “from the side” of others, rather than “from the front”, “towards” them or “from the top”. It dispenses with any semblance of a hierarchical approach to leadership and its embedded patronization. The “Alongside” Relational Equipping Identity seeks what Gibbs and Coffey call the “flattening” of traditional hierarchical leadership structures (2006:84). It is what Greg Ogden calls a “participatory” style of leadership - “leadership from the side, rather than a leadership from above” (2003:173). John Maxwell also calls this a form of “peer leadership” or “leading across”, since in this style of leadership leaders lead “with” their colleagues (Purdham 2008:no page numbers).

Like the other three Relational Equipping Identities, the “Alongside” Relational Equipping Identity incorporates its own unique subsidiary-identities which Equipping leaders adopt when coming alongside others to equip them for ministry. The “Alongside” Relational Equipping Identity sees leaders viewing themselves as “Fellow-Travellers” with their

spiritual community, as “Peers” with others in ministry, and as “Partners” in collaborative enterprises. As “Fellow-Travellers” on a common journey, Equipping leaders cultivate empathetic relationships while offering companionship and guidance. Equipping leaders also concede that ministry and leadership is to be shared. Therefore they view themselves as the “Peers” and “Colleagues” of those who serve and lead alongside them. Furthermore, Equipping leaders acknowledge that all ministry is communal and that from time to time they may need to participate in large-scale collaborative ministry enterprises with others. Consequently they approach these endeavours as “Partners” with others in ministry (Cf. 2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25; Philemon. 1:24).

8.1. Theological Precedents of Alongside Equipping Identities

While there may be several theological precedents which can be used to construct an “Alongside” Equipping Leadership Identity, due to the space constraints of this chapter, only three will be explored. The first precedent is that “Alongside” Equipping Leadership Identities require that leaders mirror the Holy Spirit’s ministry as the “Parakletos” by also coming alongside others to render any assistance that they may need. Instead of equipping people for the purpose of soliciting their help, “Alongside” Equipping leaders draw alongside others and discern where best they can be of assistance in helping *others* in their personal and ministry development. The second theological precedent is that this Equipping Identity encompasses a theology of “Presence”. Equipping others requires that leaders “Presence” themselves in the lives of others in order to accurately understand where they are at in their journey of personal and ministry development. This also requires that leaders engage with people in their contexts and adapt the equipping process to suite the ministry context. This is as opposed to using a predetermined equipping programme and imposing it upon the context. Finally, the third theological precedent is that leaders are required to embrace an “Incarnational” approach to leadership. Equipping requires that leaders invest time in building transparent relationships with those whom they wish to equip (Beuhrer 1998:15). Leaders then equip others across this relationship by modelling for them the values and skills they desire that others assimilate.

8.1.1. Mirroring the Holy Spirit’s Ministry as “Parakletos”

In their ministry of coming alongside others to equip them, Equipping leaders reflect the ministry of the Holy Spirit, particularly in his role as the “Parakletos”. The word

“Parakletos” occurs 5 times in the New Testament, all in the writings of John. The Holy Spirit is referred to as the “Parakletos” in John’s Gospel (John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7) and Jesus Christ is referred to the “Parakletos” in the first letter of John (John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7; 1 John 2:13). The word “Parakletos” is a verbal adjective, passive in form (Walker 2002: no page numbers). It is a compound word “from παρά, ‘to the side of’, and καλέω, ‘to summon’. Hence, originally, ‘one who is called to another’s side to aid him’ ” (Vincent 2009: no page numbers, Commentary on John 14:16, *italics in the original*). Other cognates are (Wenstrom 2011:no page numbers):

- Paraklesis (noun) - meaning “admonition, exhortation, encouragement, appeal”
- Kaleo (verb) - meaning "to call, name, summon, invite"
- Sumparakaleo (verb) - meaning "to comfort together with"

In ancient Greek secular usage, “Parakletos” made reference to a legal adviser, helper or advocate in court, or even any friend who would take action to give help in time of legal need (Walker 2002: no page numbers). Rabbinic Judaism used the word, in the sense of advocate, counsel, defender, especially of humans before God. Later the meaning “Parakletos” as a “comforter” penetrated early Christian literature through its connection with the cognate verb, “*parakaleo*” (“exhort, “encourage”) (Walker 2002:no page numbers). However, Zodhiates points out that the cognates “*parakaleo* (3870) and *paraklesis* (3874), the act or process of comforting ... do not occur at all in the writings of John” (1992:1107). The word has also been rendered as: “intercessor” (being akin to “advocate”); “succourer”, “aider”, “assistant”; “teacher”; “guide” (NASB New Testament Greek Lexicon 2011: no page numbers). Several more recent Bible translations (NIV, TNIV, NiRV, CEV, TEV, GNB, GW, and BBE) have opted for the general term, “helper” (or “help”) as being the English word that is most meaningful in all the passages where the word “parakletos” makes reference to the Holy Spirit. Leon Morris considers *parakletos* to mean “the legal helper, the friend who does whatever necessary to forward a friend’s best interests” (Walker 2002: no page numbers).

In their “Alongside” Equipping identity, leaders reflect the ethos of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in helping others. The prepositions used in John 14:16-17 describe the Holy Spirit’s relation to the believer: “with you” (μετά) - in fellowship with believers; “by you” (παρά) - in His personal presence; “in you” (ἐν) - as an indwelling personal energy (Vincent’s Word Studies 2009:no page numbers, Commentary on John 14:6). While

leaders cannot replicate the Holy Spirit's indwelling personal presence, they can emulate the Holy Spirit's ministry of personal participation in fellowship with others in order to render assistance wherever needed. Dwight Friesen says, "We are moving toward leadership being a bit more about paraklesis, that sense of coming alongside as an advocate, friend, encourager, defender" (Dwight Friesen in Gibbs and Bolger 2006:212).

In the New Testament, leaders reflected this ministry of the Holy Spirit. For example, Barnabas was given the nickname "Son of Encouragement" [paraklesis] (Acts 4:36 NIV). By way of further illustration, we also see that the verb "parakaleo", a cognate of "parakletos", is used widely in specific reference to Christian leaders in the following areas of their ministry:

- Encouragement - Barnabas encouraged the early church as they wrestled with ethical and doctrinal issues (Acts 11:23). Barnabas and Paul routinely exercised this ministry of encouragement among new converts (Acts 14:22), as did Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32), and Paul and Silas when they travelled together (Acts 16:40).
- Admonition - "Parakaleo" is used in the sense of a strong admonition when leaders "urged" believers in the following: to dissolve divisions (1 Cor. 1:10); to imitate their example (1 Cor. 4:16); to reconcile with those who had been disciplined (2 Cor. 2:8); and especially when calling believers to higher standards of ethical behavior (1 Thess. 2:11-12; 1 Thess. 4:1, 4:9-10, 5:14; Eph. 4:1; 1 Pet. 2:11). This "urging" often took the form of a strong admonition or warning to teach certain doctrines and to confront erroneous teachings (1 Tim. 5:1; 6:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9, 2:15).
- Exhortation – "Parakaleo" was used in reference to leaders as they motivated believers to remain true to the faith despite adversity, or in the face of converse doctrines that circulated (Acts 14:22; 1 Pet. 5:12; Jude 1:3).
- Consolation/Comfort – "Parakaleo" was also used to describe the ministry of leaders as they comforted believers in times of discouragement (Acts 20:12; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; 1:6-7)

Contemporary approaches to leadership continue to reflect the Holy Spirit's role as "Paraclete" and the ethos of ministry reflected by leaders in the NT. Peter Cockrell of Parakletos Ministries understands the purpose of leaders as being to imitate the Holy Spirit's ministry of "drawing alongside in order to help" believers (Cockrell 2008:no page numbers). Similarly another different ministry also entitled "Parakletos Ministries" has as part of their goals the training and developing of leaders, by "Working alongside leaders and leadership teams" and "Supporting and facilitating the church through the use of effective tools and resources" (Parakletos Ministries 2011:no page numbers). Another ministry called "The Paraclete Associate" sees their vision as being to "not ... establish new ministries, but to come alongside of existing international ministries and Christian leaders and offer our gifts and experience; to serve them however we can" (Garner 2007:no page numbers).

Kouzes and Posner also note that in society where technology is creating a "borderless world", leaders are reinterpreting their roles (2003:7). Instead of hierarchical interpretation of themselves as "bosses" and "commanders", leaders are viewing their roles as being "servers and supporters, partners and providers" (Kouzes and Posner 2003:7). Equipping leaders who serve according to an Alongside Equipping Identity will move away from a style of leadership that enlists people to help the leader accomplish his or her own personal vision. Instead, once Equipping leaders have themselves gathered ministry experience, they will view their roles as being to draw alongside others to assist them in developing their ministry potential. They will also understand their role as being to render whatever assistance others may require of them, working "*with* people, not *over* them" (Gibbs 2005:157, *italics in the original*).

8.1.2. A Theology of "Presence"

A theology of "Presence" stems from an understanding that ministry is most meaningful when leaders come alongside those whom they lead and participate with them in a personal capacity in life and ministry. This approach to leadership requires close proximity and engagement between leaders and those whom they equip in order for equipping to be transacted effectively (Kouzes and Posner 2003:11).

Alongside Equipping Identities require more personal engagement of leaders than other forms of equipping such as, for example, teaching. When teaching, the knowledge communicated has an objective value in its contribution to the equipping process, regardless of the nature or quality of the relationship between the teacher and student. By contrast, a theology of “Presence” as it pertains to leadership, requires that leaders build dedicated relationships with others as the foundations upon which the equipping process will be proceed. It requires that leaders cultivate relationships in which there is transparent self-disclosure of their own life in order to build trust and communicate values. It also requires that leaders express a patient commitment to gaining an understanding of- and insight into –the lives of those whom they will equip. Only once this relationship has been established can equipping proceed meaningfully.

A theology of “Presence” also assumes an *a posteriori* epistemology regarding the equipping process (Webster 2009:no page numbers). Instead of proposing a formulated philosophy of ministry, leaders help others to develop their own personal philosophy of ministry. They do this by encouraging others to first participate in ministry. After they have done this, participants are encouraged to reflect upon their experiences and draw their own conclusions regarding a philosophy of ministry. This requires that leaders not approach the equipping process with foregone conclusions or formulated assumptions regarding what is required to equip others. Instead, Equipping leaders embrace a “learn as you go” approach to training (Gibbs 2005:157). They seek to first gain an understanding of where people are at in their stage of development and will cautiously and prayerfully discern what will be required to further advance people’s development (Gibbs 2005:139). Since life contexts have a formative influence on people, Equipping leaders will also seek to gain an understanding of the contexts within which people live and in which they will minister (Gibbs 2005:25). Only once they have understood the life and ministry contexts of those being equipped should leaders then proceed to engage in the equipping process (Gibbs 2005:119). Stephen Covey sums up this approach by advocating that leaders “Seek to first understand, then to be understood” (1994:235). To not do so would betray insensitivity on the part of the leader toward people’s life and ministry conditions. Leaders will then run the risk of misconstruing the equipping that others require. They will also run the risk of misapplying their training. By its very nature, an “Alongside” approach to equipping others requires that leaders come alongside others and start “where people are at” in

their level of development and in their life and ministry contexts. The “Alongside” Equipping Identities are those which perhaps require that leaders take the life and ministry contexts, as well as the level of personal development of individuals most seriously when preparing to equip them for ministry.

