
CONCLUSION

Postmodern culture encourages the church to make needed reforms; reforms that are foundational to biblical Christianity – George Cladis.

The completion of this thesis has confirmed initial presuppositions, namely that the text of Ephesians 4:1-16, and more specifically, that of Eph. 4:11-12 deserves more attention when constructing a paradigm for Christian leadership. This thesis has proposed that not only must the text be given greater precedence when constructing leadership paradigms in general, but that the text offers a new organising centre for a theology of Christian leadership.

It appears that this revision of leadership paradigms is timely and recent controversies surrounding leadership and ministry paradigms have brought Ephesians 4:11-12 to the fore of the fray. Several authors contend that the Church at this point in time is at a crossroad. Recent far-reaching global changes have directly impacted the Church, and the Church has to formulate responses to these changes. The transition from modernity to post-modernity is illustrative of the degree to which change is taking place on a global and unprecedented scale. Gibbs and Coffey maintain that “The transition from modernity to postmodernity has contributed to the collapse of an integrated and self-contained worldview. Now we are faced with a fragmented society...” (Gibbs and Coffey 2001:69). The cultural chaos that has arisen as the result of this transition “has affected all institutions, including churches” (Gibbs and Coffey 2001:69). Adam says:

“By the time postmodernism has run its course and has done its best and worst ... the world will think, talk and act in ways that will seem quite foreign to us” (2008:20).

Another significant change directly impacting the Church is that the West is seen as having entered a “post-Christendom” period (Gibbs 2005:75). Gibbs says that the West is in need of “re-evangelizing” as “one of the world’s most difficult missionary fields” (2005:148).

Since leadership plays such a crucial role in the Church, it is essential that the Church consider the question of leadership when formulating its response to these changes impacting upon it. Reggie McNeal explains:

“Leadership is the greatest need in the church. That has always been the case ... Throughout church history, leaders have shaped the character of the Christian movement. At crucial moments, leaders like Augustine, Luther, and Calvin have redefined the church” (1995:12).

Moynagh also says that leadership is a key factor that needs addressing whenever the church faces times of transition:

“Faced by further decline and even extinction in some places, it is essential that leaders provide the impetus for change” (2003:184).

Noting the need for change, several authors have called for nothing less than “a New Reformation” of the Church and its leadership paradigms (Gibbs and Coffey 2001:75; Ogden 2003:18).

In the past many leaders may’ve glossed over Eph. 4:11-12 and its implications for Christian leadership. This is because other “arch-paradigms” for leadership and ministry existed, with each paradigm having their respective key texts. The pastoral image of leadership, for example, has many texts to support it as a leadership paradigm (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4). This paradigm has arguably been one of the dominant paradigms for Christian leaders (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:26). However, it appears that there are definite and irreversible shifts towards new paradigms of Christian leadership. One new paradigm that appears to be gaining support is an Equipping paradigm of leadership. Ephesians 4:11-12 is perhaps the pivotal text around which this paradigm centers.

Writing in 1972, Ray Stedman's book "Body Life: The Church Comes Alive" evoked some measure of controversy by contending that, "The proper task of ... the support ministries ... is to train, motivate, and undergird the people to do the work of the ministry" (Davis 2000:167). John Davis says that:

"This understanding of the task of pastors and teachers based on a particular translation of Ephesians 4:12 ['to equip the saints for the work of ministry'] has become the dominant understanding of the text in evangelical and mainline churches today" (2000:167).

Inclinations towards this understanding of Ephesians 4:11-12 can be traced back to as far as the Tyndale version of 1534 (Davis 2000:169, footnote 9). David Valleskey says:

"Years before our modern translations clarified this verse, Martin Luther caught its real meaning in his German translation in which he says that Christ gave to his Church such gifts as pastors and teachers so that the saints might become prepared for the work of the ministry" (1987:8).

