LEADERSHIP-AS-SPIRITUAL PRACTICE:

A PRACTICAL PNEUMATOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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Short Abstract

Leadership-as-Spiritual Practice:

A practical pneumatology of leadership in the Church of England

My thesis investigates leadership discourse of the Church of England. I want to uncover how God is portrayed in discourse to discern what doctrine of God is having shaping effect on practice. Is there an underlying theological deficit in discourse that is affecting leadership practice? If so, how might discourse be repaired?

The context for this research is a reforming programme which includes discussions about decision making and how the church is led. Previous criticisms focus on managerialism and the importation of organizational leadership language, while theologians note a lack of pneumatological engagement. My view is there is a dialectical relation between discourse and practice; discourse is meaning-making shaping social practice, which offers warrant to interrogate that discourse further.

Located in practical theology, the methodology follows a Search-Encounter-Transformation arc. In my search phase, chapters 1-5, I question how ecclesial leadership discourse 'speaks' of God. 'How is He named?' Through content analysis, I find the person of the Spirit is under-represented as subject in leadership texts.

In the encounter phase, chapters 6-8, via inter-disciplinary conversation, I explore how to repair this bias in discourse. I turn to systematic theology, to ecclesial practice, and the as-practice paradigm found in secular leadership studies.

In chapter 9, I offer a synthesizing approach, a new ideational formation for discourse: leadership-as-spiritual practice. Leadership-as-spiritual practice is non-entitative and processual. Leadership emerges from mutual co-constructing conversation, and interaction of members of the Body of Christ with one another, and the Holy Spirit.

This ideation reconceives leadership in such a way that an account of the Holy Spirit can be given in discourse thereby shaping practices around a more complete doctrine of God, thus enabling ecclesial leading to be better resourced pneumatologically.

Long Abstract

Leadership-as-Spiritual Practice:

A practical pneumatology of leadership in the Church of England

My thesis investigates leadership discourse of the Church of England. I take a structuralist approach to discourse acknowledging a dialectical relation between discourse and practice. Discourse is understood to be meaning-making, having constituting, and constructive causal effect for shaping practice. Meaning and subjectivity 'come to' in language use, so where there is a lack of presence in the language, personhood cannot come to form, and subjectivity is lost. If I adopt this view of discourse, then how and what is said matters for practice. So, in this investigation I want to explore how God is portrayed in leadership discourse. What doctrine of God emerges that might be having shaping affect through discourse, thus producing an effect in practice?

The context for this is that despite many cycles of debate and reform, how the church is led in practice is considered to be problematic. There has been a shift towards managerialism and the importation of an organizing rationale despite a cultural shift towards spirituality and experiential religion. In commentaries about leadership the language of spirituality and of the Spirit is noticeably absent, or simply abstracted into language around wisdom, or implicit theology.

So given the meaning-making capacity of discourse, there is warrant to examine the leadership discourse theologically to see if an account is given of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Is there any underlying theological deficit or bias in discourse that might be having shaping effect on practice? How does ecclesial leadership discourse speak of God – how is He named?

In wider theological discourse, an absence of Spirit language has also been noticed. For example, in the work of Simeon Zahl and Eugene Rogers, both of whom draw attention to

the abstraction of pneumatology and the neglect of the Spirit.[1] In relation to soteriology Zahl points to a level of abstraction in theological language that amounts to what he calls a swerve around the person of the Spirit. Eugene Roberts observes that the Spirit has floated free of bodies and materiality altogether.

In practical theology, Mark Cartledge has pointed out that the Spirit is largely ignored, something that, given the integrative nature of pneumatology in practice, needs to be corrected. Marcus Moberg has undertaken a discourse analysis of some of the Church of England's synodical documents in relation to mediatization and marketization driving institutional change, but a broader discourse analysis of leadership texts from a theological perspective seems to be absent from the leadership literature. Thus, there is warrant to analyse the nature of the leadership discourse in the Church of England further.

To investigate the discourse theologically, and ascertain how it 'speaks' of God, I follow a methodology based on the 'Search-Encounter-Transformation' arc of Mark Cartledge who foregrounds empirical methods in practical theology. The search phase takes place across chapters 1 to 5. The research is undertaken by way of a content analysis of a range of leadership texts. I ask, 'how is God named?' and examine the texts to see how many times relatively the subjects of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit appear in the documents.

In the content analysis, I find a relative lack of referencing of the person and activity of the Holy Spirit amounting to a bias towards a Patrological-Christological expression of God. Priority and focus are repeatedly given to the Father and Son.

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[1] Simeon Zahl, *The Holy Spirit and Christian Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Eugene F. Rogers JR., *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources outside the Modern West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005).

By way of example, in the Synodical document, Simpler Humbler Bolder,[2] there are in the body of the document:

26 references to Father/God/ the Almighty;

43 to Son/ Lord/Jesus Christ;

1 reference to Spirit in text.

If I take the totals from the Synodical documents there are:

261 references to the Father;

246 to the Son;

35 to the Spirit.

In the ordination services for Deacon, Priest, and Bishop, there are:

139 references to the Father;

188 to the Son;

65 to the Spirit.

In the Bishop of Oxford's 'Ministry in Three Dimensions' we find in a data sample of four chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10, that there are:

90 references to the Father;

81 to the Son;

14 to the Spirit.

[2] General Synod, *Simpler, Humbler, Bolder,* Synod July 2021, GS 2223.

Lastly, if I look to the main vehicle for leading services in the Church, Holy Communion Order Two,[3] such that it might be argued that this is what leadership has 'sounded' like quite literally for years, there are:

55 references to the Father;

45 to the Son;

9 to the Spirit.

These figures show a disparity in relative referencing. The numbers are different enough to be able to conclude safely that the Spirit is not represented as much as Father and Son in the leadership discourse.

Furthermore, these numbers cannot begin to suggest the differentiation in weight and theological complexity of the references themselves. Nor can it offer the significance of the contexts in which they are found. So though an address to the Father is counted as one reference, it may carry greater weight and theological value than a reference to the Spirit. For example, 'Our Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth', or 'Dear Lord Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour' are much deeper and richer relational references than 'and the Holy Spirit' at the end of a sentence. The referencing to the Spirit is bald, the characterization spare.

Another example can be found in the prayers for the Collect, from Pentecost to Advent. Out of sixty prayers there are only 14 active references to or pleas about the Spirit. Whereas the passive rendering of the Spirit in the phrase 'in the unity of the Spirit, one God now and forever' is present 30 times. The activity of the Spirit is thus subsumed into

[3] Common Worship, Services and Prayers for the Church of England (London: Church House Publishing, 2000), 228-244. This is the 1662 BCP version.

‘one God’ losing differentiation and necessary distinction, even where one might expect greater delineation or articulation of the Spirit at work in our midst.

Thus, not only is there empirical data to show that the Spirit is unequally represented in the leadership discourse, but the references themselves, and the location and event of those references, leads to a weaker characterization of the work of the Spirit overall.

From this disparity, as a full account of God as Spirit is not made, I deduce there is a theological deficit within the discourse. And because of the dialectical relation that exists between discourse and practice, this deficiency would suggest a weak and under-resourced pneumatology in leadership practice. The embedded limitations and differentiations in naming of the Spirit are arguably reductive for the practices and practising of leadership.

In the encounter phase, I have a linked inter-disciplinary conversation to explore how this ‘gap’ in discourse might be repaired. In chapter 6, I turn to systematic theology and to the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg.[4] I draw out four themes from his work.

First Pannenberg argues for distinction and differentiation between the Persons of the Godhead. There is a unique delineation to be made of the Spirit that is not the Son. Secondly, he draws attention to the eschatological activity of the Spirit. The Spirit as perfecting cause leads creation and the Body of Christ into the eschatological purposes of the Trinity. The Spirit is established as the one who leads into all truth. Thirdly, I learn that the church is constituted by both the Son and Spirit. This means that the church is founded on a relation with the Spirit that needs recognizing. Arguably though, the Spirit relation is ignored, or received passively as in the language of gift or giver of gifts. And

[4] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology Volumes I, II, III* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991, 1994, and 1997 respectively).

lastly it is because of the Spirit that participation in the divine life of God is made possible and vital.

The second conversation in chapter 7 moves to a consideration of practice. This is because, as I have already mentioned, Eugene Rogers and Simeon Zahl have observed,[5] the Spirit in Western ecclesial discourse has floated free of bodies allowing for an abstraction in relation to the Spirit, and an overall silencing of the role of the Spirit in practice. Thus, if a full account is to be made of Spirit, this link needs to be reasserted.