A theology of “Presence” receives its origin in the example of God. From the inception of God’s relationship with man, we see God habitually walking with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8). Shortly afterwards we see Enoch (Gen. 5:22-24, NIV) and Noah (Gen. 6:9, NIV) as people who “walked with God”. Through the Exodus the presence of God accompanied the Israelites as a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21-22; Neh. 9:12). During their wilderness journey the “tent of meeting” which God instructed Moses to build symbolised God’s dwelling in the midst of the Israelites (Ex. 29:42-43; 30:36). In the Incarnation, Jesus is portrayed as “Immanuel” – “God with us” (Matthew 1:23, NIV). John’s interpretation depicts the Word as becoming “flesh” and “tabernacling” among humanity (John 1:14, LITV). Throughout his ministry, Jesus shared his daily life with the apostles and disciples. His daily life involved “Presencing” himself among people of all social strata and ministering to their needs (Beuhring 1998:15). In the prelude to his ascension, Jesus assured the disciples of his continued presence (Matthew 28:20). The Holy Spirit ultimately became the emissary of the promised abiding presence of God (John 14:18 and Barnes 2009:no page numbers, Commentary on John 14:18; also Gibbs 2005:181). Throughout the history of God’s relationship with mankind, we therefore see the expression of a commitment on the part of God to engage with His creation in a meaningful relationship. It is through this relationship of expressed “Presence” that God often drew alongside humankind to care for, guide, and counsel His people.

In its practical application and in its simplest definition, a theology of “Presence” means “Simply Being There For Others ... Simply being present and available” (Robinson 2008:no page numbers; also Perriman 2004:no page numbers). Andrew Perriman elucidates some characteristics of a theology of “Presence” as it relates to the Church’s missionary practice (2004:no page numbers).

These characteristics can also readily be translated into the ministry practice of leaders who wish to equip others according to a theology of “Presence”, as follows (Perriman 2004:no page numbers):

- Be there: Equipping leadership requires an understanding that “*being there*”, engaged in people’s day-to-day lives is often a more effective way of equipping than “*doing things*” with people at training events (also Beuhring 1998:15).
- Be consistent: relationships must be approached as ends in themselves, and not the means to an end. Leaders must regain trust (relationally, ethically, intellectually) – which means becoming trustworthy (relationally, ethically, intellectually), and this takes an investment of time.
- Be accessible, open, and friendly: Leaders must at all times allow the building of relationships with others to take precedence over other activities, even during planned events.
- Be honest: Leaders must not be perceived as having ulterior motives or hidden agendas. Communication with others must be transparent and forthright, and leaders should at all time “create a meta-dialogue” in which all people can participate as equals.
- Be creative: Leaders should experiment with different, creative ways of stimulating thought and engaging people in conversations. These conversations should help elicit responses that open windows into people’s lives. Leaders should find paths that will encourage people to walk across “relational landscapes”.

In order for leaders to approach equipping in this way will require that they “consistently prioritize relationships and relational values” over their institutional and organizational commitments (Perriman 2004:no page numbers). Perriman says, “Presence is relational rather than programmatic; it is communal rather than

institutional” (2004: no page numbers). When leaders approach equipping through relationships, they train those being equipped to also think concordantly. Perriman says that when this theology of “Presence” is taught to a “believing community”, it helps the community see itself “as a priesthood, a mediating body between God and the world” (2004:no page numbers). Moreover, the believing community will come to understand that their priesthood requires them to engage with the secular community around them as God’s present, representative, ministering community. Rather than withdrawing to spiritual enclaves, they will understand the priestly calling of engaging with others in order to serve them better (Gibbs 2005:119).

8.1.3. Incarnational Leadership

Roxburgh and Romanuk contend that the early church’s understanding of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ formed the basis of their thinking and practice (2006:120). It was therefore based on the Incarnation that “the character and identity of those leading the church were articulated” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:120). Into Thy Word Ministries also maintain that “ ‘Incarnational leadership’ is rooted in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2011a:no page numbers).

Kouzes and Posner see an incarnational approach to leadership as “one characterized by serving others rather than being served, based on giving rather than receiving” (2003:3). This posture of serving others acts as a motivational incentive to those alongside whom leaders minister (Kouzes and Posner 2003:2; also Gibbs 2005:139). Furthermore, by ministering alongside others, leaders are able to experience first-hand what others experience (Gibbs 2005:139). They are also able to observe how others are assimilating what they have been taught and how they are processing the theory which is to be applied in ministry practice.

Incarnational leadership requires that leaders embody the message that they wish to communicate. It is this process of embodying the message which serves as the *medium* of equipping (Gibbs 2005:116). Buehring suggests that leaders equip others in this way by spending time with them in a variety of settings and allowing them to observe the leader’s behaviour (1998:16). He suggests that while many people may acquire knowledge during their training, values are

changed and lifestyles are only altered as people see their training modelled before their eyes (Buehring 1998:16). Eddie Gibbs says that Jesus used this method of communicating what he wanted others to learn (2005:140):

- “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (John 13:15, NIV).
- “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, *leaving you an example*, that you should follow in his steps” (1 Peter. 2:21, NIV, *italics added*)

David Buehring notes that “Jesus imparted His vision and Kingdom values to His disciples through *modelling* (1998:15, italics in original). This means of teaching and equipping was also practiced by the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17, 4:9). He encouraged his protégés Timothy (1 Tim. 4:12) and Titus (Titus 2:6-8) to also demonstrate in their own lives that which they had written to others to adhere to (Buehring 1998:15). As leaders proceed with this Incarnational approach to equipping they will find themselves having to inculcate their message into their own lifestyles. In order to demonstrate integrity in their lives, leaders will have to internalize the values which they espouse. This application of their message and its values to their own lives may at first prove to be a challenge to leaders. This is because it requires that they take “a serious, self-introspective examination” to see how well they embody their message and display Christ (Into Thy Word Ministries 2011a:no page numbers). Yet, because leaders are symbols for their organizations, this is a responsibility which every leader must embrace (Blackaby and Blackaby 2001:177). Roxburgh and Romanuk also mention that leaders are required to model the values and beliefs inherent in any *changes* they desire to cultivate within their communities (2006:127). Furthermore they say, “The need for leadership today is the lived, demonstration of a life coherent and consistent with its professed beliefs and narratives” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:131). When leaders *do* lead by their demonstrated example, they inculcate a corporate culture in which their espoused practices are also internalized by others among whom they serve (Blackaby and Blackaby 2001:168).

Having established some theological precedents for the Alongside Identities of Equipping leaders, the three identities will now be explored.

8.2. Fellow-Traveller

Christianity can be viewed as a journey with God, one on which all believers have embarked (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:121). Yet, individual believers are not “independent travellers” in their walk with the Lord, but are on a journey with the rest of the community of faith (Damazio 1988:96). As members of their communities, leaders too are “fellow-travellers” alongside the members of their communities (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:205). As leaders lead, they must do so by participating in the life of their own communities, and as those who are on a journey together with them (Rebecca Ver Straten McSparran in Gibbs and Bolger 2006:212).

It is important for leaders to be on the same journey as those whom they lead since they cannot lead where they have never been (Shawchuck and Hueser 1993:126). Means says, “Spiritual leaders are spiritually-sighted people who are guides, who know and point out the way because they themselves have travelled on that way” (1990:113; also Mark Palmer in Gibbs and Bolger 2006:212). Jimmy Long notes that since 1990 younger leaders have become sceptical of the pragmatic approach to leadership - something which characterised the approach to leadership of the period 1970-2000 (2009: no page numbers). Long says that, “The emerging generation of leaders desires a context that fosters community, trust, *journey* ... and empowerment” (2009:no page numbers, *italics added*). Similarly, Ogne and Roehl have also observed that “Younger Evangelicals” (a paradigm emerging from 2000 onwards) prefer an authentic spirituality in which the leader is a sojourner with them (2008:11).

8.2.1. The Functions of Leaders as Fellow-Travellers

As leaders journey with the rest of their community, they can engage in the following actions in order to further their equipping responsibilities:

8.2.1.1. Cultivate Empathetic Relationships

Empathy was identified by Daniel Goleman as one of four key relational qualities required of leaders to ensure their relational competency (1995:43). Michael Hartsfield also identified empathy as an important component of a leader’s “emotional

intelligence” and one that has a determining factor of how leaders will relate to others (2011:no page numbers). The Microsoft Office Encarta Dictionary defines “empathy” as:

“Understanding of another’s feelings; the ability to identify with and understand somebody else's feelings or difficulties; empathetic – understanding others” (2007, English (UK), “Empathy”).

Grant Richison describes “empathy” as follows:

“Empathy is the ability to identify with the pathos (passions) of others. It is the faculty to put yourself in the place of another and consider their state of affairs ... Empathy is not sympathy. Sympathy is simply feeling the emotions of another person. Empathy is the ability to identify with the state of the other person. ... Empathy is a sign that someone is thinking of others and cares for others ... Empathy is a principle of selflessness. A person who shows capacity for empathy means they think seriously about others” (1995: no page numbers).

As fellow-travellers, leaders must display empathy and a sensitivity to the spiritual journeys of those whom they lead (Ogne and Roehl 2008:170). They must learn to see things from the perspective of those being equipped (Maxwell 2001:79). Empathy requires that leaders get to know each individual among whom they minister. John Maxwell says that empathy requires that leaders place themselves “in the other person’s shoes” in order to develop a sensitivity to the person’s needs and in order to better address the issues that concern him or her (2001:79). Empathetic leaders will be more attuned to the “subtle social signals that indicate what others need or want” (Goleman 1995:43). By “tuning in” to these signals, leaders will be able to recognize the changing emotional state of others and then know how to respond accordingly (Hartsfield 2011:no page numbers). This necessitates that leaders take time to listen to people’s “stories” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:163; also Into Thy Word Ministries 2011b:no page numbers). It also means that once leaders get to know people, that they accept people “*how they are*”, i.e. for who they are (Gibbs 2005:181, *italics in the original*).