This interpretation of the text appears to be followed without dissent in English translations of the Bible since 1946 (Davis 2000:169). This is the position of the editors of the U.B.S. and Nestle's Greek texts (Vooyo 1991:no page numbers). In terms of commentaries, as early as 1904 Armitage Robinson showed that the "traditional" interpretation, namely that the reference in Eph. 4:12 was to the work of the "clergy", was a mistake (Davis 2000:171).

Despite attempts to reverse this "newer" interpretation of Ephesians 4:11-12, it appears that the tide of sentiment has turned irretrievably towards viewing it as teaching that a fundamental responsibility of leaders is to equip other believers for ministry. Several authors are vocal in their admission that prior interpretations of Ephesians 4:12 have been a mistake, as the following citations show:

- "It is unfortunate that for years the full meaning of this passage was *obscured by faulty punctuation* in the King James Version ... The original Greek makes it

clear that this is *not* the meaning of this verse” (Valleskey 1987:8, *italics added*).

- Barth calls the interpretation that applies Eph. 4:12 to the work of “professional clergy” both “aristocratic-clerical and ... triumphalistic-ecclesiastical ... arbitrary distortions of the text” (1981:479).
- “The Misplaced Comma (4:12). Due to a misplaced comma, however, generations of Christians have misunderstood this passage” (Wilson 2011:no page numbers).

In addition, the following citations are indicative of the sentiment that there is a call for a new emphasis, *based on Ephesians 4:11-12*, for the Christian leader’s primary “*raison d’etre*” to be the Equipping of the body of Christ for ministry. They are listed here in addition to the numerous references already made to this effect in each chapter of this thesis:

- “These words [Eph. 4:11-12] make it clear that equipping the saints for ministry is not merely a sideline but a primary reason for the existence of the public ministry” (Valleskey 1987:8).
- “Empowerment is akin to equipping—the pastor-teacher’s chief role (Ephesians 4:11-12)” (Drury 1993:38).
- “The role of the pastor-teacher is clearly taught in EPH 4:12 ... the pastor’s role is to equip and prepare the members ‘for the work of the ministry, for the building up of each member of the church’. His main role is to help every member to discover their spiritual gifts, develop them to effectively serve with their gifts, deploy them to the ministry to which they are called and delegate authority to them in their ministry” (The Asia-Pacific Institute of Biblical Studies 2001:no page numbers).

- “I believe the closest thing to a job description that is given for the pastoral role is Ephesians 4:11-14 and it defines the fundamental posture and purpose for pastoral ministry ... *to equip the saints for the work of ministry*” (Ogden 2003:131-132, *italics in original*).
- “the members of the congregation are to do the work of ministry *themselves* -- not just the pastors and teachers. The pastors and teachers rather are to train and equip the members of the congregation to get on with their ministry” (Wilson 2011:no page numbers, *italics in original*).

It appears that an Equipping paradigm has filtered through to media platforms as the following books show – they all directly call for leaders to equip others for ministry:

- Greg Ogden’s “The New Reformation”, published under this title and issued in a revised edition under the title “Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God” (Ogden 1990; Ogden 2003)
- “The Equipping Pastor: A Systems Approach to Congregational Leadership” (Stevens and Collins 1993)
- “The Equipping Church” (Sue Mallory 2001)

The paradigm has also filtered into the ethos of ministry, as evidenced by the samples of church and ministry vision-statements below:

- Calvary Baptist Church: “We envision a church where believers of every age are equipped to become like Jesus Christ, living a life of love, obedience and service (Ephesians 4:12-13)” (2011:no page numbers).
- Sherwood Bible Church: “Core Values ... Equipping the Saints ... (Eph. 4:11-12) ... We are committed to training and empowering believers in our body to continue the ministry in our community and across the world. The New Testament makes it clear that the leadership of a church is to prepare its members for doing the work of service” (2011:no page numbers).