Bonnie Miller-McLemore is a practical theologian who has written about how the historical ecclesial approach to spiritual practice has led to a divorce between spiritual practice and daily life.[6] She argues against the need for a retreat, or separatist mindset, or the view that God can only be found in peace and quiet. Her solution is to argue that any activity that can evoke faith in oneself or others is potentially 'spiritual practice'. By this she breaks open the definition of spiritual practice and allows for an application of spiritual practice outside of its traditional field. This allows for a redefinition of the nature of the activities associated with leading.

In chapter 8, I find that in secular leadership studies there has also been a turn to practice. I encounter the work of Joseph Raelin and leadership-as-practice.[7] I find the as-practice paradigm is a means by which leadership can be reconceived as a non-entitative form. Leadership-as-practice is processual. Leadership emerges from patterns of action, and from in-between the interactions of people. This detaches leadership from entitative

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[5] Zahl, *The Holy Spirit and Christian Experience*; Rogers, *After the Spirit*.
[6] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *In the Midst of Chaos: Caring for Children as Spiritual Practice* (San Francisco, CA.: Jossey-Bass, 2007).
[7] Joseph A. Raelin, Introduction to Leadership-as-Practice, in *Leadership-as-Practice: Theory and Application,* ed., Raelin, J.A. (New York: Routledge, 2016).

modes and social structures. Leadership is found in social flow that comes forth from discourse and practice.

I come to the transformation phase in chapter 9 in which I propose a synthesis that integrates my learning journey. This takes into account the voice of systematic theology that would see the Holy Spirit present and active in the leadership of the church. It redefines leading to be spiritual practice, and it adopts the as-practice processual paradigm. I propose a new discursive form that offers an ideation to discourse that has potential to repair the gap I have found in discourse. Leadership is reconceived as leadership-as-spiritual practice, a model in and through which an account can be made of the Holy Spirit in leadership discourse.

Leadership-as-spiritual practice is a non-entitative paradigm. Leadership emerges as a form of social flow from the mutual activity of members of the Body of Christ in co-constructing conversation with one another, and with the Holy Spirit. The building brick of this practice is the co-constructing conversation that allows different voices to be heard in the activities associated with leading. This makes room for the Holy Spirit who becomes conversation partner.

Leadership-as-spiritual practice thus describes a process of moments and ongoing micro-interactions that seek to host the Spirit. For example, a series of connections, meetings, and conversations with others, and the Spirit. These might include times of listening and waiting together in spirit, prayers, moments of sense, and collective discerning of the Spirit's leading, disagreements, discussions, and strategic activities which build towards appropriate action, a sense of purpose, and accumulate to create a sense of direction and mutual understanding which we call leadership.

If we envisage this broadly as 'ongoing conversation', then what I am saying is that the Spirit is given voice and becomes part of that conversation. Leadership is that which emerges from ongoing connecting social flow.

This requires one to shift thinking about leadership as being an entity (a job, role, title, ordination, structure, or something I am) to being something that flows out from a collective process. Leadership flows from the process of our mutual acting, and connecting, and in the course of our relating and conversing together. It is the move from an entitative understanding to a non-entitative understanding that means that leading can be reconceived to be a process or a series of micro-interactions, or a 'co-constructing conversation'.

Leadership-as-spiritual practice is an ideation that can serve in and across all strata of the church, allowing the practising of leading to be shaped around a more complete doctrine of God, and offering a means by which leading can be better resourced pneumatologically.

Accordingly, when leadership is experienced in this form, as-spiritual practice, then the ecclesial leadership that emerges can bear witness to, and give an account of, the Spirit in a way that is more theologically true. For it is more theologically true to say that as a believer I am to join in with or get on board with what the Spirit of God is already doing in the world – with His ways and His teleological cause – than it is to add Him theoretically into, or bolt Him onto, what I am already doing.

Conclusion

In this project, I have found that there is a disparity in the way God is named in leadership discourse. The discourse of leadership in the Church of England does not give a full account of the Spirit of God. This amounts to a bias or deficit in the theology of the discourse, which has meaning-making effect for practice.

However, if we reconceive leading 'as-spiritual practice', a process in which room is given to the Spirit through what I am calling 'co-constructing conversation', then the leadership that emerges from the series of micro-interactions of that process will better attest to the

Person of the Spirit. The leadership that flows can give an account of the Spirit's leading, and His voice in the process. And as a result of engaging with the Spirit in and through discourse, the practices of leading will come to look, feel, and be shaped, very differently as the ideation of as-spiritual practice draws from an alternative theological imaginary.

Beneficially, a communication co-constructing-conversation led approach will allow for adaptive ecclesial forms to arise in response to the 21st century's fluid needs. And in a time of reform, it allows for many voices to interact. This paradigm has application across leadership function, it is communal, and it makes room for the move and leading activity of the Spirit.

Lastly, it is intended that the method by which the synthesis in chapter 9 is reached, mirrors the very ideation being proposed. This thesis is itself a co-constructed conversation with other voices in the theological discourse, as well as in secular leadership studies, and through prayer with the Holy Spirit.

LEADERSHIP-AS-SPIRITUAL PRACTICE:

A PRACTICAL PNEUMATOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Introduction

My thesis is a study on the discourse of leadership in the Church of England. The reason why I approach the subject of leadership through the lens of discourse is because as a practical theologian I am interested in the meaning-making power and determining effect of discourse on social practice. This is an interdisciplinary exercise therefore which I will be arguing is located in the field of practical theology.

My situation in relation to this topic is as an ordained Anglican priest and I am concerned that despite many cycles of reform and ongoing debate in the Church of England, there is still dissatisfaction with the ways and practices of leading. Ecclesial leadership is being worked out in a 21st century context.

I will explain why my focus is on discourse in chapter 1, but by way of introduction, discourse is in a dialectical relationship with the social structures within which it operates. It is therefore not only referential but is constitutive, constructive, and with determining effect so that discourse can operate as a driver for social change. This view derives from what is known as the 'linguistic turn' in the social sciences of the early 20th century, and from philosophers such as Foucault, and Wittgenstein.

Therefore, if the practices of leadership and their delivery are considered to be problematic, and they are by some, then it is a logical step to 'work back' to investigate the discourse that has structuring effect on those practices. A focus on discourse is warranted if discourse has constructing and structuring ability for practice. Indeed, it might

be argued that it is important to investigate discourse first, to see what shaping affect or influence is being exerted on leadership in practice.

Previous critiques of ecclesial leadership have tended to focus on the importation of managerialist language and organizational paradigms for leadership practices. However, on the whole, such criticisms fold back into the existing models of leadership and entitative paradigms that already exist within the church, and the discussions themselves take place within, or on, the existing referential 'grid' of the assumed ecclesial discourse which mostly elides leadership with ordination. An analysis of the ecclesial discourse itself through a theological lens seems to be absent from the leadership literature.

So, if ecclesial leadership discourse does have constructing effect on ecclesial leadership practice because of the constituting nature of discourse and its ongoing significance in social transformation, then exploring what it is saying becomes important. How does leadership discourse 'speak' of God? In this thesis, I set out to find out by interrogating the public discourse of leadership of the Church of England.

The outline is as follows:

In chapter 1, I will consider the importance of discourse, and set my enquiry in context.

In chapter 2, I offer a review of the literature.

In chapter 3, I locate this project within the academic field of practical theology and outline different options for a practical theological methodology.

In chapters 4 and 5, the search phase culminates in a critical content analysis of the leadership discourse.

From my findings, both quantitative and qualitative, I then move to the encounter phase. So, in chapters 6,7, and 8, I embark on an inter-disciplinary conversation to gain insight

and fresh perspectives. Out of this constructive conversation, an ideational synthesis is found.

In chapter 9, in the third phase seeking transformation, I propose a new ideational formation to the ecclesial leadership discourse.

In chapter 10, in my conclusion, I reflect on the research journey, summarize my contribution to knowledge and practice, and suggest some areas for further research.

Chapter 1

Researching the Problem

Introduction

'To lead' is a complex and multi valent idea. It broadly centres around a notion of guiding through vision casting and steering through decision making towards an end goal. To be a leader is both great gift, and responsibility. How one leads matters for a community, for its flourishing and future, and is deeply significant for the well-being of those who follow. This makes it an important subject to study, and to think about theologically.

In this thesis, I want to consider the subject of leading within an ecclesial context, but through the lens of discourse. In this chapter I explain my own context, offer a brief portrait of the current reforming agenda in the Church of England, and consider the cultural context in which the church is set. I will also explain why I want to approach leadership through discourse.

One of the first things to notice is that the action of 'leading' quickly solidifies into the noun 'leadership', settling almost immediately as an entitative idea in discourse. Leadership then becomes something one has – given or taken by virtue of position, one's place, or power. This means that within an organization the notion of leadership coheres closely to seniority, with executive function and management, and it takes on related social aspects of pay, prominence, power, and authority. Thus, though one might not be leader by nature, leadership can nonetheless attach by name.