In order to gain insight into the lives of those with whom they are journeying and equipping for ministry, leaders should seek to understand some of the following areas about people's lives:

- Their life contexts: Where is it that people live and minister, and to what extent has their environment shaped the formation of their personality and character?
- Their life experiences: What formative experiences have shaped the person? These may be indelible impressions that have remained with the person because of recurrent experiences or formative, singular encounters.
- Their inner conversations: What emotions and thoughts currently occupy the person's psyche? These may be positive, such as the person's past and current aspirations, as well as their joys and reflections upon their accomplishments in life. Conversely, they may include the person's fears, discouragements, and the challenges which the person may face on various fronts.
- Their current spiritual condition: Leaders need to be aware of the health of a person's spiritual life. Of special importance is the vitality of the person's present spiritual growth habits and the perception that the person has of God and their relationship to Him.
- Their relationships: The current state of a person's relationships with others may reveal a lot about them. Of special significance also are a person's familial relationships, especially their past and present relationship with their parents.
- Their ministry calling and spiritual giftedness: Leaders will do well to discern the calling that God has placed upon a person's life and the gifts with which He has endowed them. This is so that leaders work alongside others to further develop the ministry to which God has called others.

Empathetic leaders seek to understand people in order to know how to adapt their approach to equipping to develop people as *individuals*, not en-masse. Empathetic leaders display sensitivity to individual differences and how it is that each person

assimilates the experience of their equipping journey. Empathy also ensures that the relational dimension of the equipping process is at all times preserved. Moreover, it is empathy that ensures that leaders do not lose sight of the fact that people will continue to need pastoral care for the duration of their training.

8.2.1.2. Offer Companionship

Shawchuck and Heuser mention that all people have a desire for spiritual companions to guide them in their journeys of faith (1993:125). They also assert that, “The pastor’s role as spiritual companion of the congregation should be the central work of the pastor’s entire ministry” (1993:126). Although acknowledging that “The truest spiritual companion is Christ working through His Spirit”, the Society of Jesus also sees spiritual companionship as a ministry of spiritual leaders, a ministry in which leaders “assimilate” this ministry of Christ (2008:55). They see “spiritual companionship” as a special pastoral ministry, “a charism ... signaling the activity of the Spirit in the Church” (The Society of Jesus 2008:55). The Synod of the Church of Santiago de Chile in 1997 defined “spiritual companions” as “persons who have the matured ability to help others move along in their spiritual growth”, and also recognized this as a “pastoral service” (The Society of Jesus 2008:55). Kent Groff sees spiritual friendship, being “soul friends (Irish anamchara), spiritual mentoring, or discipling—and the rebbe-hasid tradition in Judaism” as all being synonymous with the concept of “spiritual companionship” (1997:no page numbers).

(a) Biblical Precedents for Leaders to Serve as Companions

The Bible contains several examples of the ministry of spiritual companionship. The Society of Jesus notes that:

“In the Old Testament, God is the companion of His people ... He is the God who accompanies the pilgrim people—in times of infidelity, still there; in times of triumph, rejoicing in His temple in Jerusalem; and in the Exile” (2008:57).

Glen Miller considers God to have formed special friendships, “most explicitly with Abraham, Moses, and Job” (Miller 1999: no page numbers). Abraham was called the “friend of God” (2 Chron. 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23), as was Moses (Ex. 33:11). Job considered himself to have an “intimate friendship” with God (Job 29:4, NIV). Jesus also displayed friendship in his relationship with his disciples. Chrystal Colding mentions that Jesus had various “circles of friends”, which “started off at seventy two, then He narrowed it down to twelve, and then on down to three” (2009: no page numbers; also Groff 1997:no page numbers). Jesus frequently called the twelve apostles his “friends” (Luke 12:4; John 15:13-15; 21:5). Colding mentions that Peter, James and John formed Jesus’ “inner circle” of friends and describes the level of companionship that Jesus enjoyed with them in the following way (2009:no page numbers):

“These were the three that He fellowshiped with on a very frequent basis; these were the three that He confided in; these are the three that He shared the innermost parts and depths of His being with; these are the three that He laughed with, cried with, and prayed with. There were only three who truly got to experience the depths of who Jesus was”.

In addition to his relationship with his disciples, Jesus was also called the “friend of tax collectors and ‘sinners’ ” (Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:34: Cf. Luke 15:2, 19:7; Matt. 9:11).

We see the same approach to companionship among other Christian leaders in the New Testament. Paul made frequent references to other believers as his “friends” (Rom. 12:19, 16:5; 1 Cor. 10:14; 2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 2:12; Philemon 1:1-2), as did the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 2:11). The apostle John considered himself to be the “companion” of other believers (Rev. 1:9, NIV). Kent Groff also sees the following as biblical examples of spiritual companionship: “the friendship of David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, Paul and Silas” (1997:no page numbers). Groff says the

following also reflect more contemporary spiritual companionship relationships:

“Francis of Assisi and Claire, John Calvin and John Knox, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Eberhard Bethge, Evelyn Underhill and Baron von Hugel, Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King, Jr.” (1997:no page numbers).

(b) The Companionship Needed by Leaders

In addition to leaders being spiritual companions, leaders also need others to be spiritual companions to them (Reighard 2007:no page numbers; Colding 2009:no page numbers). Despite this, one Focus on the Family study revealed that “at least 70 percent of pastors in the United States claim they have no friends” (Wilson 2010:no page numbers). The Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership in 2007 also reported that 70% of church leaders surveyed mentioned that they do not have someone whom they consider to be a close friend (The National Clergy Support Network 2010:no page numbers). Ike Reighard notes that, “Friendship is a vital part of New Testament ministry and leadership” (2007:no page numbers; also Groff 1997:no page numbers). Reighard says that leaders who do not have “quality, biblical friendships” model a flawed Christian lifestyle for church members (Reighard 2007:no page numbers). Tilden Edwards also says that leaders who have few quality friendships “become less trustworthy guides of others” (1995:no page numbers). Despite the statistics mentioned above, Peter Wilson maintains that leaders “have been created for deep connectedness like everyone else” and that leaders should “Develop and cultivate ... close friendships” (Wilson 2010:no page numbers). Ike Reighard notes that all leaders need the following four types of friends (2007:no page numbers):

- The Developer: Developer friends counsel with wisdom and correct when necessary. They also bring the gift of encouragement to a leader’s life and will protect and strengthen leaders.
- The Designer: These are mentors with whom leaders develop personal relationships. They serve as advisors in all the personal areas of a leader’s life by modeling the correct behavior for them.

- The Disturber: Disturbers are the people God uses “to become the object of greater force that breaks inertia and propels us to greater achievement” (Reighard 2007:no page numbers). They “shake up our status quo ... ask us difficult questions”, and force leaders “to take a closer look at motivations and ambitions” (ibid).
- The Discerner: “More popularly known as ‘accountability partners’, discerners bring the gift of spiritual insight into our lives” (Reighard 2007:no page numbers). Discerners “know how to speak the truth in love” and “how to exhort and rebuke, seeking to keep their friend on the right track” (ibid).

(c) The Practice of Companionship

Regarding the practice of spiritual companionship, the Society of Jesus maintains that “Spiritual Companionship is not just one more kind of help added to social work, educational, counseling, [and] psychological therapy” (2008:58). Rather, they mention that spiritual companions should facilitate “the continually deepening personal development of the new creation in Christ”, i.e. the spiritual growth of others “under the guidance of the Holy Spirit” (2008:58). Spiritual Companionship “is a help which one offers to another so that the other might grow in faith and come to be their true self in acting the will of God” (The Society of Jesus 2008:58).

Spiritual companionship is a reciprocal relationship (Groff 1997:no page numbers). It entails leaders and their companions “encouraging and praying for one another, with some mutual giving-receiving (Romans 1:11-12)” (Groff 1997:no page numbers). Despite the reciprocity of the relationships, the leader usually serves to a greater extent as the guide “by example, story, listening, [and] praying” (Groff 1997:no page numbers). In this sense spiritual companionship resembles “a disciple-mentor relationship” (Groff 1997:no page numbers).

Spiritual companionship reflects a pastoral approach to leadership. As companions, leaders live “with” the sheep and are there to encourage, protect, and feed them.

The Society of Jesus describes this as follows:

“‘Spiritual companionship’ (com-panis in Latin— literally ‘bread with’)” entails accompanying others through “all life experiences—grieving and celebrating, working and playing” (2008:58).

Glen Miller notes the following as being unique to Jesus’ pattern of behavior when he interacted with his disciples as a “Friend and Companion” (2009:no page numbers). Jesus’ interactions with his disciples all demonstrate to leaders how it is that they can also form reciprocal relationships as spiritual companions to others:

- Jesus communicated with his friends and told them of his feelings for them (John 15:12-15). He shared His inner self with them, opening His inner emotional life and thoughts to them and included them in His experiences (Mark 12:4ff.; John 12:27, 13:31; Matt. 26:36).
- Jesus shared life experiences with His friends. He spent time with them and engaged in common living and activity with them (Luke 7:34; Mark 2:15ff.; John 11:11, 12:1-2) . “They traveled as a band together for 2-3 years, and celebrated all the Jewish festivals and simple daily life together. They shared triumphs of ministry (Luke 10.17) and the attendant tragedies (e.g., the death of John the Baptist)” (Miller 2009:no page numbers).
- Jesus “expressed *and lived* commitments to them, and maintained a strong personal relationship with God, from which to fulfill those commitments” (Miller 2009:no page numbers, *italics in the original*). He expressed concern for them (Luke 10:40ff.; John 14:1, 27) and did not allow their temporary failures to affect His acceptance of them (Luke 22:31). “He avoided relating to them on the basis of their *known* future failures or on the basis of their *actual* past failures! He took intimacy risks and personal

risks, trusting them, even knowing the betrayals ahead (John 12.4)” (Miller 2009:no page numbers).

- Jesus expected commitments from them. He risked "friendship failures" with them, and communicated clearly His expectations of "their side" of the friendship. He asked them for support in His hour of need (Matt 26.36-37) and was honest about how He felt about failed personal commitments, expecting them to be loyal friends (Mark 14:32-37).

One caveat that Chrystal Colding notes when forming spiritual friendships is that, although leaders should have a broad circle of friends, not everyone should be allowed into a leader’s “inner circle” (2009:no page numbers). Colding notes that the people whom a leader surrounds himself/herself with are vital to a leader’s spiritual growth and encouragement (2009:no page numbers). She suggests that since people will also “speak into” leaders' lives, that leaders exercise discernment when forming “inner circle” friendships. A leader’s “inner circle” of friends should be those who display evidence of the fruits of the Spirit and private integrity, as opposed to people who display carnality and spiritual immaturity (Colding 2009:no page numbers). She notes that another quality that leaders should look for amongst those within their “inner circles” are “people who have displayed loyalty throughout changing circumstances and trying times” (2009:no page numbers).