- Calvary Baptist Tabernacle: “Core Values: ... We value service ... We are committed to maintaining common faith within the body, and are committed to ministry as a team by equipping and empowering every member to identify and use his or her spiritual gifts in the building up of the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-16)” (2011:no page numbers).
- Evergreen Baptist Church: “Growing in God's Purpose ... Ephesians 4:11, 12 ... God has gifted each member of His body according to His purpose. Evergreen is committed to equipping each member in the discovery and exercise of God's gifts” (2011:no page numbers).
- New Mission Missionary Baptist Church: “Equipping Ministries - Ephesians 4:11-12 ... Exalt (worship Christ) by Educating (teaching) People with the word of God, which will Equip (prepare) us to live Godly and serve one another and to Evangelize (reach out) to bring all people to Christ” (2011:no page numbers).
- Grace North Church: “ASSISTING MINISTERS ... Ephesians 4:11-12 ... The assisting ministers of Grace North are committed to the ministry of equipping others for their God-given mission in life” (2011:no page numbers).
- Equipping Ministries International: “Equipping Ministries ... [is a] non-profit ministry. Recognizing the awesome responsibility pastors have to feed and lead God's people, God has given Equipping Ministries® a calling to train and equip Christians to do the work of the ministry and to minister more effectively” (2011:no page numbers).

When all of the above has been considered, it appears that there is already a shift in paradigm in the Church's approach to leadership towards an Equipping paradigm, even if there has been no official consensual statement to this effect. There also appears to be a convergence of opinion that Ephesians 4:11-12 and its greater context, Ephesians 4:1-16, provides the fundamental Biblical authorisation to proceed with the construction of an “Equipping” paradigm for leadership. It is hoped that this thesis has served in some way to lay part of the foundation for this paradigm.

The Text's Bearing on Theology

Although the implications of Eph. 4:11-12 (and Eph. 4:1-16) have been explicated throughout this thesis, attention can be drawn to its implications for Ecclesiology and a theology of Christian leadership. The import of these implications is suggested by the fact that the decision regarding whose work the phrase “works of service” is to in Eph. 4:12 (NIV), has a direct bearing on one’s theology of the nature and ministry of the Church and theology of leadership. Although it is conceded that major doctrines cannot be built around singular passages, it appears that Ephesians 4:1-16 has of late been accorded great significance in constructing a holistic ecclesiology and a theology of leadership. Deffinbaugh says, “No passage deals with this fundamental to church life more clearly than that of Ephesians 4:1-16” (2011:no page numbers).

1. An Equipping Paradigm and Ecclesiology:

One positive contribution that an Equipping paradigm can make to ecclesiology is the return of ministry to the whole people of God. Greg Ogden maintains that “the Reformation was unable to deliver on the promise of the priesthood of all believers” regarding the use of spiritual gifts and “body ministry” (2003:69-70). One reason for this is that the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers requires an organic view of the church, whereas the Reformers’ definition was “thoroughly rooted in an institutional mind-set” (Ogden 2003:72).

An Equipping paradigm offers an organic view of the Church and can therefore help construct the implications of the priesthood of all believers for the Church’s ministry. Hjalmarson says:

“In Ephesians 4 language ... We have to connect every part of the body in a healthy way to the other parts so that the gifts can function appropriately to bring maturity” (2011: no page numbers).

Some differences between an institutional and an organic view of the Church help to expose the approach of an Equipping paradigm and its ministry implications for Ecclesiology:

- An organic view of the Church helps dispense with the politics of bureaucratic hierarchical power which characterise institutions. It helps people serve alongside each other with an attitude of appreciation for the contribution of each individual. There is no arbitrary assignment of power and authority to certain spiritual gifts since this notion is foreign to the “body ministry” envisioned in the NT. Ministry is gift-based and no singular gift, including that of leadership, is elevated above any other gift.
- A corollary of the above is that an organic view offers to reconcile the division between the “clergy” and “laity” induced by the separation of believers into “classes” on the basis of gradations of ministry. There is only one priesthood, with every member serving a complementary purpose. Ministering alongside each other, unity is built as all believers share in common challenges and accomplish things together.
- An organic view of the Church replaces dependency relationships that characterise institutions. It proposes a more balanced relationship between believers as being interdependent on each other for each other’s mutual welfare. All believers minister to God in worship and obedience, to each other in mutual care, and to the world in mission. No specific group has either the capacity or assignment to care for others on its own. All believers, including leaders, give and receive ministry from each other in a symbiotic relationship of mutualism.
- An organic view wrestles the domination of control and power from the hands of a select few (the leaders) and distributes it more uniformly throughout the entire body. In doing so, members are empowered to develop their ministries and take ownership as responsible stewards of what God has entrusted to them.
- The result of the above is that initiative for ministry is stimulated among all believers. This in turn provides for the on-going diversification of ministry as