The ideation of leading is further complicated by broader relational aspects since it also carries a more opaque notion of influence, of one-to-one care, or of a relational experience not confined to systems or social structures. And when we turn to the specific context of the church the notion of leadership is complexified by historical, theological, scriptural, and ecclesial discourses around ministry, mission, and service.

The Church of England is essentially a hierarchical structure such that leadership authority flows down to parochial level from the bishops who have 'oversight', while governance of the institution lies with General Synod. Thus, it is said that the Church of England is episcopally led but synodically governed. At parochial level there is also a visible hierarchy or ordering in the church such that leadership rests with the one 'ordained'. And because it is the ordained who are given the 'cure of souls', and authorized to preside at the eucharist, preach, and officiate pastoral services, it is those who are ordained who have become 'leaders' of much, if not most, of church life.

Thus, I run immediately into one of the controlling factors embedded in ecclesial leadership discourse – namely an elision of leadership with ordination. Today in the Church of England to be ordained is to be designated deacon, priest, or bishop, and though managerial or organizational aspects of church life might be distributed, there is an expectation that the ordained lead.

This points to another complicating aspect of leadership discourse in the Church of England. I am referring to the way the ecclesial discourse is structured around particular binary or dualist ideational formations. The most obvious example is that of ordination, but other examples are whether one is male or female, high or low church, liberal or evangelical, or even whether one is paid or not. These embedded formations play into the leadership discourse and further complexify practice, and any reform to those practices. This matters as the Church of England is in a reforming process.

Indeed, it is not controversial to say that the Church of England is having strong internal argument about how to organize, manage, and lead itself, and lead the people it serves in the 21st century. On July 5th, 2013, in his presidential address, the Archbishop of

Canterbury, Justin Welby, encouraged Synod to respond imaginatively to new contexts.[8] Since then there has been a clear movement towards reform, and specifically a detailed programme of 'Reform and Renewal'.

A Reform Programme

In January 2015, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York brought a programme of Reform and Renewal (General Synod (GS) 1976) to the Synod of the Church of England as a 'necessary but far from sufficient response to the challenges facing the Church of England' (§5). The Archbishops noted that the 'urgency of the challenge facing us is not in doubt' (§8). Issues offered as reasons were levels of retirement of clergy, the need to recruit more clergy, declining attendances, increasingly stretched finances, and investments, and governance not serving the ministry of the Church as well as they should. The programme for Reform and Renewal set in train a series of investigations around developing senior leaders and discipleship, improving resourcing, governance, and financial simplification.

In the five years following other substantial pieces of work were also undertaken by different Church of England groups looking at aspects of leadership, and or the organization of ecclesial ministry. So, for example, the Faith and Order Commission (FAOC) published 'Faithful Improvisation' in 2016, and 'Kingdom Calling' in 2020; concerning the role of laity the Archbishop's Council published 'Setting God's People Free' in 2017, while in 2020 the National Ministry Team published 'A Vision for Lay Ministries'.

That was before the Covid pandemic. Then in November 2020, a new report came to Synod this time called Vision and Strategy (GS 2180) laying out a more iterative and

[8] https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/general-synod-archbishop-canterbury-presidential-address accessed 30 November 2023. The word 'reimagine' is used 5 times.

consultative methodology outlined in a diagram entitled the Vision and Strategy Process for reform. The report set out the intention to formulate a new set of strategic priorities. These were made explicit later in July 2021 in a report titled ‘Simpler, Humbler, Bolder’ (GS. 2223). The language is noticeably Christological as the church is to be ‘Jesus Christ centred, and Jesus Christ shaped’.

New priorities are ‘to become a church of missionary disciples’, ‘to become a church where mixed-ecology is the norm’, and ‘to become younger and more diverse’, recognising the need for a ‘much more diverse, inclusive and reflective leadership and governance…’, (§17). To realize this vision, the report makes it clear that further reform of structure will be necessary to bring coherence and simplicity to enable better decision making and bring financial saving. It states, ‘[a]t the moment we are led in one way or another by a plurality of different overlapping bodies … But the aim is to bring spiritual and theological renewal into all our decision-making, giving clarity of decision-making and proper ownership of those decisions by those who take them’, (§18).

These reforms are ongoing along with the National Governance reform project, and the replacement of the Archbishop’s Council with a new charity, the Church of England National Services board. But the reforming agenda also touches the ‘spiritual and theological renewal’ of decision-making at all leadership levels.

A very public example of how complex and problematic decision-making can be within the Church was the summary disbanding of the Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB) by the Archbishop’s Council in June 2023, creating significant backlash. This disquiet led to unusual procedures in Synod on July 9th. As a result of a series of ‘point of order’ interruptions, stilted, and protracted discussions, and then use of a standing order to suspend ‘formal’ business for ten minutes so a presentation could be made ‘informally’, the two sacked ISB representatives were eventually allowed to speak to Synod. They

shared deep frustration about a muddled remit, not being listened to, a lack of communication, and poor leadership decision-making by the Archbishop's Council.[9]

This is just one example that illustrates how varied, layered, and difficult, the ways of decision-making are. It also raises the question as to what is actually shaping the leadership decision-making processes of the Church of England, especially given one of the aims of the Vision and Strategy reforms is 'to bring spiritual and theological renewal into all our decision-making', §18. What might 'spiritual and theological renewal' be, in practice?

Where I Stand

I watch these goings on with a deep sense of frustration as I am connected to the church as both attendee and as a member of the clergy. This project therefore originates from my own experiences and practice so that I come to leadership discourse as one who is already invested. However, being ordained gives me a particular voice within the leadership debate for as practitioner, I have been on the receiving end of leadership function at parish and diocesan level for good and ill.

Now however, as a student researching the subject of ecclesial leadership, I find myself (to use a sporting metaphor) on the bench. From this position, technically being on the team but not on the field, I am afforded a useful view. Though still one with its own 'horizon', of course. But since, according to Stiver (adopting Gadamer), 'we are always connecting our horizon of assumptions, culture, and traditions to the horizon of the text' allowing for 'creative synthesis',[10] I want to suggest that from this view I am well placed to

[9] Church of England live stream, 9th July 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYu3MDRecUY Report in The Church Times, No. 8365, 14th July 2023.
[10] Dan R. Stiver, *Theology After Ricoeur: New Directions in Hermeneutical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 45.

see differently, not as a personal standpoint I enforce, 'but more as an opinion and a possibility that one brings into play and puts at risk'.[11]

Being ordained affords me a particular perspective, but equally important is that I am a woman. I cannot claim therefore to be neutral but confess a hermeneutic of suspicion around the inbuilt masculinity of leadership discourse. I recognize a personal leaning towards further undoing the hegemonic influences at play around the nature and work of leadership as male, as priestly, and as fatherly, by focusing on God as Triune and seeking to allow the 'Other' – the one named Third – into the field of view.

I acknowledge therefore that the best analysis I can offer will be a situated evaluation and that a quest for pure objectivity is flawed (even when I am 'on the bench'). However, I want to maintain that '[d]ealing critically with a text is nevertheless possible, but it includes rather than precludes our presuppositions'.[12] I can still take a view, and it is from that position that I can now begin.

The Significance of Discourse

The starting point for my exploration of ecclesial leadership is its discourse rather than structures or orders of ministry where leadership most commonly operates. I am starting with a consideration of discourse because I understand that discourse is essentially creative being both meaning-making, and practice shaping. However, I acknowledge that choosing a discourse led approach might not seem to run with the grain of practical theological approaches which usually start from a consideration of practice. So, in this section, I want to explain why I think discourse is important, and why starting with discourse is significant for practical theology.

[11] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 3rd Ed. 2013), 406.
[12] Stiver, *Theology After Ricoeur,* 49.

First, I offer a few terms. Every social practice is made up of discursive and non-discursive elements, but the nature of discourse itself is more difficult to discern. Discourse in social theory refers to the structuring of knowledge, and to the structured ways ideas and theory are socialized in linguistic and social practices. It can also refer to the more particular written or spoken expressions of a field of knowledge, such as the discourse around literacy in schools, or leadership in the church. A discourse can simply be written or spoken language use.

An alternative way of defining discourse is as the site in which social forms of organization engage with systems of signs in the production of texts which reproduce or change the meaning and values which make up a culture.[13] Discourse can therefore become a site of struggle between conflicting interests.