8.2.1.3. Provide Spiritual Guidance

Although God guides his people, he often uses “Christian leaders who are walking with Him” to do so (Damazio 1988:251). Miles Catlett draws attention to the importance of leaders needing to be spiritual guides, saying that leaders are “primarily spiritual guides” and that providing spiritual guidance is “the core purpose” of pastors (2009:no page numbers). The role of providing spiritual guidance is synonymous with that of

providing spiritual direction (Edwards 1995:no page numbers) and also incorporates a dimension of mentorship (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:212). Spiritual guides “come alongside people and help people to grow through different stages of faith” (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:212).

Spiritual guidance is an important component of any equipping process. When preparing others for ministry, leaders must help individuals develop a healthy walk with God people in addition to helping them develop the skills that they will require for ministry. Means says:

“Guides assist people to reach a destination which they would not be apt to reach on their own. Guides supply advice, counsel, and companionship in practical *and* spiritual affairs” (1990:113, *italics added*)

A healthy walk with God is essential to maintaining an effective ministry in the long term (Cf. John 5:19, 15:5; Phil. 4:13). All who minister for God must do so in the strength and wisdom that God gives (Cf. 1 Cor. 2:1-5; Rom. 15:18-19). They must be led by God (Cf. Rom. 8:14; Is. 48:17; Matt. 4:1) and develop the discernment required to hear His voice (John 10:14-16, 27). This is so that God is allowed to direct the ministry in which they engage (Cf. Acts 16:7-10; 22:17-21). Ministry that is not dependent on being sustained and directed by God can face the danger of being reduced to “secular” works of philanthropy and benevolence. When this happens, ministry loses its prophetic component of witnessing for God. It is through this “prophetic component” of ministry that the “good works” of believers also serve as signs directing others back to the God from whom they originate (Matt. 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12).

(a) The Ways in Which Leaders Guide Others

There are many ways in which leaders provide spiritual guidance.

i. General Guidance

Some argue that leaders are always engaged in guiding others spiritually, whether they do so consciously or not. For example, Tilden Edwards says that every Christian leader “is at least an indirect spiritual guide through everything he or she does and is” (Edwards 1995:no page numbers). He also says that, “All pastors inevitably are

involved in occasional guidance: in crises, informal conversations, and many other circumstances” (1995:no page numbers). Similarly, Miles Catlett says that, “Visiting people in the hospital, preaching, leadership, even helping to forge new ministries and revive or kill old ones is an exercise in guiding people spiritually” (2009:no page numbers).

ii. Leaders Guide Individuals

As they join others on their spiritual journey, leaders typically serve as spiritual guides of individuals (Edwards 1995:no page numbers). They help sensitize people to hear “the voice of God” for themselves so that God can direct their lives (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:2237).

iii. Leaders Guide Larger Communities

In addition to guiding individuals, leaders also give “corporate” spiritual guidance to larger communities (Edwards 1995:no page numbers; also Gibbs and Bolger 2005:212). Tilden Edwards says that pastors often move “between the corporate and individual dimensions of spiritual guidance, turning one time this way and another time the other, symbolizing and actualizing their connectedness with one another and with the larger Body of Christ” (1995:no page numbers). As an extension of this corporate dimension of spiritual guidance, leaders have also served as spiritual guides or advisors for nations. This was one of the central functions of the spiritual leaders within the nation of Israel (Christadelphian Christian Mission 2011:no page numbers). More recently, Roger Lee notes that Billy Graham “played a significant part of the growth of evangelical Christianity in the United States and in the world in the mid- and late-Twentieth Century” (2011:no page numbers).

iv. Leaders Facilitate Spiritual Guidance

In addition to the direct guidance that leaders provide, they also facilitate spiritual guidance. Since leaders typically have many responsibilities, it is not always possible for them to guide many people on an individual basis (Edwards 1995:no page

numbers). However, leaders can still ensure that people receive guidance through a variety of other means.

- Leaders can identify other mature Christians who can assist them in guiding others. Leaders can equip them with the skills that they will require to be good spiritual guides (Edwards 1995:no page numbers). When leaders take this approach to spiritual formation they expose people to “other mutually reinforcing and long-term forms of guidance in the faith community” (Edwards 1995:no page numbers).
- Leaders can also facilitate the formation of focused small groups that meet weekly for a period of months to assist people in gaining guidance in specific areas (Edwards 1995:no page numbers).
- Leaders can conduct retreats at which people can spend time alone with God to receive direction from him for their lives.
- Leaders can conduct training workshops which teach people how to discern the voice of God for themselves.

v. Leaders Also Need Guidance

Although it is common for leaders to serve as spiritual guides to others, leaders also need people who can serve as “guides” or “mentors” for them (Bandy 2011:no page numbers). Bill and Kristie Gaultiere mention that “Every pastor, missionary, ministry leader, and dedicated disciple of Jesus needs a Soul Shepherd”, by which they mean “spiritual guide” (2011:no page numbers). While leaders must develop discernment of how it is that the Holy Spirit is personally leading them, they need others who can help “expose and test” that which they feel they have heard from God (Edwards 1995:no page numbers).

(b) A Relational Approach to Spiritual Guidance

One unique characteristic of the manner in which Alongside Equipping leaders exercise spiritual guidance, is that the guidance is ideally given across interpersonal relationships. Equipping leaders guide others by *first* forming personal relationships with them. As the relationship unfolds, both the guide and the one(s) being guided

learn more about each other. Over time, misconceptions about the guiding process and misunderstandings about each other are dealt with, leaving each person with more insight into their venture together. As the relationship progresses, trust is built and an environment of personal security is cultivated. Within this environment individuals are more likely to be transparent and honest with each other. They will also be more likely to give and receive guidance.

A relational approach to equipping requires that leaders commit to journey with others through life, or at least for as long as individuals request guidance. Shawchuck and Heuser articulate this by noting that there are two types of guides: those who point the way without going with people, and those who not only point the way, but who also accompany others to their destinations. They mention that Christian leaders should be the second type of guides (1993:125-6). Ian Mobsby also says that leaders should “stand at the side” of others and help them on their journey, instead of directing them from the front (Ian Mobsby in Gibbs and Bolger 2006:211). Guidance may also be required intermittently, and leaders may invite others to return as often as they may require assistance.

Leaders should guard against any form of patronization during the guiding process. They ought to express mutual confidence in those they guide and also see the process of guidance as an opportunity for fellowship (Damazio 1988:251). As someone who has already been along that same road, a guide can also humbly show others the path to follow to a particular destination. A relational approach to guidance requires that leaders dispense with any semblance of the typical disparity of power that characterises the relationship between leaders and those they lead. Leaders must also avoid the temptation to control or direct the relationship or its outcomes. They are to serve as guides, offering advice when needed, without being coercive. Being a spiritual guide or a spiritual director is antithetical to exercising hierarchical authority over others, telling people what to do, or even solving their problems for them (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:212; also Edwards 1995: no page numbers, and Damazio 1988:251). As spiritual guides, leaders are not to be prescriptive, but rather reflective in the sense that they serve as “sounding boards” to whom others can express their thoughts and from whom they can receive constructive feedback. Bill Easum expresses this viewpoint when he says:

“Leaders function as spiritual directors as opposed to expert teachers. Spiritual directors join with fellow travellers on their journey in personally experiencing God’s direction. They help the other person interpret his own story in light of the biblical story. They are interpreters of experience, not experts who deliver information. Spiritual directors help others identify the right path for their lives. They direct mentees to the needed spiritual disciplines” (2009: no page numbers).

Although leaders must not be too dictatorial in their guidance, it is important that they remember that a certain measure of active engagement will be required of them in the guidance process. Sometimes leaders may passively offer no constructive input into people’s quests for guidance for fear of being intrusive. When they do so, they risk frustrating others, since from time to time people *will* seek their opinions about certain matters. Spiritual leaders will therefore need to continually discern the balance required between facilitating the spiritual growth of others through passive, gentle encouragement and when more directive intervention is desired by people seeking guidance. There will be times when individuals seeking spiritual guidance may desire that leaders do nothing more than serve as referees of their experiences.

(c) Additional Practical Suggestions for Guiding Others Spiritually

Although leaders may be called upon to provide spiritual guidance to both individuals and groups of people, in this thesis the practice of guiding people will focus on the guidance that leaders give to individuals. The reason for this is that the details of all the various ways in which leaders could guide larger groups (e.g. congregations or nations) is beyond the scope of this thesis. Also, there are some ways in which the practical suggestions for the guidance of individuals could apply to larger groups, and this can be inferred from the suggestions offered. This subsection will therefore focus on simple, practical ways in which leaders can serve as spiritual guides to help others develop a healthy relationship with God. This relationship with God serves as a necessary complement to any practical skills in which others will be trained.

Bill and Kristi Gaultiere describe spiritual guidance as:

“an ancient form of soul care focused on guiding someone in their relationship with God. It provides a confidential and explicit context for you to receive prayerful listening, encouragement, and guidance in your spiritual journey of following Christ” (2011:no page numbers)

Shawchuck and Hueser describe a spiritual guide as one who:

“values and knows how to support and direct others in their quest for authentic spiritual experience and maturity; provides resources and experiences, offers spiritual direction, teaches spiritual discipline, within the framework of the Christian and church’s tradition” (1993:306).