growth occurs. Churches and ministries are then “open-systems” with the ability to absorb endless mutations of service around common visions inspired by God. Institutional approaches are often “closed-systems” which delineate clear boundaries which are regulated by myopic internal policies conceived of by only a few individuals. In closed-systems, since the focus is often on maintenance and not evolution, it is often crisis that prompts change. Organic, open-systems are in constant dynamic states which incorporate self-regulation, thereby ensuring both the health and evolution of the system. This helps the organism to undergo timeous change without requiring crisis to precipitate it.

- In an organic approach, as the body connected to the Head, believers have a greater chance to be directed by God’s Spirit directly. In this way, the gifts believers are entrusted with are directed to function for their intended purpose. In practice in institutional approaches, leaders stand proxy as vessels through whom the Spirit of God leads. However, the effect is sometimes that those in power reserve the right to accede to or veto initiatives, not on the basis of the Spirit’s leading, but on the basis of preconceived organisational policies. Communication can also be slow and cumbersome with ministry opportunities being lost while procedural decision-making processes are being followed.

An ecclesiology based on an Equipping paradigm requires transitioning from an institutional view of the Church to one that is organic. An Equipping paradigm is at variance with an institutional view of the Church. Several other thoughts that inform ecclesiology have been alluded to throughout this thesis. This section serves only to draw attention to the fact that perhaps the greatest contribution that an Equipping paradigm offers ecclesiology is to turn attention to the unfinished work of having our “stated theology ... informing our mind-set and practice” (Ogden 2003:96). An Equipping paradigm calls for the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers to be put into effect with *visible demonstrations* of all believers serving alongside each other, without prejudice and with unanimity.

2. An Equipping Paradigm and the Theology of Christian Leadership

A theology of leadership is inseparable from ecclesiology. Fundamental to this thesis is the view that leadership is an extension of the ministry of the Church, albeit directed in a large part to the Church. An Equipping paradigm does not specifically consider leaders to be leaders of the Church in the sense that Christ has abdicated his position as Head and entrusted the government of the Church to leaders (Eph. 1:22-23, 4:15, 5:23; Col. 1:18). Instead Christ remains the Head of the Church and uses leaders as his instruments. Equipping leaders are leaders *of* the Church only in the sense that they emerge from the midst of the body, and are inseparable from it. Hjalmarson explains:

“It is important to remember the wider context of gifted ministry. Ministry differs from leadership by matter of degree and function. Ephesians 4:7-12 assigns the five-fold gifts to the entire church (“to each one of us grace has been given..”). Leadership is then a calling within a calling” (2011:no page numbers).

This understanding of leadership is fundamental to an Equipping paradigm. Banished are notions of leadership borrowed from secular culture to the extent that these secular models become the controlling force for Christian leadership paradigms. While there is some convergence of thinking within all leadership paradigms, sacred or secular, there are also points of sharp divergence. Jesus drew attention to this fact (Matt. 20:25-28; John 13:12-17), as did other NT writers (1 Peter 5:1-4). The body metaphor is unique to Christianity, and the implications of this metaphor for leadership can serve the Church well at a time when there is a plethora of leadership models, as Andy Woods says:

“the primary function of a pastor is that of an equipper. An equipped, matured and gifted body is then capable of carrying on the work of the ministry (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:12). An awareness of a pastor’s primary role is needed in our day when so much confusion abounds concerning what the role of a pastor actually is. Many see the function of a pastor as that of a CEO, marketer, motivational

speaker, or resident psychologist. However, the Pauline definition of a pastor is that of an equipper. Perhaps the reason why so much immaturity exists in the body of Christ is that modern pastors have strayed away from their primary task of being an equipper who leads the church into maturity” (2004:10-11)

The Equipping paradigm of leadership is not without its limitations. Therefore it does not propose to dispense with all other leadership metaphors of the NT. In fact, Ogden maintains that there exists “no detailed description of the role of” any one type of leader in the NT (2003:130). Consequently this thesis has allowed for the inclusion of several diffractions of the central theme of Equipping. Certainly no one leadership metaphor can hope to explicate all the variegated nuances and responsibilities inherent in the complex field of Christian leadership (or any other field of leadership for that matter). What is proposed here is the reversion of conventional approaches to leadership. Whereas in several paradigms, the leadership role of training and equipping is relegated to but one of a leader’s responsibilities, an Equipping paradigm calls for it to be the nucleus of Christian leadership. Several leadership responsibilities form a matrix in an Equipping paradigm. In an Equipping paradigm, these responsibilities have enough cohesion so that they can readily utilise the Equipping emphasis as their organising centre.

Furthermore, in arguing for a new kind of leadership, an Equipping paradigm proposes a new relationship between leaders and others in the body of Christ. Clerical models of leadership have separated the body into two separate and unequal classes, the “clergy” and the “laity”. This has created dependency models of ministry with both overburdened clergy and overly-dependent laity. An Equipping paradigm envisions a new healthier model of interdependency wherein each individual’s contribution is appreciated and celebrated. With this approach, the unity and mutual care anticipated in Ephesians 4:13-16 has the potential at last to become a reality.

If the Church is to implement an Equipping approach to ministry and leadership, the roles of leaders have to change (Ogden 2003:158). Greg Ogden suggests that the move for leaders from traditional stereotypical roles such as those of pastors or teachers may elicit “a crisis of identity” among leaders (2003:159). If the primary model of Christian leadership to date has been the “sola pastora” model, the implications of a change to an

Equipping paradigm are monumental. The “sola pastora” model determined all of church life in a Christendom environment, and an Equipping paradigm in a post-Christian society has the potential to have an equally great impact. For this reason the proposal of this thesis is not for the augmentation of the pastoral model of leadership with an Equipping paradigm. This thesis calls for the Equipping paradigm to supersede the pastoral model of leadership. Alternatively, and at the very least, the call is for the pastoral role to be reinvented as being primarily the Equipping of other believers - to the extent that they can serve alongside each other as mutual ministers. Pastoral care is not the sole domain of the clergy, but a function of the entire body of Christ.

A further contention of this thesis is the call for all the leaders mentioned in Ephesians 4:12 - indeed all Christian leaders - to engage in Equipping believers for ministry as their primary leadership responsibility. While it has always been assumed that pastors and teachers will undertake the responsibility of teaching and training others, even the emphasis of this training has been deficient. By and large, the focus of this teaching and training has been to ensure the spiritual growth and sanctification of believers. Equipping paradigm requires that these important emphases be supplemented with a primary focus of training believers *for ministry*.

An Equipping paradigm requires that the other leaders of the Church mentioned in Ephesians 4:12 (apostles, evangelists and prophets) also see Equipping as one of their primary responsibilities. This also requires the revision of the stereotypes surrounding these gifts. For example, an Equipping paradigm does not only require evangelists do the actual work of reaching the lost (the stereotypical function). It requires that their primary responsibility, either in tandem with reaching the lost, or superseding it, be the equipping of others for ministry. Like pastoral care, evangelism is the responsibility of *all* the people of God.