A discursive event is understood to have a three-dimensional frame: the text itself whether written or spoken, the instance of the discursive practice, the production of the text, and the social aspect or practice in which it occurs. Specific written texts are regarded as 'one dimension of discourse: the written or spoken 'product' of the process of text production'.[14]

The totality of discursive practices within an institution or society and the relationships between them, are referred to as 'orders' of discourse.[15]

Operationalization refers to the 'putting into practice' of a new discourse, or new ideation.

A 'practice' in simple terms refers to an activity, or patterns of behaviour, or to convention – the practice of law for example. Discourse, as intimated above, is a form of social

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[13] Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, 'Social Semiotics,' in *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, eds., Margaret Wetherell, Taylor S., and Yates, S.J. (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2001), 295.
[14] Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2020), 3.
[15] Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change,* 43. Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 96.

practice, and both terms ‘discourse’ and ‘practice’, have what Fairclough calls ‘felicitous ambiguity’ as they can each refer to both event, and convention, and suggest one in the use of the other.[16]

There can also be ambiguity in the usage of the word ‘practice’ when the American spelling is used since it denotes both the noun and verb. This creates complication when seeking to tease out distinctions around and between entitative ‘practices’, and a non-entitative practice or the verb ‘practising’. So in this thesis the different spellings are retained aligning with the United Kingdom rule. Thus, using a ‘c’ refers to a noun and use of an ‘s’ indicates the verb. I will return to these distinctions again in chapter 8 where an exception is made in relation to the secular leadership model named as ‘leadership-as-practice’. In the ‘as-practice’ literature the term practice is used by scholars to indicate all forms of understanding around ‘practice’, and as a result as will be explained, scholars have needed to find alternative ways to distinguish between the noun and verb, or between entitative and non-entitative understandings.

Within the academy, the notion of practice can denote different theoretical understandings. Davide Nicolini, for example, identifies six different ways to theorize practice.[17] And rather than seek to synthesize these into one unifying theory of practice, Nicolini offers instead a ‘tool kit’ approach.[18] He argues that there is much to be gained in using these theories as separate but in combination. His main tenet is that “to study practice empirically we are better served by a strategy based on deliberately switching between theoretical sensitivities”.[19] Adopting a pluralist stance allows for us “to provide a thicker account of the world we live in” and “to exploit the strengths of the different

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[16] Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Ltd., 2001), 23.
[17] Davide Nicolini, *Practice Theory, Work, and Organization: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 9.
[18] Nicolini, *Practice Theory,* 213.
[19] Ibid.

theories in order to get a better grasp of the nexus of practices we live in".[20] Accordingly, in this project adopting this 'tool kit' idea, I intend to draw on three ways to explicate practice, namely, *praxis* (a series or set of routinized behaviours), as interactivity or field, and practice as 'know-how', which is linked to the idea of 'habitus'. I outline these three briefly here:

I use the term praxis to denote an established custom or routinized pattern of behaviours or activities, for example the ecclesial praxis of worship. It is the fact that a practice has become a pattern, or is routinized, which suggests that that practice discloses an underlying theory about what is being done, and therefore that practice and theory are inextricably joined. 'This conviction is often expressed in the use of the terminology of *praxis*, denoting a dialectic of theory and practice', a synthesis of committed action and proper theological understanding.[21]

Secondly, the notion of practice as being the sum of interpersonal interactivity is derived from the thinking of T. R Schatzki.[22] Essentially this approach understands series or chains of practices to interact so as to create a web, net, or field of interactivity. This approach foregrounds process and the inter-relations between actors. This approach is the intellectual antecedent or the necessary intellectual precursor for the development of a non-entitative leadership-as-practice model. I explain the 'Turn to Practice' at the beginning of chapter 8.

Thirdly, the notion of practise speaks to an understanding of accumulated or assimilated knowledge that accrues as skill. The theoretical device of 'habitus', deriving from Pierre

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[20] Nicolini, *Practice Theory,* 213.
[21] Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2019), 154.
[22] Theodore R. Schatzki, 'Introduction to Practice Theory' in *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory,* eds., Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin Knorr Cetina, Eike von Savigny (London: Routledge, 2001).

Bourdieu's cornerstone work which seeks to define the prerequisites for scientific discourse about human behaviour, is used to describe 'a system of dispositions',[23] or the ways of being resulting from organizing action. It also designates habitual states (especially of the body), and therefore the predisposition, inclination, and internalized bodily know-how that operates at an unconscious level so as to regulate and order human conduct and behaviours in society.[24] I will also consider this practice theory in chapter 8.

If I now 'zoom in'[25] on the specific social practice referred to in this project as 'discourse', it was Norman Fairclough who developed the field of critical discourse analysis ('critical' because it looks for absences, hidden values, and presumptions), and 'a social theory of discourse'. In doing so Fairclough changed 'the face of the social analysis of language'.[26] I trace my views to his work in the first instance, though he stands in line of others who pioneered what has come to be called the 'linguistic turn'.

The linguistic turn is the realization that language does not merely reflect reality, as much as create and construct it. The realization that 'knowledge comes in linguistic form and cannot be considered apart from language'[27] shifts language away from being merely a descriptive vehicle or a neutral information carrier. Gadamer writes, 'language is something other than a mere sign system denoting the totality of objects. A word is not just a sign'.[28]

Accordingly, it is not that knowledge or understanding or ideas are 'subsequently put into words' for transmission, but rather 'the way' understanding and knowledge of a subject 'comes to' is *within* the process of expression itself. So again, Gadamer writes, 'the way

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[23] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans., Richard Nice (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977), 72, and n1., 214.
[24] Ibid., 214.
[25] Nicolini, *Practice Theory,* 219.
[26] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, vii.
[27] Stiver, *Theology After Ricoeur,* 50.
[28] Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 434.

understanding occurs – whether in the case of a text or a dialogue with another person who raises an issue with us – is the coming-into-language of the thing itself'.[29] This is important for this thesis which is concerned with the coming-into-understanding of God himself within leadership discourse.

Particularly significant is the idea that 'a conversation has a spirit of its own, and that the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth within it – i.e., that it allows something to 'emerge' which henceforth exists'.[30] This notion of emergence through a process of conversation is one I will come back to because, if understanding, relationality, and agreement are understood to 'come to' in language-in-action, or a process of conversation-in-practise, then this will need to inform the ideation I propose in chapter 9.

Another influential voice is that of Wittgenstein who found that the specific, situated, and ongoing meaning of a word for a community is found in its usage, 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language'.[31] So meaning both comes 'to' in language[32] (Gadamer), and forms or crystallizes in 'this' context, 'this' way, at 'this' particular time (Wittgenstein). Language is thus the site where meaning comes-to, or comes-forth, and the site where meaning is shaped. It is the vehicle for 'meaning-making' in the widest sense for a social group.

Accordingly, it matters what we say, because saying makes it matter – literally. It is in the saying that meaning becomes and is materialized. Again, Wittgenstein pointed to this when he wrote, '[e]very sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life? – In use it *lives*.'[33] And it is such use that forms part of the 'language-game' of a community.[34] Thus the

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[29] Ibid., 386.
[30] Ibid., 401.
[31] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* trans. P.M.S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009), 25.
[32] Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 386, 403.
[33] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 135.
[34] Ibid., 8.

presence of, and naming of, a subject (or object) in discourse becomes constitutive for the subjectivity of that one as the ongoing use of that name or subject instantiates and establishes that one's subjectivity. Referring again to Wittgenstein, the meaning (of a word or linguistic form) or the subjectivity (of a character or subject), is understood to be conferred by its use in language.

It is because of the 'linguistic turn', that language (speech and written text) is now understood to be a means of social construction since through constant iteration of certain words, or terms in the language, the discourse comes to establish, identity, and instantiate belief, which in turn determines social behaviour and practice. It is because of this that I want to suggest there is a reasoned logic to approaching leadership through a focus on discourse. I lay out four propositions below that offer the theoretical groundwork for a discourse led approach and justify this approach within practical theology.

The first proposition is that discourse is itself a form of social practice. Fairclough viewed discourse as a form of social practice since it is not external to society, it is a social process, and because it is a socially conditioned mode of action. Discourse is a mode of historically situated social action.[35] Thus, language, speaking, writing, and the production of forms of text are forms of practice. These linguistic phenomena are a sort of social phenomena. By referring to language as a form of social practice I am signalling that I want to examine it in a socially and theoretically informed way.