Miles Catlett says that during the process of guiding others spiritually, leaders help others change their assumptions about who they are, about who God is and about what their purpose is in this world (2009:no page numbers). He says that in this sense, “A spiritual guide helps you re-envision yourself” (Catlett 2009:no page numbers). Gaultiere and Gaultiere mention that spiritual guides typically help others in their walk with God as follows (2011:no page numbers):

- To becoming more aware of God’s presence (perhaps God seems distant)
- To be renewed spiritually (including dealing with stress overload or ministry burn out)
- To discern God’s direction
- With guidance in prayer and spiritual disciplines
- Help with a “Dark Night of the Soul”
- To provide spiritual companionship on people’s journeys

i. Base Guidance on God’s Word

Those whom God uses to guide his people must be led by the Holy Spirit and are to base all their guidance on the Word of God (Damazio 1988:252).

ii. Assist Others in Receiving Guidance from the Holy Spirit

As spiritual guides, leaders must not presume to act on behalf of the Holy Spirit as His intermediaries or proxies (Edwards 1995:no page numbers). Instead they must assist others to cultivate the discipline of discerning God's voice for themselves. Corné Bekker expresses this as follows:

"We define Christian spiritual direction as help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship." (2007:no page numbers)

iii. Model a Healthy Walk with God

When providing spiritual guidance, it is important that leaders inculcate in their own lives that which they espouse (Cf. Matt. 23:1-3; Rom. 2:19-24). The nature of Alongside Equipping Identities requires that leaders demonstrate to others in their relationships with them how to apply that which they are communicating. Bill Easum says, "Leaders are servants of Jesus Christ, not professionals who serve a church. Leaders represent Christ by *modelling* faith for others to see" (2009: no page numbers, *italics added*). In the same way Thomas Bandy says that leaders must "model the spiritual life" since a walk with God "is not a skill that can be taught or a program that can be replicated" (2011:no page numbers).

iv. Personalize Guidance to Suite Each Person

When guiding others, it is important that leaders understand that individuals require different approaches to guidance. Tilden Edwards notes the following:

"In spiritual guidance pastors need to remember that the Spirit resonates differently in people's lives. Some find themselves called primarily to strong direct social action, others to solitude. Some are called to intensive study, other

to simply personal service. Others are guided to creating beauty, to contemplative or ecstatic presence before God, or to energetic hospitality. Still others need to be affirmed in the Spirit's hidden presence through times of patient waiting, dryness, resistance, and pain. The spiritual disciplines involved in these paths and phases may vary significantly, depending upon our personalities and situations” (1995: no page numbers).

v. Co-ordinate Regular Meetings and Lead Others in Spiritual Disciplines

Groff says that the ideal situation is for leaders to interact informally and formally with those receiving guidance, and that regular meeting times should be scheduled at least once a month, or once a week (1997:2). Meeting times should allow for at least one hour of “special focus” on guidance, rather than “mixing talk about one another in the same hour. This promotes disciplined, sustained focus on one person” (Edwards 1995:no page numbers).

During the course of guidance, leaders could help others employ various spiritual disciplines or “soul training practices” to help them develop their walk with God and to hear from Him (Gaultiere and Gaultiere 2011:no page numbers). Time together should include time for prayer (Groff 1997:2). This prayer could also incorporate a time of quiet listening and reflecting on what each person feels God is saying to them (Edwards 1995: no page numbers). Time can also be spent meditating on Scripture and on “spiritual conversation” - discussing spiritual matters (Gaultiere and Gaultiere 2011:no page numbers). Guides can encourage others to cultivate contemplative spiritual disciplines such as meditating, journaling, and retreating so that they can discern and reflect upon God’s presence activity in their lives (Groff 1997:2). Good Christian books can be read, with each person sharing what they have learned (Groff 1997:2).

Gaultiere and Gaultiere list the following as further examples of spiritual disciplines which can be used during the guidance process:

Fasting; Sabbath-Keeping; Secrecy (Doing good deeds for God alone); Silence and Solitude; Solitude and Community; Submission; Examen of Consciousness

(Cultivating Awareness of God’s Presence); Play; Praying a Psalm in its Nature Setting; Reading the Classics of Devotion; Serving Others; Scripture Memory; Stability (Staying in Community), and Thankfulness (2011: no page numbers).

Finally, Groff suggests that if either person decides to end the relationship, that the leader and the person being guided “plan a final session to give each other the gift of closure and blessing” (1997:2).

8.3 Peer

The second major Alongside Equipping Leadership Identity is that of the Christian leader as a “Peer”. The Farflex Online Dictionary defines a “Peer” as:

“a person who is of equal standing with another in a group; ... equal” (2011:no page number).

The Cambridge University Press Online Dictionary defines a “Peer” as:

“a person who is the same age or has the same social position or the same abilities as other people in a group” (2011:no page number).

These definitions lay emphasis upon the “equality in status” behind the meaning of the word “peer”. However, an Alongside Equipping Leadership Identity seeks to go further than merely affirm the fact that all believers (leaders and others) have the same intrinsic value and standing before God. Alongside Equipping Leaders also consider themselves to be peers in the sense of being “Colleagues” who minister alongside others. The WordWeb Online Dictionary defines a “Colleague” as:

“An associate that one works with; co-worker, fellow worker, workfellow” (2011:no page numbers).

In this sense, the peer status which all believers share also translates into each person’s contribution to ministry being of equal importance and value. Equipping leaders do

not see their primary ministry as being directed towards the welfare of other believers, since this may have patronizing overtones. Instead, they consider all believers to also be their “Colleagues” - those who serve alongside them as their co-workers in ministry.

8.3.1. Seminal Biblical Precedents of Shared, Peer-Ministry

In order to regard other believers as peers and colleagues, leaders must first embrace a theology of “shared ministry” (Ogden 2003:168). Beginning with creation, we see the members of the Triune Godhead setting a precedent of working in unity alongside each other (Genesis 1:26 Cf. 11:7). Creation Ministries International note that in creation, “Each part of creation was a sovereign act of each member of the Trinity. None of it would have been produced without the co-operation of each one” (2011:no page numbers). God continues this spirit of co-operation in His interactions with humankind. Sharon Drury says that, “God is the original implementer of empowerment” and partnership (1993:74). “Although God is sovereign and thus able to accomplish everything He wants faster and better than humans could, yet He has chosen to empower His people to participate with Him in accomplishing His purposes” (Drury 1993:74). Jesus adopted this approach to ministry. Sharon Drury says:

“Jesus (God incarnate) empowered people, too. He sent out the disciples to do miracles, the disciples baptized (though He didn’t), and Jesus gathered a band of average men and handed over the future of His Kingdom on earth—the church—to them. He promised they would receive power after the Holy Spirit came on them and they would spread the church to the ends of the earth” (1993:74).

Bobby Clinton says that Jesus saw the empowerment of the disciples as both the means and the goal of ministry (1999:1). Ogne and Roehl also note that most of the apostle Paul’s ministry relationships were very much peer-orientated:

“Most of his terms for his ministry partners – words like “fellow labourer”, “fellow traveller”, “fellow servant”, “fellow prisoner”, and “fellow worker”- are built from the Greek word *syn*, meaning ‘with’ ” (2008:61).

Although the parameters of this section only allow for a cursory look at biblical evidence for shared peer-based ministry, the following two excerpts from Sharon Drury encapsulate the sentiment behind this approach to ministry. It is to be noted that once again reference is made to the key text underpinning this thesis, namely Eph. 4:11-12:

“As always with God there is synergy—God acts and we act with Him. He seldom acts alone and we shouldn’t act alone” (1993:38).

“The task of the church was not given to the ministers but to all the people ... The minister’s job is to rally the people to accomplish the task of the church. The people cannot accomplish the task without power, therefore, the church leader is especially obligated to empower the people to do the ministry of the church. Empowerment is akin to equipping—the pastor-teacher’s chief role (Ephesians 4:11-12)” (1993:75).

8.3.2. Peer-Orientated Approaches to Leadership

In order for leaders to relate to others as Peers *and* as Colleagues, they must incorporate the following elements in their approach to leadership:

8.3.2.1. Leaders Must Lead from “Within” A Group

Several leadership models view leaders as being in some way distanced and separated from others. For example, hierarchical models view leaders as being either “above” others (the leader as CEO) or “below” others (the servant model). In a similar way, functional leadership models may view leaders as being “in front” of others (e.g. the leader as a pioneer/visionary). The overarching sentiment of these models is that they envision leadership as requiring some degree of separation between leaders and others in order for leaders to lead effectively. Whether leaders lead from “above”, from “below”, or “from the front”, the leader is viewed as exercising leadership separated from the group whom they are leading.

By contrast, a “Peer” Equipping Leadership Identity views leaders as leading from “within” or from “amongst” the group within which they serve. Alongside Equipping leaders do not exercise influence “upon” a group or “towards” a group as an entity separate from the group. Instead, as part of the “rank and file”, they exercise leadership from “within” and “along with” their groups. In this sense, leaders combine their contributions with the unique contributions of others in their ministry groups to form a new synergy. They do not see themselves as distinct from their groups, but as participants with others in an organic unity (Cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-27).

8.3.2.2. Leaders Must Regard All Other Leaders as Peers in the Equipping Process

A “Peer” Leadership approach to equipping others requires that leaders view other leaders as peers in the equipping process and in ministry. Ephesians 4:11-12 views all leaders as offering “mutual help” to each other and to believers in their ministry within the Church (Henry 2009: Commentary on Ephesians 4:7-16). Peer Equipping Leaders view themselves as part of a larger team of leaders, all of whom make some significant contribution to the overall mandate to equip others for ministry. They view their ministry (and the ministry of other leaders) as complementary and necessary in the broader process of equipping believers for ministry (Cf. John 4:36-38; 1 Cor. 3:4-9). Bill Hybels described this approach as “Lateral leadership”, leading with one’s peers in a spirit of “mutual servanthood” (Drury 1993:76). This is as opposed to being envious of other leaders or feeling threatened by their ministry.

8.3.2.3. Leaders Must Regard All Believers as Colleagues in Ministry

James Means contends that “Spiritual leaders were never intended to be authority figures to follow, but fellow workers, servants and colleagues in the work of the ministry” (1990:47). He also says that in true partnerships where collegiality and fraternity are present, the distinction between who is leading and who is following disappears (Means 1990:64). Gibbs and Bolger assert that this desire to be “treated as peer[s] and with respect” already exists among believers (2006:197). In order for people to participate more effectively in ministry, leaders must therefore no longer see others as their “helpers” in ministry, but as “colleagues” (Cladis 1999:151). Norman Wright says that, “All people should be treated as contributing peers regardless of their

scope of responsibility” (2003:134). Similarly Gibbs and Bolger maintain that leaders should treat others as “creative equals” (2006:208), as does Sharon Drury (1993:30).

8.3.2.4. Leaders Must Develop a Participatory Ministry Ethos

An Alongside Equipping ministry in which leaders serve as peers requires that leaders approach ministry with a particular ethos if this philosophy of ministry is also to be embraced by others within their groups. Greg Ogden mentions that, “There is both a *manner* and *style* to being an equipping leader that is consistent with fostering and every-member ministry” (2003:166, *italics in the original*). He says that Equipping leaders must display “a deportment that ‘comes alongside’ rather than ‘lords it over’ ” others (Ogden 2003:167). Sharon Drury also endorses a participatory approach to ministry and leadership and says that leaders must display collaborative behavior and encourage shared decision-making (1993:30). This implies that, “People must be respected, involved in the setting of their own goals, and treated like colleagues in the ministry” (Means 1990:59).

A participatory ministry ethos requires that leaders view all ministry as being communal, in the sense that all members of the Church have been called to participate alongside each other in ministry. It is leadership based on the organic metaphor of the Church as “the body of Christ” found in Ephesians 4:12. In this organic unity, leadership is functional, not hierarchical. The “body” metaphor of the Church also implies that there is no inherent difference in the status or the value of ministry of those who serve as leaders and those who do not (Cf. 1 Cor. 12:15-27). Instead, there is a sense of interdependency between each contributing member. Furthermore, leaders have no intrinsic authority over others, apart from that attributed to them for the purpose of their ministry, as and when this is necessary (Matt. 20:25-27; 1 Peter 5:2-3 Cf. 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:17).