Suggested Issues to Explore Further

The proposal of a new paradigm for leadership will inevitably elicit many questions. This thesis cannot hope to anticipate what the questions surrounding an Equipping paradigm may be, and it certainly does not propose to offer solutions to issues which it (the thesis) may raise. However, what follows are two issues which may require

further attention if the paradigm is to be adopted. Their place here does not suggest that there are ready-made answers to these issues. Rather, their presence reveals that they are among the issues which may be at the forefront of people's minds. They are also offered as immediate points of discussion which may be generated by this thesis. It is hoped that in part, the contents of this thesis may offer some guidance when seeking to address them.

1. The Curricula and Method of Equipping in an Equipping Paradigm

When seeking to transition to an Equipping paradigm for ministry, one question that arises is, "How should this be done?" Traditionally, seminaries and Bible colleges have been the training institutions of the Church. However, Cunningham says that the theological seminary continues to be viewed as an institution primarily for the training and accreditation of professional ministers (1996:64). This has been criticised as being "self-serving, with the professionals accrediting themselves" (Cunningham 1996:65). The challenge is that training leaders this way creates a multigenerational problem: "Clericalism is passed from generation to generation" (Stevens and Collins 1993:139)

Cunningham says that a priority for theological education is to interpret properly the term 'minister' and then to adapt training accordingly (1996:67). Leaders should not only be trained for their own ministry. They could also be trained to train the individuals in their congregations and ministries (Morgan 1994:76). Cunningham therefore says that the "task of theological education is to equip clergy to recognize their role as equippers, and to train laypersons to recognize and discharge their role as our 'real ministers' " (1996:65). Cunningham says that ideally the priority for theological education is to design a curriculum for the "direct training" of the "laity" (Cunningham 1996:68-69). In other words, seminaries should no longer equip the laity *through* the clergy, but seminaries should equip the laity *directly*. Morgan says that the most profound change within American seminaries is "the emerging shift from a 'clerical paradigm' (preparation of clergy) to a 'community of faith

paradigm’ (a multi-purposed nurturing of knowledge and understanding of a faith community)” (1994:75).

A further consideration is that, despite its merits, theological training should neither be the only, nor the primary method of equipping. On the contrary, in some instances “Formal theological training has a negative correlation to both church growth and overall quality of churches” (Schwarz 1996:23). As important as theological education is, more is required to adequately prepare for ministry. Doyle Young says that, “A seminary degree is not a work permit” (1988:52). Theological education could be complemented with mentorship relationships. Mentoring relationships provide a secure, relationship-based platform in which character can be developed under the guidance of a seasoned leader. Mentoring relationships help bypass the cookie-cutter curricula of mass education and allows for personal grooming. Mentorship helps cultivate the individual gifts people have without projecting onto them stereotypical roles. More credence can also be given to practical, “hands-on” training too, and more place in a training program could be devoted to this.

2. The Phenomenon of Corporate Culture

In his article, “Ephesians 4:12 Once More: ‘Equipping the Saints for the Work of the Ministry’ ”, John Davis has attempted to delineate two mutually-exclusive positions regarding the interpretation of Ephesians 4:12. This thesis readily concedes that the Greek text of Eph. 4:12 does not permit a conclusive answer as to whether the reference to the “work of ministry” in Eph. 4:12 (NIV) is to the leaders mentioned in Eph. 4:11 or to “God’s people” (NIV) in Eph. 4:12 (Barth 1981:478). However this thesis has attempted to not only expose the weakness of the “traditional” interpretation, but has also demonstrated both the textual and contextual factors in favour of the “revisionist” interpretation. This thesis rests upon the presupposition that while the Greek text alone may be insufficient in and of itself to arrive at a decisive conclusion, there is a groundswell of support in favour of interpreting the phrase “work of ministry” in Eph. 4:12 (NIV) as pointing to the ministry of the whole priesthood of believers. There are numerous citations to this effect within every chapter of this thesis.

While attempts have been made in this thesis to present in a rational and objective way, the myriad factors favouring a transition to an Equipping paradigm for Christian leaders, more is required to secure the adoption of this paradigm. If anything, this writer's experience has been that the Church in general, has as its chosen approach, a "cautious adoption" of anything new. Wright says, "Tradition is strong in churches and difficult to change" (2003:120). Reasons for the Church's reticence to embrace change quickly are numerous. However, resistance to change can in some way be explained by understanding the phenomenon of (corporate) culture.