However secondly, discourse is also constituting. It both constructs meaning and is constitutive of that meaning. It is 'meaning-making' in that it is creating with ongoing organizing regulatory effect such that 'discourse is seen as constituting reality for human

[35] Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 18,19.

beings'.[36] This constitutive view derives from the work of Michel Foucault which Fairclough incorporates into his analytic approach. 'Discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning.'[37]

A constitutive view involves seeing discourse as actively constituting or constructing society in various dimensions: 'discourse constitutes the objects of knowledge, social subjects and forms of 'self', social relationships, and conceptual frameworks'.[38] Thus, there are essentially three constructing aspects of the discourse. The first is in relation to social identities and subject positions for social subjects. The second is the construction of social relationships between people, and the third is the construction of systems of knowledge and beliefs. These three effects of discourse correspond to the identifying, relational, and ideational functions of language.[39]

Thirdly, there is a dialectical relationship to be acknowledged between discourse and sociality (identities, relations, structures, and systems). And if these are in a dialectical relationship, then determining effect is mutual. Causality does not work only one way. The constituting nature of discourse is socially shaping as there is ongoing re-ascribing of meaning to practice. Specific language use will have shaping and regulatory effect socially because ongoing iteration of a specific form in a particular use will control the meaning of that ideation. A simple and obvious modern example being the change in the meaning of the word, 'gay'.

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[36] Margaret Wetherell, 'Debates in Discourse Research,' in *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, 392. As an aside, 'constitutive' is used in its broad sense to denote both construction and instantiation of an idea, as well as then regulation and organization of those ideas.
[37] Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change,* 64.
[38] Ibid., 39.
[39] Ibid., 64.

In developing discourse analysis, Fairclough was seeking a systematic means to explore this dialectical relationship and the causality and determination between discursive practices, events, and texts, and the wider social and cultural structures and processes.[40] He identifies that discourse is put into practice in three ways. It is enacted becoming transformed into new ways of acting and interacting, it is inculcated as new styles or identities, and discourse is materialized in new structures and systems.[41]

This requires a structuralist understanding of discourse. Social realities are understood to be structured and determined *by* discourse in contrast to constructivism where meaning is only found *within* discourse. A structuralist view contends that discourses are intransitive enough to be studied as causal, that is, though it is accepted that all sociality is in flux, discourse does not change so quickly as to be without effect.

By focussing on the dialectical relationship between these elements, Fairclough relies on there being an ontological difference between the discursive (linguistic and semiotic) events, and the social events or structures (non-discursive) in which they take place, this requires a critical realist epistemology, which I will discuss further in chapter 3.

It is when one finds ontological separation between different kinds of social practices (discursive and non-discursive) that it becomes possible to question the determination of the one by the other.[42] Language use then is 'constitutive in both conventional, socially reproductive ways, and creative, socially transformative ways'.[43] And what is of significance for this thesis, is the view of discourse as constitutive 'contributing to the

[40] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis,* 93.
[41] Ibid., 233, 266, 369.
[42] Wetherell, 'Debates in Discourse Research,' 392.
[43] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis,* 92.

production, transformation, and reproduction of the objects (and … the subjects) of social life'.[44]

The fourth proposition is that within discourse, and the coming-to of understanding in a specific instance, within the expression of that language there seems to be an inbuilt change ability, and so in relation to outcomes, a notion of emergence. As we have seen, discursive practices contribute to reproducing social identities, relationships, and beliefs, to regulating meaning within that sociality, and to contributing to the transformation of a societal group or even wider society.[45] All of which depend on a mechanism or potential within the discourse itself that enacts change.

Thus, it is not only that discourse or discursive practices can be manipulated and changed, for example by rewording or by changing a sign, but that there seems to be within the expression of the words or sign itself an inherent creative ability. If I use theological language, one might say that there is a 'prophetic' quality to speech that is inbuilt into expression. This is reflected in the Christian scriptures where speech is portrayed as an act of creating, for example the refrain throughout the creation narrative, 'then God said, "Let …"'.[46]

To sum up so far, meaning and understanding, being and subjectivity, 'come to' in use in language with materializing effect. This is because there exists a dialectical relation between discourse, and social structures and practice, such that causality flows both ways. There are four propositions on which I rely: discourse is social practice, is constituting, has determining effect, and there is a creational ability in expression. These four underpin my analysis theoretically.

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[44] Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change,* 41.
[45] Ibid., 65.
[46] Genesis 1: 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29.

Accordingly, I propose that how the one we call God 'comes to' in the leadership discourse of the church is worth examining because that language has materializing effect, structuring the practices of leading, and determining whether they are theological. It is this that gives a warrant to look at ecclesial leadership through the lens of discourse. It is the significance of discourse for practice that provides the rationale for a discourse-led approach to examining ecclesial leadership.

Moreover, I want to suggest that it is this 'meaning-making' significance of discourse that is often overlooked in practical theology. I believe this is problematic because to seek to change leadership practice while using the same linguistic markers, the same semiotic vehicles, and ideational formations will serve only to re-iterate the current web of signifiers of leadership discourse, and thus instantiate the discourse itself. Such instantiation then serves only to undermine any attempts to reform practice since the essential structural signifiers within the language and discourse remain intact, subverting any actual change in practice.

So therefore, if one is interested in practical reforms or changing leadership practices, there is a *prior* need to start with discourse, and question it. The temptation to engage with the subject of ecclesial leadership leaving discourse as it is, has to be resisted.

An example of discourse within an ecclesial context operating as social practice that both constructs meaning and determines sociality, is the use of liturgy. This is an example of language moving in regular social transaction between the church and its people. The liturgy expresses what is to be believed and normalizes that belief for the group, and then through regular use it also regulates how that belief is experienced and received which has determining affect (and effect) on personal response. This is why the discourse is so significant within the worshipping community: liturgy constructs a belief system and establishes the ways and practices for expressing those beliefs, which then regulates and

determines how one experiences (and therefore responds to) those beliefs. Over a long period of time the liturgy has orchestrated, and conducted, the experience of faith.

Another example, that illustrates the determining enmeshment between discourse and the very material ways we experience our world, is noted by geographers. They study how 'discourse literally shapes landscapes; it brings new objects into being so that to walk over the countryside is, in effect, to walk over a landscape constructed by self-conscious human activity where what is 'natural' is highly 'cultural' '.[47] This idea of a landscape under construction can of course also be applied to religious discourse, to its architecture, and the very material ways that then shape what is experienced as spiritual.

However, if I am to consider how leadership discourse 'speaks' of God, if I am to look out for any bias or gap in the leadership discourse, then I cannot rely on structuralism in its positive register only. I need also to rely on structuralism in its negative register. What I mean is that if the 'meanings of words are derived not from fixed relationships between abstract signs, but from the accumulated dynamic social use of particular forms of language in different contexts'[48] then, where there is no 'accumulated dynamic social use', meaning cannot derive. (This recalls Wittgenstein's statement that meaning comes with use in language.[49])

So, I submit that if it is agreed that it is from the presence, and usage, of a semiotic vehicle in discourse that meaning is constituted, carried, and subjectivity is conferred, then, logically the reverse must also be true. Where a word, name, or sign is *not* present in the discourse, meaning, or signification cannot be attached to that ideation. If a word is not used, or not used for a purpose, or in a specific way, then that subject (its

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[47] Wetherell, 'Debates in Discourse Research,' 391.
[48] Janet Maybin, 'Language, Struggle and Voice: The Bakhtin/Volosinov Writings,' in *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, 65.
[49] See note 22 above.

subjectivity), and any meaning or significance it might have had in that context, will be absent.

Grace Jantzen uses a similar logic in her philosophy of religion and in relation to the experience of women (in the Christian West) within religion's masculine imaginary. She argues that human subjectivity is not just a given – it has to be achieved within discourse. Women are not able to become subjects in the masculinized religion of western Christendom where the language of discourse does not admit entry. 'If becoming a subject means entry into language, and if language is always already masculine, then, … a woman could achieve subjectivity, if at all, only to the extent that she became masculinized, entered into masculinist structures of rationality and discourse and did not rock the boat.'[50]

I will return to the work of Jantzen later in chapter 9, but it has long been the argument of the feminist voice that 'language must be recognized as a web of signification which constitutes us as subjects'.[51] Jantzen's argument is that for a woman to be heard requires a new imaginary in religion – an imaginary of natality.[52]

So, I am arguing that, where there is literally an absence of subject or of name, or a lack of expression and usage in a particular way or context, where there is such an omission then in that redundancy, meaning will drain away. Another way of stating this is that there will be no 'be-coming' of that idea, no 'coming to' of meaning in the language, no materializing of presence. Within the discourse that idea, or theme, name, or noun, will not derive meaning – and if I refer again to Wittgenstein – it cannot live.[53]

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[50] Grace M. Jantzen, *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 11.
[51] Ibid., 185.
[52] Ibid., 171.
[53] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 135.

This idea then extends to practice. When discourse does not itself instantiate a reform to practice, where it remains 'silent', then no matter how well intentioned that reform is, it will struggle to 'live'. An example of this is the perceived dilemma around lay ministry. There are real and valid attempts to 'open up' ministry to the laity, and to encourage the lay into leadership, yet real change is slow because the embedded structural signifiers in the discourse remain. The arguments for change stay within the confines of the existing discourse, and its embedded dualist ideations, which means the pre-set language around being lay or ordained pre-determines that difference remains in practice.