A participatory ministry ethos requires that leaders also acknowledge that every believer can in some manner contribute to the process of equipping each other (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:11; Titus 2:3-4; Heb. 5:12, 10:24-25). Equipping leaders therefore seek to broaden the Church’s equipping base by incorporating the input of all believers. Equipping does not only happen “from the top down” as leaders train others,

but also “across” as believers assists in equipping each other. At the same time, Equipping leaders understand that this general equipping responsibility of every believer does not negate their unique calling to be “people-developers” (Drury 1993:22).

8.3.3. The Challenges of Regarding Others as Peers

Although leaders may embrace an Alongside peer-orientated approach to ministry, the approach is not without challenges. Roxburgh and Romanuk mention some reasons why working with peer groups can be a challenge for some leaders (2006:190):

- Pastors have been “schooled to think and act in a *sola pastora* way” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:190, *italics in the original*)
- Leaders are reluctant to entrust themselves to others
- Leaders may be afraid that their constituency will be resistant to them spending time with another pastor talking about the congregation
- Leaders may not know what to do in a peer team since no models exist which can give guidance as to how to conduct the group

A common challenge for leaders who lack experience in peer-orientated ministry would be for them to trust “ordinary” believers with ministry (Ogden 2003:168). Leaders will not only have to accept that ministry may not be done according to their standards, but also that others may want to achieve the same ends using different means.

Greg Ogden also notes that some leaders have been taught that in order for them to maintain their authority, they need to keep a certain distance from other believers in order to maintain a “pretence of false perfection” (Ogden 2003:168). Since participating in peer-styled ministry requires that they dispense of this facade, insecure leaders may find this challenging to do. Furthermore, leaders may find that the change of roles required when interacting with others impacts upon the power and authority granted to them in hierarchical structures. When hierarchical structures are dissolved, roles, power and authority may need to be renegotiated and may even be reversed if someone else in the peer group has greater expertise in the new area of ministry. Under such changes, leaders who have strong

leadership drives and who have been used to leading groups, may find it difficult to submit to others in the new arrangement. Similarly, those whom the leader had previously been leading may find that it is awkward to relate to the leader in a different capacity. They may interpret taking a greater role in decision-making as being rebellious and subconsciously recoil from doing so. Alternatively, they may feign participation, but inevitably relinquish control back to the leader. Another danger is that the wrong individuals may look upon the changes as an opportunity to usurp control over the group (Cf. Acts 20:28-31).

Despite these challenges, with wise leadership and the presence of mature individuals in their midst, it is possible for groups to negotiate the transition to peer-orientated ministry with negligible detrimental effects to their relationships or their ministry. Sharon Drury notes that while some leaders may lose “*Structural power*” in these situations (i.e. power afforded to them because of their positions in the organizations), most leaders will gain “*Interpersonal power*” (power that is grounded in their expertise and character) (1993:43).

8.3.4. The Practice of Peer-Based Ministry

In order for leaders to develop a peer-orientated ministry, the following three practices could be integrated into their ministry activities:

8.3.4.1. Leaders Should Display Receptivity to Peer Influence

In order to promote peer ministry, Equipping leaders should display a willingness to receive ministry from others. Leaders that display transparent receptivity of the contributions of others affirm the ministry of others. They also encourage the dissemination of the ethos of shared ministry by their personal example.

Although leadership is often generally defined as “the process of one person influencing another”, several Christian leaders have explicated the ramifications of this theorem (Wright 2003:31). For example, in describing leadership influence, Bill Hybels has noted that leaders not only lead “down” by positively influencing those “subordinate” to them in ministry, but that they also lead “across”, i.e. laterally (Drury

1993:76). Leading laterally describes the influence that peer leaders exert upon each other, and which they in turn receive from each other. Equipping leaders must not only acknowledge the existence of this lateral leadership influence, but also allow others to positively contribute to their development. After studying successful leaders for a number of years, Paul Stanley postulated the thesis that, “Over A Lifetime A Christian Leader Needs A Balanced Relational Network With other Christian Leaders Who Will Help Him/Her And Vice Versa” (Clinton 1999:1).

Roxburgh and Romanuk suggest that even seasoned leaders need others to minister into their lives. They cannot rely on their personal experience alone to remain productive in ministry (2006:190). Roxburgh and Romanuk describe this as follows:

“The only experience we learn from is the experience we reflect upon, and to do that we need others who will assist us in the reflection. It is only with trusted peers that we effectively reflect upon our experience as a leader and wrestle with what we are doing and the challenges we face” (2006:190).

In a similar vein, Greg Ogden notes that the following happen when leaders allow themselves to receive influence from others (2003:170):

- Ministry skills are sharpened (Cf. Prov. 27:17)
- The perspective of others leads to the development of new insights into ministry
- Vision for ministry grows with the input of others who have a passion for the same ministry

Alongside Equipping leaders view their relationships and ministry as symbiotic. Symbiotic relationships are mutually beneficial, cooperative relationships between two people or groups (Microsoft Encarta Dictionary 2007:no page numbers). Equipping leaders accept the limitations of what they themselves are able to accomplish, as well as the limitations of their spiritual gifts and calling (Ogden 2003:168). They recognise that they not only need others in order to help them with their own personal development, but that other believers with complementary gifts will always be required to accomplish any vision that God entrusts to a leader (Ogden 2003:168).

In order to begin implementing these truths, Roxburgh and Romanuk suggest that leaders could schedule regular monthly meetings with their peers in order to ensure that they receive input into their lives (2006:187). As a peer group, participating leaders can also formulate a mutually agreed-upon development plan for the whole group (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:187). Another idea suggested by Sharon Drury is for leaders to select “superiors, subordinates, and peers” to give them regular feedback on their performance (1993:76).

8.3.4.2. Leaders Should Learn *With* Others

Roxburgh and Romanuk mention that “All leaders are learners on a journey” (2006:10). On their “learning-journeys”, leaders are required to develop “as disciples together with those they serve” (Ogden 2003:167). They must also continually develop new skills for ministry (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:153). The best way to do all of this is to learn with the help of other people (Ogne and Roehl 2008:54). Learning with others increases one’s own insights and, at the same time, helps to build a relationship with them (Maxwell no date:1119).

Roxburgh and Romanuk suggest that, “The congregation today must become a learning centre”, which “invites people into a process of lifelong engagement in learning” (2006:159). They suggest that leaders establish and facilitate “co-learning networks” in which all participants contribute something to the learning process, while at the same time learning from each other (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:32). However, they mention that leaders must not only facilitate the networks, but also participate in them as “fellow-learners” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:32). In addition to this, Roxburgh and Romanuk suggest that leaders also form “a team of peers who are willing to take the risk of becoming a learning community committed to calling forth the best in one another” (2006:163). In these forums, leaders and their peer-leaders can “codevelop the skills they need” as they grow alongside each other (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:147).

8.3.4.3. Leaders Should Learn *From* Others

The contributions to their welfare and development that leaders need may come from various sources. Leaders can learn from other Christian leaders. They can also learn from those whom they are leading (Maxwell no date:100). For example, “laypeople”

mainly work in “secular” environments and can help “clergy” keep abreast of the changes in culture and thinking taking place in those environments. They can also transfer important skills and knowledge to Christian leaders, all of which would be useful for ministry. Examples of these are knowledge and skills in the areas of Information Technology, Commerce, Organizational Administration, etc. Christian seminaries may not always offer leaders specialised training in these areas, since it is training in ministry skills and theological education which forms the foci of their curricula.

A peer-orientated leadership approach also embraces what Walter Wright terms “transactional leadership” and “transformational leadership” styles (Wright 2003:42). These are approaches to leadership which ensure that both the leader and the “follower” gain something through the course of their interactions. In “Transactional leadership”, the leader and follower exchange something and gain from their influence upon each other. “Transformational leadership” builds upon this, but goes further. When transformational leadership takes place, both the leader and the follower grow in the process as they lift each other to higher planes of maturity and morality (Wright 2003:42). During this process, the vision, values and beliefs of both the follower *and* leader are enlarged through their mutual influence upon each other (Wright 2003:42). Transformational paradigms therefore do not see the follower as being passive or the only party being impacted upon in leader/follower interactions. They also do not see the leader as the predominant influence in the relationship. Transformational leadership paradigms see a dynamic interplay of influence between leaders and followers which promotes the growth, development and maturity of each party. Leaders must both acknowledge the influence of these dynamics and, as a result of doing so, accept that in any equipping process there will be a “cross-pollination” taking place if they are to develop peer-orientated ministry.

8.4. Partner

This third and final Alongside Equipping Identity, that of Equipping leaders as “Partners”, explores the approach that Equipping leaders have towards communal or collaborative ministry enterprises. Equipping leaders view all ministry endeavours,

whether done on a small scale or a large scale, as “Partnerships”. The Threshing Floor Christian Fellowship defines “Partnership” as:

“the relationship between people who support one another in the achievement of a common goal” (2011:no page numbers; also Choice Ministries 2011:no page numbers).

While several additional definitions of what constitutes a “Partnership” can be offered, partnerships commonly share the following characteristics:

1. Depths of relationship – partnerships are relationships of trust and mutual respect between two or more autonomous people or organisations.
2. Holding Common Purposes at Heart – Partners share a common vision, work toward the same goals (Wan and Bagget 2010:3; Choice Ministries 2011: no page numbers), or have agreed-upon expectations (Bush and Lutz 1990:46).
3. Genuine Interest & Voluntary Participation – while participants may expect some level of reciprocal benefit from partnerships, partnerships are often formed by volunteers who have altruistic motives and a belief in the worthiness of the cause for which they have volunteered (Choice Ministries 2011:no page numbers).
4. Active Participation – Partnerships entail each member *actively* working together in shared responsibilities (Choice Ministries 2011:no page numbers; Warren 1956:12).
5. Time-Commitment – partners often pledge commitments for the entire duration of their anticipated venture, whether it is short-term or long-term (Choice Ministries 2011:no page numbers).
6. Equality of Status – partnerships typically regard each person’s contribution as being equally important and therefore attribute equal rank to each person.
7. Magnanimous Contributions by Each Participant – partners pool their complementary strengths and share their resources (Bush and Lutz 1990:46)
8. The Acceptance of All Liabilities – this is demonstrated by a readiness to pay the price required to achieve the goals held in common (Warren 1956:12).