Every congregation and ministry has its own kind of culture (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006:21). Adeyemo describes culture as follows:

"Culture as a way of life, habits and customs (including laws and taboos) of a people is deeply rooted in what they think of their environment and their role in it" (Adeyemo 2009:15-16).

Finzel says, "An organization's corporate culture is the way insiders behave based on the values and group traditions they hold" (2000:135). Each organization "has a totally unique and distinct personality ... and that culture is built upon the values and belief systems that percolate up from the core of its leadership like molten lava bubbling out of a volcano" (Finzel 2000:136). Organizations are guided by a set of "unwritten rules" (Finzel 2000:138). Wright mentions that:

"Every organization has a hidden culture that has developed over the years that controls what is done regardless of the values we espouse" (2003:117).

The reason that this is noted here is to help understand that the adoption of an Equipping approach to ministry will not ultimately depend only upon reasoned theses. A transition to an Equipping paradigm requires nothing less than a "cultural revolution". Theses like this one may be easily ratified and adopted in principle, but changing culture is a far more complex process.

Change, however, must start somewhere. One place for it to start is with the group of people whom this thesis addresses directly – Christian leaders. Leaders are the

“keeper[s] of the culture” (Finzel 2000:149). “Leaders create and sustain culture in everything they do” (Wright 2003:122). The implementation of an Equipping paradigm therefore falls upon the shoulders of the leaders in the Church. Leaders who do embrace an Equipping paradigm must understand that transitioning will not be a simple process. Stevens and Collins draw attention to the fact that since the time of the Protestant Reformation there have been “few government, ministry and mission structures that express the belief in every-member ministry and mission” (1993:140). Leaders must therefore make conscious decisions to either “reinforce or change the culture” of their organization (Wright 2003:128).

There is another factor that perhaps, in some senses offers more hope of an Equipping paradigm being adopted. This is that the influence for an Equipping paradigm may originate at the periphery, at the borders of the Church - with its “laity”. Hans Finzel says that the greatest ideas and innovations “bubble up from the workers” at grassroots level (2000:84). In a time of flattened social structures, leadership and innovation often comes from the edge and finds its way along the network to the centre (Gibbs and Coffey 2006:84).

In transitioning to an Equipping paradigm, leaders must take cognisance of the powerful influence that corporate culture exerts upon the organizations they lead. They must understand their own personal predispositions regarding ministry and work towards those that are commensurate with an Equipping approach to ministry. Then they must work to effect positive change. Wright notes that “the relationship between the leader and the organization is a key variable in the reinforcement or change of ... beliefs” (2003:120). Once leaders embrace an Equipping approach, they have the privilege and the responsibility to effect change. It is after all leaders who have “the most significant long-range impact on the life and mission of the organization” (Wright 2003:122).

Postscript

I have enjoyed completing this thesis. It has broadened my vision of leadership and ministry. The journey I have been on during its completion has exposed me to several new concepts in the field of ministry and leadership. It has had a direct influence on my philosophy of ministry. Conviction of the central tenet of the thesis, namely that the Church has entered a era, one that requires a new paradigm of leadership, has strengthened my resolve to move onto a second stage. This is the phase of applying the theory to practice. The theory must be tested. A particular interest will be to investigate new ways of training leaders, and looking at alternatives to traditional seminary curricula. The anticipation is that this may require more than superficial modifications to seminaries. It may require the creation of something entirely new. This is not intended as a critique of seminaries, for I am a product of a seminary theological education. Rather, it stems from a consideration that seminaries have served the Church well in an age of Christendom. That age is being eclipsed. There is no doubt that seminaries will continue to play an important role in shaping the Church's future. However, my anticipation is that the Equipping of the future will look very different to that which we have today. I look forward to meeting with like-minded individuals and working together with them to develop fresh approaches to ministry and leadership which will serve the Church in these challenging and exciting times.