Accordingly, if subjectivity comes to the fore in the 'naming' and presence within the language, then there is import and significance to be assigned to the 'naming' of subjects in discourse, even to the degree that there is prophetic necessity to name if that subject is to be made known – since one of the functions of language is to make an unknown known. This has Scriptural resonance in relation to the naming of subjects in the Old Testament, as well as to the naming of God himself as Subject. This will become important for my project as I am asking how leadership discourse 'speaks' of God.

Before I end this section, to take the linguistic turn seriously, I must also acknowledge that language is understood to create and condition perception. It is not only about what we know, or knowing about something or someone, but also about 'how' we know. Language guides the ability to perceive, not the other way around. Language has a fundamental role in generating 'new forms of perception',[54] that is, a language category is a necessity to ensure experience does not remain a 'blind event'.[55] Torrance argues that language is 'an essential social condition of our interpreting the world, i.e., our indwelling it 'in depth''. He

[54] Alan J Torrance, *Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 342.
[55] Torrance, *Persons in Communion,* 338.

writes that, ‘we indwell the world by means of words and by the use of language’, as much as by visual, audial, or tactile means.[56]

There is then, I am suggesting, an occupation of experience within language itself, one that needs to be acknowledged, and realized. Language is an indwelling tool allowing for interiorization of ideas, terms, and concepts that becomes experiential.[57]

Further, I accept that power relations are embedded in discourse. The relations of power in discourse were first explored by Michel Foucault and his findings and the vast subject area that this is, are acknowledged – power operates behind the discourse and the discourse becomes a site of power struggle. What needs to be stated here is simply that, since the order of discourse is inherently powerful then who controls it, and what is being communicated by it, will be of critical importance for leaders and for the change they want to make; ‘discourse is the power which is to be seized’.[58]

Foucault however is described as a constructivist. His concern around discourse was not whether things exist materially or not, but where meaning comes from and how it is formed. He argued that nothing can have meaning outside of the discourse in which it is situated. Those who stand in the line of Foucault tend to take an all-embracing view of the discourse including all materiality into the discursive realm. However, a structuralist like Fairclough would argue that this loses key ontological distinction and ignores the dialectical relationship.

In this section, I have sought to provide a rationale for choosing a discourse led approach to the ecclesial leadership debate and lay out the theoretical groundwork. I am arguing that there is good reason to examine discourse first, as both constitutive and causal. In

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[56] Ibid., 343.
[57] Ironically though, despite employing this useful metaphor Torrance himself is critiqued by Simeon Zahl for unhelpful abstraction in language.
[58] Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change,* 51.

my examination of the leadership discourse, I am also arguing that a structuralist approach must be read in both positive and negative registers as both presence and absence in discourse will have meaning-making and shaping effect on practice.

Leadership Discourse in Context

I now turn to consider two contextualizing shifts: the first shift is a cultural shift in the church towards secularization, and the second is a cultural shift in society towards spirituality.

There is resistance to leadership language in the ministry of the church because it is associated with the importation of organizational technical approaches and an accompanying focus on managerialism. Martyn Percy is one critic whose large body of work affords me a starting diagnosis. As practitioner, Percy was ordained in the Anglican church and has also held senior leadership roles in the Academy. The works that I am considering here are those that he wrote up until 2017.

There are two diagnostic themes. One is that ecclesial leadership discourse and the Church of England's organizational approach need to correspond to the inbuilt complexity of being the Body of Christ. Percy argues that any organizing or leading approach must consider this complexity within its ecclesiology. Using the metaphor of herding cats, he argues that the 'very nature of the organization – a complex spaghetti of democracy and autocracy, synodical and Episcopal, local and national, clerical and lay, voluntary and professional – seems to mitigate against clarity of purpose and direction'.[59] The 'church embodies too many views to be too easily led'.[60]

[59] Martyn Percy, *Anglicanism: Confidence, Commitment and Communion* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Co. Ltd., 2013), 137.
[60] Percy, *Anglicanism,* 138.

Another diagnostic theme is around description of the church. Percy prefers to describe the church as an 'institution': 'a church is an institution, requiring leadership, not mere management'.[61] But, he argues that there has been a significant shift within the way the church conceives itself, a shift from comprehensive institution to a narrower member-based organization.[62] When the church is treated like an organization (he argues) it can only ever be managed and it will lean into self-preservation. Managing the church as an organization betrays an inadequate ecclesiology meaning it struggles with 'fragmentation, tribalism and polarization',[63] and decision making is by executive managers, not by theologians.

Thus Percy identifies a 'deeply deficient ecclesiology' which offers programmes to improve leadership that are 'too task-oriented, or too simplistic, based on deeply contested aims and objectives'.[64] He writes, 'the church might as well be a supermarket chain or car plant, the only difference being that we are 'selling' God and trying to increase our customer base through our outlets, (i.e. churches)'.[65] He argues that since ecclesiologies cannot be easily aligned it is 'hardly surprising that a collective vision for leadership in the church cannot be easily achieved, and attain consensus … the 'descriptive dilemma' in everyday ecclesial polity, lies at the very heart of some of the most infamous cases of leadership or managerial failure in the Church of England'.[66]

Combining these two themes, it is because the 'ecclesia' is both complex, and institution, that Percy objects to it being treated mechanistically: 'organizational-activism and management can't fill the gap vacated by theology, Christology, or pneumatology.

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[61] Percy, *Anglicanism,* 200. Martyn Percy, *Shaping the Church: The Promise of Implicit Theology* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2010), 114.
[62] Martyn Percy, *Future Shapes of Anglicanism: Currents, Contours, Charts* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017), 7.
[63] Percy, *Future Shapes of Anglicanism,* 7.
[64] Percy, *Shaping the Church*, 114.
[65] Percy, *Future Shapes of Anglicanism,* 14.
[66] Percy, *Shaping the Church,* 114.

Management can't replace God. If God – and theology, Christology, and pneumatology – are not our point of origin for addressing and transforming the church, then we will simply produce a secular reification; non-sacred or anti-sacred'.[67]

There is then against the secularization of society, a 'descriptive' dilemma that arises from a deficient ecclesiology that fails to reflect the inbuilt complexity of the true nature of the church, allowing for a misappropriation of secular approaches. Percy fears that the obsession with management will lead only to a 'vacuous polity'[68] which means leadership suffers in public life, and he foresees the end game as being a 'gradual emergence of a vacuum – of the absence of inspiration' so that the public turns away in the face of a 'vapid and ineffectual form of Christian witness'.[69]

Alongside the descriptive dilemma, Percy also identifies an emerging decline in and loss of theological leadership. The 'church lacks articulate theological leadership in many key internal functions',[70] and specifically that, 'theological literacy amongst the bishops is a growing problem'.[71] He writes that 'some parts of the Anglican Communion are now reduced to bishops being no more than regional managers of organizations (dioceses) struggling with money and resources, as well as being purveyors of spiritual sentiments that rarely impact outside the church. Most Anglican bishops are becoming managers, not leaders'.[72] He observes that as a result, there is 'an observable, inward turn: managing processes, crises, anxiety levels and so forth in the body of the church',[73] which results in a church that is 'over managed, and theologically under led'.[74]

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[67] Percy, *Future Shapes of Anglicanism,* 14.
[68] Ibid., 13.
[69] Ibid., 17.
[70] Ibid., 15.
[71] Ibid., 15.
[72] Ibid., 16.
[73] Ibid., 16.
[74] Ibid., 29.

Richard H. Roberts has also written against the '*uncritical* assimilation of managerialism' within the Church of England.[75] He links the adoption of a 'managerial modernity', that promised a reassertion of control and a promise of power, to the loss of identity and authority that Anglicanism had to face in the post war era. Roberts identifies the work of the Turnbull Report, 'Working as One Body' 1995, and 'Strategic Church Leadership' 1996, by Robin Gill and Derek Burke as being two key pieces of work in discourse that exemplify the change in ideology that has led to the aggregation of 'Anglican polity into a wider societal managerialism'.[76]

In particular, he critiques the language of the report 'Working as One Body'. The 'discourse employed is of course that of the new managerial *classe dirigiste*, and this may have its place – even in a church. There is an odd juxtaposition of a mechanical, functional language and the organic, theologically derived imagery of the 'body''.[77] He argues however that any theological justification for 'comprehensive leadership' and 'trusting followership' is in fact underpinned by an organizing rationale.