It is not uncommon to find some or all of the above characteristics of partnerships in ministry partnerships. However, where Alongside Equipping leaders lay emphasis is that partnerships are not formed to merely expedite ministry objectives or to ensure collegiality. Rather Alongside Equipping leaders see partnerships as a fundamental approach to ministry. For Equipping leaders, forging partnerships is not a means to an end – it is in itself a legitimate end. Equipping leaders see others as “partners in ministry” alongside them (Means 1990:60). Greg Ogden encourages leaders to develop “empowering” leadership styles which facilitate participative partnerships between leaders and others as a ministry’s *modus operandi* (2003:173). This involves “the leader working with the follower” (Finzel 2000:109) as a fellow-participant in ministry instead of as a mobilizer of others (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:213).

8.4.1. Biblical Precedents of Leaders as Partners

Due to the confines of this subsection, only the rudiments of a theology of partnership and how it relates to Equipping Leadership paradigms will be explored here. Most of the material for this theology is drawn from the Greek words and their cognates that are translated as “partner” or “partnership” in English translations of the NT. More importantly, the contexts in which these words appear are also considered.

Ian Mobsey says that the theological roots of partnership are that, “It starts with an understanding of the Trinity as a community of mutually inclusive and serving components of God” (Ian Mobsey in Gibbs and Bolger 2006:194). The Christian concept of God is that he participates with humanity in ministry (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:192).

Gibbs and Bolger state that in the New Testament, “The gospel makes possible full participation with God in the redemption of the world” (2006:155). They mention that the Church of the New Testament was a “Participatory Church” in which everyone participated and to which everyone contributed (2006:156; Cf. 1 Cor. 14:26). Regarding the theology of partnership as it pertains to leadership, Greg Ogden says that leaders are to empower others because of “the belief that Christ as head of the body is directly connected to every part of the body” (2003:173; also Gibbs and Bolger 2006:192). Similarly Gibbs and Bolger mention that “Leaders in local churches [are

to] provide leadership and facilitate the wide range of ministries exercised through the membership of the body” (2006:192). Of special interest to this thesis, Loscalzo says that in the light of Ephesians 4:1-16:

“the pastor is not an overlord, but a fellow struggler in the faith, a fellow servant, shepherding and feeding the flock and relying on their maturity and faith *to fulfil cooperatively, as one body, the mission of the church in the world*” (1988:691, *italics added*).

There are several words in the New Testament used to express the concept of partnership. These references all depict how important the concept of partnership was in the mind of the apostles and among the first Christian congregations.

- Κοινωνία (feminine noun): meaning “partnership, (literally) participation ... communion ... fellowship” (Strong’s Greek Dictionary 2009:no page numbers; Strong’s’ number – G2842). Thayer defines Κοινωνία as “fellowship ... joint participation; ... the share which one has in anything, participation” (Thayer’s Greek Definitions 2009:no page number - Κοινωνία). The word occurs in Romans 15:26 to describe the “contribution” (NIV) that the churches in Macedonia and Achaia made to the believers in Jerusalem. Paul also uses it to describe the “partnership” (NIV) that existed between him and the Philippian church (Phil 1:5).
- Κοινωνός (masculine noun): meaning “a sharer ... associate ... companion, fellowship, partaker, partner” (Strong’s Greek Dictionary 2009:no page numbers; Strong’s’ number – G2844). Thayer defines it as: “a partner, associate, comrade, companion; ... a partner, sharer, in anything” (Thayer’s Greek Definitions 2009:no page numbers - Κοινωνός). Paul used this term to describe Titus as his “partner” in ministry (2 Cor. 8:23, NIV), and also used it to refer to himself as Philemon’s “partner” (NIV) in Philemon 1:17.

The following terms used in the Epistles to describe partnership, all trace their roots to the preposition “Σύν”, meaning “with” (Strong’s Greek Dictionary 2009:no page numbers; Strong’s’ number - G4862). Thayer describes Σύν as “a primary preposition

denoting union; with or together ... that is, by association, companionship” (Thayer’s Greek Definitions 2009:no page number).

- Συναθλέω (verb): meaning “to wrestle in company with, that is, (figuratively) to seek jointly: - labour with, strive together for” (Strong’s Greek Dictionary 2009:no page numbers; Strong’s’ number – G4866). Thayer defines it as, “to strive at the same time with another” (Thayer’s Greek Definitions 2009:no page number - Συναθλέω). Paul uses this word to once again describe the Philippian church as his “fellow workers” (NIV) in Philippians 4:3.
- Συνεργός (adjective) – meaning “a companion in work, fellow worker” (Strong’s Greek Dictionary 2009:no page numbers; Strong’s’ number – G4904). Thayer describes the word as “a co-laborer, that is, coadjutor: - companion in labour, (fellow-) helper (-labourer, -worker), labourer together with, workfellow” (Thayer’s Greek Definitions 2009:no page number - Συνεργός). Paul uses this word often. He regarded apostles as being “God's fellow workers” (1 Cor. 3:9, NIV), and also mentions Timothy as being “God's fellow worker” (1 Thess. 3:2, NIV). He lists Titus (2 Cor. 8:3), Philemon (Philemon 1:1), Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke (Philemon 1:24), Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25), Clement (Phil 4:3), certain Jews (Col. 4:11) all as being his “fellow worker[s]” (NIV) (Cf. 3 John 1:8). The apostle John also mentions men who were his “fellowhelpers” (3 John 1:8, KJV).
- Συνεργέω (verb) – meaning “to work together, help in work, be partner in labour; to put forth power together with and thereby to assist” (Strong’s Greek Dictionary 2009:no page numbers; Strong’s’ number – G4903). Paul uses this term to describe Christian leaders as being “God's fellow workers” in 2 Cor. 6:1 (NIV).

From the above words and their frequent occurrence in the NT epistles, we see sufficient evidence to conclude that Christian leaders in the newly established churches regarded ministry as a partnership between all believers. They enlisted even newly formed churches as partners with them in ministry. In addition to this, it was customary for leaders to not merely minister on their own, but alongside others too. In

the apostle Paul's approach to ministry in particular, we see him regarding other leaders as "partners", "fellow workers", or "co-labourers", with *Συνεργός* being his preferred term. Our English word "Synergy" is derived from this word and describes "the combined working together of two or more parts of a system so that the combined effect is greater than the sum of the efforts of the parts" (Whatis.com 2008:no page numbers).

We take note that, from its definition, the noun "*Κοινωνία*" in its various interpretations has both a relational meaning - "communion, fellowship", and a functional meaning - "partnership", "participation". From an Alongside Equipping perspective, we conclude that both relationship and active participation are key components of the Biblical concept of partnerships. Biblical partnerships proceed out of the relational union between believers, and when believers participate in ministry together, stronger relational bonds are forged. Enoch Wan and Geoff Baggett contend that this word is "the New Testament word that is nearest in meaning to the English word, 'partnership' " (2010:14). Rick Warren also notes that "*koinonia*" indicates both partnership and intimate fellowship (1995:105). Wan and Baggett mention that "from the linguistic and contextual evidence, the two concepts are not separable" (2010:14).

An Alongside Equipping theology of partnership sees ministry as a collaborative endeavour between a network of believers who are in close and committed relationships with each other. It is to be noted that the design of ministry partnerships do not proceed out of specific injunctions to this effect. Instead, partnerships, especially in the New Testament, developed naturally when people were in relationships with each other. These human ministry-partnerships are a natural reflection of the mutuality and co-operation evidenced in the Tri-Unity of the Godhead.

8.4.2. Functions of Equipping Leaders Who Serve as Partners

"Leadership represents a wide range of functions" and each situation makes its own demands of leaders (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:207). This is also true when leaders seek to facilitate the participation of others as "creative equals" in ministry (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:207-8). In these contexts, unique responsibilities are required of leaders

to make participative collaboration become a reality. Suggestions of what these functions may be for Equipping leaders are outlined below.

8.4.2.1. Equipping Leaders Cultivate *Participative* Relationships

Leaders must not merely mobilize people for ministry, but must also encourage others to participate *alongside them* in ministry (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:213). Frank Damazio says that good leaders encourage the sharing of ideas and invite participation from others (1988:31-32). They value the contributions of others and work with them to achieve long-term goals (Damazio 1988:31). This participatory leadership style promotes unity among those who minister (Means 1990:87). Furthermore, Equipping leaders must also facilitate participatory relationships between all who serve alongside each other in ministry. Leaders who have built trust with everyone in their ministry are in a unique position to promote healthy relationships between others because of the influence of their own position and relationships. Gibbs and Bolger encapsulate this sentiment when they say:

“Leaders who follow the kingdom lead not by controlling but by connecting. They bring people together to generate synergy through the combining of visions, gifts, and experiences for the diversifying of the church’s mission and its continuing outreach in society” (2006:213).

Leaders can elicit participation in the following ways:

(a) Serve as Co-ordinators, Not Directors

Although groups in which everyone participates still require leaders, in participatory relationships, leaders approach their responsibilities differently (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:198). In participatory ministry, leaders play a more facilitative-, than supervisory role (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:198). They bring people together with the understanding that people “become creative through collaboration” (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:208). Instead of focussing their energies on initiating and directing ministry programs, leaders should dedicate their energies to “connecting” people upon whose hearts God has laid a shared ministry burden (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:1164). Leaders can

help people discern their spiritual gifts and calling. They can help them understand their complementary roles in ministry ventures so that each person is motivated to complete their assigned responsibilities. Leaders can also utilise their expertise to assist with the establishment of efficient administrative processes so that people can work together with fewer hindrances (Pinder 1994:31). Finally, leaders can facilitate ministry by helping to maintain healthy relationships between participants and by helping them to process conflict in ways that preserve unity.

(b) Make Involvement the Learning Process

According to Roxburgh and Romanuk, “leadership involves empowerment, mentoring and equipping *coalitions* of people” (2006:163, *italics added*). The word “coalition” is taken from the Latin verb, “to grow together” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:163). Gibbs and Bolger note that people learn better when they get involved and take part in ministry (2006:159). Equipping leaders therefore capitalise on the potential for personal growth and development that involvement in ministry affords participants. Instead of divorcing the equipping process from ministry involvement, they use ministry involvement as one important means of equipping. In this way they also ensure the seamless integration of ministry theory and ministry practice.

(c) Create Avenues for People to Serve

Equipping leaders recognize the call to ministry upon each individual’s life and “create a space” for each person to serve (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:210). Newman and Newman maintain that leaders need to provide all people with avenues for opportunity, advancement, rewards, and personal development (2010:no page numbers). Leaders must prayerfully help people discern the gifts that they have been given by the Holy Spirit and then link them to an area of ministry (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:159; also Pinder 1994:30). This participatory style of leadership requires that leaders be creative and flexible in their approaches to corporate ministry. They must allow for the exploration of various means to accomplish ministry goals. Instead of ministry being governed by organizational structures and policies, ministry could be customized around participants’ gifts and calling. Leaders will also need to resist the temptation to control the direction and outcomes of ministry. As each person engages in ministry,

the scope and complexity of ministry may develop to such an extent that leaders may no longer be able to provide personal oversight. Instead, leaders will need to humbly submit themselves to God and entrust the direction and development of ministry to God's leadership. Leaders who create space for individuals to explore fresh avenues for thinking should expect that those individuals will start new initiatives, some of which may be outside of the existing ministry structures (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:211).