Percy has also critiqued the language of the Reform and Renewal documents: those 'not full of management-speak are saturated in membership-speak'.[78] He asks 'is it really the case that all that was needed to help shape the future of the church was a cocktail blend of organization, rationalization, simplification, centralization and deregulation?'[79] The reports do not 'trust theology – certainly not enough to root any of the reports in a generative and creative theological imagination'.[80] And in relation to what is known as the Green Report about senior leadership development and preferment, Percy writes, a 'total

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[75] Richard H. Roberts, *Religion, Theology and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 164, 188.
[76] Ibid., 167.
[77] Ibid., 170.
[78] Percy, *Future Shapes of Anglicanism,* 50.
[79] Ibid., 51.
[80] Ibid., 51.

absence of ecclesiology flows from this literature … It is steeped in its own uncritical use of executive management speak'.[81]

Thus, both Percy and Roberts express doubts over the assumption of a secularized leadership lexicon deriving from the secular context. The argument is that leadership language risks a narcissism which richer forms of institutional oversight arguably avoid.[82] This is linked to Percy's criticisms of the current archiepiscopacy and the model of charismatic leadership. Yet despite being critical of elite and episcopal executive power, he does not actually question from a theological point of view the model of ordination for leadership function. Instead, he links any issues in the way ordination functions to the 'professionalization' of the clergy.

It was Anthony Russell in 1980 who argued that the adoption of 'professionalism' was to combat a loss of clerical identity. This means that 'clergy in contemporary society occupy a role which principally reflects attitudes, methods, and practices which were current in the mid-nineteenth century'.[83] And therefore the 'shape and structure of the clergyman's role are in danger of becoming less a means of facilitating the church's ministry, and more a problem and a barrier'.[84]

Russell identifies several areas of dysfunction around the leadership role of clergy. One of which is whether the form of a 'professionalized' ordination is a suitable vehicle for clerical leadership noting the lack of scriptural sanction, and its elitism – 'the notorious passivity of the laity is in some way a consequence of the form in which Church of England leadership is exercised'.[85]

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[81] Ibid., 34.
[82] Ibid., 53.
[83] Anthony Russell, *The Clerical Profession* (London: SPCK, 1980), 291.
[84] Ibid., Russell was writing when all priests were male.
[85] Ibid., 294.

Russell also observes that the inability to respond quickly to altered social circumstances is a facet of a heavily institutionalized culture and roles that have developed high levels of resistance and inertia. Thus, the present system of professionalized ordination has proven 'to be peculiarly inflexible as a mode of leadership', such that it is 'impervious to the impress of social change and has not responded to the new conditions of the twentieth century'.[86] He concludes that because of this increasingly problematic institutional form, 'the Church is being called to re-examine the vehicle of its priestly ministry and to discover whether there is not much in the received pattern which … merely serves to reinforce the marginality of the contemporary Church'.[87]

Another commentator who questions whether the vehicle of ordination and the ministry of priest is appropriate for leadership is Robin Greenwood.[88] He recognizes that a coherent statement and rationale for priesthood is lacking in the Anglican Church, and in the absence of any theological statement as to what is meant by the expression 'parish priest' there is inherent conflict with 'laity'.[89] Greenwood avoids conflating leadership with ordination, calling for a re-examination, and in relation to the dysfunction of dioceses – 'the clock is ticking, time is running out for inherited patterns of church'.[90]

Significantly, for this project Greenwood argues that the root of inspiration for ecclesial life should be a church that worships the Trinity. 'To root a conceptuality of ordination in an eschatological-trinitarian ecclesiology, mirroring the ontology and the passionate cause of God, provides a coherent path towards … recognizing all the ministries as equally

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[86] Ibid., 295.
[87] Ibid., 305.
[88] Robin Greenwood, *Transforming Priesthood: A New Theology of Mission and Ministry* (London: SPCK, 1994), 1.
[89] Greenwood, *Transforming Priesthood,* 3.
[90] Robin Greenwood, *Transforming Church: Liberating Structures for Ministry* (London: SPCK, 2002), 8.

representative of that of Christ in the character and task of the Church.'[91] This offers a relational basis for the 'many leaderships' within the church's ministry.[92]

It is apparent that against a context of secularization and managerialism, the incursion of a leadership paradigm and leadership language has been resisted by some in ecclesial discourse. There are other writers who prefer to reach for alternative vocabulary based on ministerial or sacramental service, as I will mention in chapter 2. Yet since these can carry unhelpful gender, or elitist associations, and can still struggle to shed a presumption towards hierarchy and differentiation, I want to maintain that the ideation of 'leading', as distinct from managing or organizing, remains a useful term with which to engage in an ecclesial context.

This is because an ideation of leading has inter-disciplinary reach, it is multi valent, and it can accommodate corporate and corporeal complexity. It can also carry a deep sense of the sacred as will be seen, and since leadership language is on the ascendant societally, 'it is not surprising that the language of leadership has moved into the church and now influences the discussion about ministry'.[93] It is, therefore, important to explore ways to reconceive the discourse of leadership theologically.

Shift towards Spirituality

The incursion of secularism and managerialism into the church sits against an opposing shift in wider culture towards spirituality, and subjectivity. I introduce these two ideas in brief below.

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[91] Greenwood, *Transforming Priesthood,* 150-151.
[92] Greenwood, *Transforming Church,* 32.
[93] Helen Cameron, *Resourcing Mission: Practical Theology for Changing Churches* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 119.

I would like to suggest that since the end of the 20th century, and the decline in appeal of institutional religion, there has been a noticeable cultural move towards, and interest in, the experiential and the spiritual. 'Spirituality' at its most grammatically simple, denotes the state, condition, or behaviour that is described by the adjective 'spiritual', and spiritual as an adjective describes that which is of spirit, or of the 'breath'[94] either human or divine. Spirituality as a basic concept thus speaks to the ways of life, to taking a 'full' breath or a 'deep' breath metaphorically, and thus at a basic level it sits theoretically opposite to that which is shallow, or tight, constricted, choked, or dead.

In the New Testament, the adjective *pneumatikos,* (translated spiritual, of spirit, or spirit man), is used by the apostle Paul in opposition to the concept of the 'flesh' referring to any attitudes or human expressions that are contrary to the Spirit of God.[95] This difference seems to lie at the heart of a New Testament understanding of spirituality: 'if according to the flesh you live, you are destined to die, but if by spirit the practises of the body you put to death, you will live'.[96] Spirituality then according to the Apostle, seems to be about working out that choice.

However within the church, different ecclesial streams have come to characterize contrasting approaches to spirituality. So for example, Ann Loades identifies Anglican spirituality as meaning 'a conscious relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the indwelling of the Spirit, in the context of a community of believers'.[97] Philip Sheldrake by contrast, writing with a Jesuit background, shapes spirituality in terms of human desire;

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[94] 'Spirit' in Hebrew is 'ruach' or 'pneuma' in Greek, which can be translated as spirit, wind, or as breath.
[95] Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality: A Brief History* (London: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2013), 1.
[96] Romans 8.13. *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament,* ed., J.D. Douglas (Carol Stream, Il: Tyndale Publishers, Inc., 1990).
[97] Ann Loades, 'Anglican Spirituality' in *The Oxford Handbook of Anglican Studies*, eds., M.D. Chapman, S. Clarke, & M. Percy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 149.

‘Desire haunts us. In its deepest sense, it is a God-given dimension of human identity. As such, desire is what powers all human spirituality’.[98]

Within a contemporary understanding of the term spiritual, Sheldrake identifies a number of aspects present. So for example, spirituality is about integration, that which is whole. It speaks to the transcendent, and the sacred, and it is frequently referred to in relation to the quest for meaning and purpose. And lastly it is linked to a notion of thriving, and thus to a notion of flourishing.[99] It is this latter understanding that underpins many of the interpretations and applications of spirituality that occur culturally. I will discuss specifically the notion of secular spirituality and workplace spirituality later in this chapter.

When I refer to the notion of spirituality within the church, from a purely Christian theological perspective, I will be referring to how the Life-breath of God, the Holy Spirit, is made apparent, or realized, or disclosed in a believer’s own walk of faith, or in the church’s calling to the world. In addition, I will be seeking to develop the idea of movement, of becoming, of process and emergence, that which is intimated by the original semantic connection to the activity of ‘breathing’, and which maps onto the Move of Spirit.

It is because the notion of spirituality, both culturally in its broadest sense and from a Christian perspective, contains a notion of ‘becoming’ (of process and emergence) within it that there is a material link into the ideation of practice and practising. Roger Gottlieb writes that spirituality ‘begins in movement – away from what we come to see as unreal, painful, disappointing, trivial, or meaningless and towards the ultimate, true, vital, real, or

[98] Philip Sheldrake, *Befriending our Desires* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2016), xii.
[99] Ibid., 3.

sacred'.[100] And, practice is linked to spirituality in that 'move away from', for it is through ongoing practising that the S/spirit life can be brought to bear in the body.