8.4.2.2. Equipping Leaders Facilitate a Shared Power-Base

Gibbs and Bolger maintain that churches are meant to be “non-hierarchical communities” (2006:194). They also mention that, “In the new covenant, there are no patriarchs in the kingdom, for that place is reserved for God alone. Jesus is the head of any community under God ... The very nature of the kingdom of God leads to a re-examination of all views of power...” (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:192).

Equipping leaders therefore approach the issues of power and influence from the context of the priesthood of all believers (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:192). While no individual or leader has inherent personal power or authority over others (Matt. 20:25-28; 1 Peter 5:2-3), power and authority are based on one's purpose within the Body of Christ (Pinder 1994:62). God has appointed leaders within the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:8) to manage or oversee the affairs of the Church (1 Tim. 3:1, 3:5; 1 Tim. 5:17). They have been assigned authority for their responsibilities (1 Tim. 5:17; 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:12; Hebrews 13:7, 17). However, Jesus determined that the nature of leadership would be service and not the exercise of control and authority over others (Matt. 20:25-28; 1 Peter 5:2-3). There are also several occasions in the New Testament which reveal that leadership was shared among several leaders (Acts 14:23, 15:2, 15:23-27; 16:4; 2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1). The NT also reveals that all leaders were in some way accountable to others (Acts 4:23, 15:4; Gal. 2:11; 1 Tim. 5:19-21; Titus 1:13).

With the above in mind, Equipping leaders seek to exercise leadership in such a way as to empower others. This “inevitably means yielding one's own power” (Gibbs 2005:88). Steven M. Bernstein and Anthony F. Smith suggest that leaders can decentralise power and allow for leadership to be a “*collective* action, orchestrated in

such a way as to bring about significant change while raising the competencies and motivation of all involved” (Gibbs 2005:21, *italics in original*). Leaders can also share power by allowing for purpose-, or task-based leadership. This means allowing those who are most competent in certain areas to be allowed to take the lead in these areas (Gibbs 2005:21-22; Gibbs and Bolger 2006:198). In collegial leadership teams, leadership influence may also be transferred from one person to another as the situations require (Gibbs 2005:22). By the formation of these collegial teams, power can be diffused from being centralised in one individual to being shared between all the members of the team. Furthermore, leaders can also decentralise missional impetus. Instead of ministry initiatives originating at the centre of the organization and then being disseminated “through the ranks”, leaders can support “ground level” initiatives which they discern that the Holy Spirit has birthed in the hearts of others in their midst (Gibbs 2005:14; Gibbs and Bolger 2006:203-205).

8.4.2.3. Equipping Leaders use Consultative Processes

Bill Easum says that, “In most churches, the day-to-day decisions are made by a handful of people—generally paid staff” (2009:no page numbers). However, he notes that one alternative approach to decision-making is where decisions regarding ministry:

“are not decided by a handful of people; rather, ministries are decided by God in the hearts of the people as they are growing in their relationship with Christ. The system is permission-giving, centred around clear, core values and an understanding of the church’s mission” (2009:no page numbers).

Participative leaders desire to discuss decisions and the reasons behind decisions before implementing them (Damazio 1988:31). In participative leadership styles, leaders and followers make decisions together (Wright 2003:40) since in the kingdom of God, “those who have no voice are given a voice” (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:215). Ian Mobsby says that this practice originates in the theology of the priesthood of all believers and in the theology of the Trinity (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:194). There are several recorded instances in the book of Acts which show that important decisions involved inviting input from several leaders (Acts 4:5; 15:2-4; 16:4). Rather than assuming the responsibility to formulate a vision for ministry on their own, leaders will

serve others better by allowing them to participate in the process of developing a vision after all participants have taken time to hear from God. This empowers people with the ability to discern God's voice for themselves, rather than relying on the leader(s) to hear on their behalf (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:195). In any event, people are prone to resist change when it is "top-down", i.e. when others have initiated the change without allowing them due process to be involved in influencing the proposed changes (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:160). Participatory leaders therefore lead by using "consensual processes", by offering suggestions, inviting reflection and discussion and waiting for consensus before implementing proposals (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:193).

(a) The Challenges of Consultative Decision-Making

Despite the merits of consultative decision-making, this approach to decision-making is not without its challenges (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:157). The process of consensus decision-making can be quite difficult because inevitably within large groups, it becomes difficult to reach consensus because of the variety of opinions (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:204). The decision-making process also has the potential to become cumbersome if information is to be communicated to large groups of people (Gibbs 2005:80). This can render ministry ineffective because plans cannot be implemented timeously, resulting in ministry losing momentum. Gibbs and Bolger mention that "When leadership becomes decentralized to the point that it permeates the entire group, it can paralyze the group rather than empower each member" (2006:207). Furthermore, some individuals are by nature problem solvers, vision casters and initiative takers and tend to be more outspoken at decision-making events (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:206). This inevitably leads to them exercising undue influence at decision-making events, while a non-vocal majority may become passive.

(b) Possible Solutions to the Challenges of Consultative Decision-Making

Despite the challenges of consultative decision-making, several things can be done to overcome these challenges. One idea is to cultivate a "permission-giving" ethos among members. Just as participatory leaders grant permission and power to all in their ministry, so too members must allow leaders to use their initiative and good judgment to make decisions. There can be clear guidelines formulated by the community as to

which decisions leaders are permitted to make on their own, and which decisions require consultation with the corporate body. A community can also elect representative leaders, and once these are elected, they can be allowed to take decisions on behalf of the community, within certain boundaries. This is essentially a combination of consensus and delegated decision making (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:206). The community can permit elected leaders to make all decisions needed for the smooth administration of ministry. Larger decisions that have a more far-reaching impact upon the community should then be brought before the community for explanation, discussion and agreement before implementation (Gibbs and Coffey 2006:84). This requires that there be an extensive communication network in place (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:207). Furthermore, there can be an understanding within the community to not implement decisions until there is a certain minimum level of consensus. Where no consensus is reached, both the leadership and the community can enter into a time of prayerful reflection regarding the matter at hand. They can allow themselves a certain period of time to hear from the Lord before coming together to discuss matters further. Alternatively, they can appoint several of their members to explore the matter more thoroughly and to report their findings at the next meeting.

Despite the desire to invite participation from all interested parties, Sue Wallace says that, “Leadership is not always consensus based” (Sue Wallace in Gibbs and Bolger 2006:206). Leaders and their communities must distinguish between consensual decision-making and consultative processes. While all may participate in discussions, situations will arise occasionally where no consensus can be reached by the larger group, and leaders must then be allowed to take the decision that they feel the Lord has led them to take. Others should then respect the decision and support its implementation.

8.4.2.4. Equipping Leaders Encourage Networked Activities

While Equipping leaders encourage collaboration within the microcosm of their ministries, they acknowledge the need to also forge external partnerships on a larger scale. This enables them to achieve goals that may be beyond their ability to accomplish on their own. These partnerships take the form of networks.

A “network” has been defined as:

“An extended group of people with similar interests or concerns who interact and remain in informal contact for mutual assistance or support” (TheFreeDictionary:no page numbers).

The act of “networking” is defined as:

“Meeting and interacting with individuals who have similar interests in an effort to build relationships that will produce current and future benefits” (yourDictionary.com:no page numbers).

Networking is a relational, decentralised approach to ministry (Gibbs and Coffey 2006:84). Members find their identity in the skills that they bring and “work to get a job done efficiently and effectively, and to enjoy themselves and each other’s company in the process” (Gibbs and Coffey 2006:86). As opposed to hierarchical, departmentalised and fixed organizational structures, “networking partnerships” are lateral, fluid, open-ended systems which are centred around shared values and ideals and are formed for common purposes (Gibbs and Coffey 2006:86). The nature of networks allows them to address situations quickly, and new networks or sub-networks can be established to address any new challenges that arise. Networks circumvent the challenges of being overly controlling or authoritarian, challenges which are often associated with hierarchies and closed systems. This is because leadership in networks is configured or even reconfigured as the situations demand, thereby not establishing long-term positional authority (Gibbs and Coffey 2006:87).

An Equipping approach to leadership is compatible with a networking approach to ministry. This is because Equipping leaders focus on growing people and developing personal initiative. Rather than reinforce the status quo, they are permission-givers and form alliances that further the development of people, while simultaneously achieving common goals (Gibbs and Coffey 2006:87). It is because Equipping leaders understand “the inter-relatedness of the Body of Christ” (Pinder 1994:28) that they form networks instead of building hierarchies (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:195, 215). “They bring people together to generate synergy through the

combining of visions, gifts, and experiences for the diversifying of the church's mission and its continuing outreach in society" (Gibbs and Bolger 2006:215). They recognise that God may often call several leaders to network together to accomplish a single spiritual task, as teams often do (Damazio 1988:279). These networks are "group[s] of men or women of God who are knit together in spirit and purpose for God's kingdom" (Damazio 1988:279).

(a) How Equipping Leaders Function in Networks

Leaders who want to establish networks must not limit themselves to serving as guardians or functionaries of their own institutions (Gibbs 2005:39). Instead they should exercise oversight and mobilise and accompany the whole Church into the whole world (Gibbs 2005:38). They need to think laterally and learn to work across disciplines (Gibbs (2005:36-37). They must also celebrate creativity and diversity and be permission-givers who allow people to take responsibility for ideas which originate with them (Gibbs and Coffey 2006:87). Furthermore, leaders must form relationship-based partnerships and build unity around shared visions and values (Gibbs and Coffey 2006:87). Leading networks require that leaders maintain close relationships with people "on the ground". Networks also require regular, personal and direct communication from leaders. Equipping leaders must also allow for "on-the-job" training with the understanding that while theory informs practice, practice also develops new theories (Gibbs and Coffey 2006:88).

To promote their own personal growth, networking leaders must also participate in networks with people who will challenge their assumptions. This will enable leaders to remain on the cutting edge of ministry and not stagnate (Gibbs 2005:136). They must also acknowledge the limitations of their own "in-house" apprenticeship training and expose people to the training offered by others in their networks (Gibbs and Coffey 2006:88). Finally, effective Equipping leaders also offer others their networks (Johnson 2000:39). They help connect others to those whom they already know who can assist them in ministry.