There is then I think, an intrinsic link to, and a necessary understanding of, 'practise' that is embedded within any interpretation of spirituality, as indicated by the Apostle Paul. There can be no effective Spirit-talk or spiritual intelligence in the church without a turn to practise and bodies, precisely because the body is the place and site of the Spirit's dwelling and operation. I will return to this in more detail in chapter 7 when I consider the work of Eugene Rogers and Simeon Zahl, but it is this link that I am seeking to tease out in respect to the relation between the church and the Spirit of God and His leading. That is, I want to suggest that it is in the 'flow' of practising the Spirit-relation in community that we come to learn the necessary 'know-how' of the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The cultural move towards and interest in spirituality is connected to, and has arguably been driven by, the shift towards a focus on subjectivity and the self. It was Peter Berger who first identified this 'subjective turn' in 1979.[101] He observed that identity and security for many centuries were found in the object of the Divine such that one's subjectivity was never an issue. God was stated Subject, and an understanding of self was reliant upon God being at that centre. But following the Enlightenment project, when that which was called God was removed from that Subject centre, institutions failed to provide answers and provide the objectivity that 'this' is how it is.

Accordingly, the 'self' struggles to know identity and security, and there is increasing need to find out 'who I am'. [102] Berger argues that this means that in the face of increasing uncertainty an individual 'is compelled to turn inward, toward his own subjectivity, to

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[100] Roger S. Gottlieb, *Spirituality: What It Is and Why It Matters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 7.
[101] Peter L. Berger, *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1979).
[102] Berger, *The Heretical Imperative*, 21.

dredge up from there whatever certainties he can manage. This inward turning is subjectivisation'.[103] He argues that the spiritual space for formal Christianity within culture collapsed as modern consciousness moved from a sense of fate to personal choice. Further modernity multiplied that choice, and thus reduced the scope of that which was experienced as destiny. It is this necessity of choice in the contemporary era, that Berger has called 'the heretical imperative'.[104]

The subjective turn is therefore a turn away from the previous objective certainties of duty and institution that ordered one's life. The taken-for-granted manner in which pre-modern institutions ordered a human life has been eroded, and even more so in a post-modern world: 'the outside world becomes more questionable, and his inner world becomes more complex'.[105] Thus what was previously self-evident, has now become an occasion to choose for myself. But ever-increasing complexity within ever increasing choice has led to ever deeper cycles of personal reflection, anxiety, and introspection. And it is this, coinciding with the development of psychology, neuroscience, and the science of health and well-being, that has led to burgeoning interest in spirituality, in the 'wholeness' or 'well-ness' milieu, and to the interest in spirituality in its broader generic sense of 'breath', life, and flourishing.

Accordingly, in post war Britain, a popular 'spirituality' movement has grown up outside the confines of the established church as organized religion has struggled to respond to the needs for a more experiential spirituality. Indeed, the shift towards spirituality only exposed the decline of the church. So much so, that sociologists Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead undertook a seminal study to discover whether there had in fact been a spiritual revolution.

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[103] Berger, *The Heretical Imperative*, 21.
[104] Ibid., 30, 31.
[105] Ibid., 22.

The argument was that a spiritual revolution will have occurred when 'subjective-life' spirituality, where the primary source of identity is the individual themselves, overtakes the higher calling of traditional institutions of the establishment, such as the church, termed 'life-as religion'. They offered a 'subjectivization thesis' to explain both the decline of traditional forms of religion, the 'congregational domain', and the growth of spirituality, termed the 'holistic milieu'. Heelas and Woodhead specifically relate this subjectivization thesis to the sociological subjective turn identified by Berger, as mentioned above.[106]

The question researched by Heelas and Woodhead is whether the claim that there has been a spiritual revolution can be proven empirically. They did this by researching in Kendal, Cumbria, whether the holistic life activities that are associated with 'subjective-life' spirituality attract more people than the congregational activities of 'life-as religion'. Several shifts in people's attitudes and the way they consume religion were noted. One of the shifts is the growth in a distinct Christian spirituality that is neither 'life-as-religion' nor 'subjective-life' spirituality – a Christian spirituality that is personal experience of the sacred transcendent God. This is spirituality that is devoted to God, and thus both subjective, and focused on something that is external to self, the authors describe it 'life-as spirituality'.[107]

One of the conclusions of the study is that the 'associational subjective-life spirituality has not eclipsed associational life-as religion either in Britain (or in the USA), even though the congregational domain is declining in both countries and the holistic milieu is growing'.[108] The reason for this is the relative success of congregations that offer experiential difference, and 'life-as spirituality'. This prevented a decline in the congregational domain overall. However, the authors argue that it looks very much as though some 'revolution'

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[106] Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 2.
[107] Heelas and Woodhead, *The Spiritual Revolution*, 6.
[108] Ibid., 75.

has occurred or is occurring in significant sectors of the general culture, and to that extent 'proponents of the spiritual revolution claim – or something close to it – have got it right'.[109]

So, within the wider or broader cultural landscape there is increase and growth in the holistic milieu that would amount to a subjectivization pattern. However, the fact that society is secularized overall is explained by the fact that the holistic milieu to date has attracted a relatively small constituency and has not had wide enough appeal to compensate the overall decline in the religious congregational domain.

The Kendal study is useful for this thesis as it offers a case study that confirms a move to spirituality and offers an example of the kind of contextual evidence that has led to pressure for reform in the organization and leadership of the Church of England. The study is also useful in relation to the ways of leadership because the assessment by Heelas and Woodhead of the relative successes of different types of churches that have withstood decline speaks pointedly to varied practices in ecclesial leadership. The stalling of any spiritual 'revolution' in the holistic milieu overall is largely due to the observable success of those churches that offer an experiential 'life-as spirituality'. In contrast, clergy of established churches that have maintained a formal and more disconnected ritualized offering, have overseen decline.

As the search for spirituality in society has become more popular, it has also become marketable: religion has been commodified, 'repackaged, rebranded and then sold in the marketplace of ideas'.[110] According to Carrette and King, 'the term spirituality has now become 'the 'brand-label' for the search for meaning, values, transcendence, hope, and

[109] Ibid., 72-73.
[110] Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 15.

connectedness in ‘advanced capitalist’ societies’.[111] And since spirituality is now the subject of personal choice, it can be adopted and adapted by anyone, and therefore exploited.

Carrette and King argue that there are few words in the English language as ‘vague and woolly’ as the notion of spirituality.[112] This is the burden of the post-modern concept of spirituality. It is indeed so vague it can usefully carry multiple meanings without precision and avoiding offence. There is therefore inherent within this formulation of spirituality, both a nod towards, and the separation from, religious expression and God. Instead, it is the development of the field of psychology that has provided a way for the market to embrace religion through the language of spirituality and remove its threat to the status quo. In effect, the territorial takeover of religion by psychology (individualization) has become the platform for the takeover of spirituality by capitalism (corporatization).[113]

The commercialization of spirituality means companies claim to be able to offer peace of mind, divine connection, and personal satisfaction commodified in anything from zen diffusers to wellbeing clinics. The corporate machine has utilized the cultural cachet of both subjectivity and spirituality, and makes a profit out of both. Accordingly, big business can pay lip service to the ‘things that matter’, selling us a holistic lifestyle, well-being, and purpose, without having to engage with or adjust their behaviour according to the values that are being represented, and which they apparently uphold.

For this reason, the notion of spirituality cannot be adopted uncritically as the discourse around spirituality is itself re-creating and commodifying its own spiritual content, and it can become anything we choose. Nonetheless, the rise of interest in spirituality in culture

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[111] Carrette and King, *Selling Spirituality*, 32.
[112] Ibid., 30.
[113] Ibid., 79.

does suggest that there is a hunger and need for spiritual engagement and experience that the church is failing to meet.

Another outcome of the cultural shift towards spirituality is its acceptability within the organizational sphere. Workplace spirituality is not now taboo but recognized as important for the wellbeing of employees. This has not traditionally been the place where religion has been found, but there are now many secular leadership theorists who shape organizational values, delineate leadership, and operate office spaces with a notion of spiritual well-being very much in mind.

The question is not if spirituality, experiential well-being, and meaning have place at work; the question is now 'how can spirituality add value to what we do?' This means that the spirituality of leadership and management is the subject of a burgeoning literature, as evidenced by the establishment of the 'Journal of Management, Spirituality, and Religion' in 2004,[114] the title offering an unusual mix of subject field.

'Secular spirituality' is broadly about the practice of virtues which promote well-being, while 'spiritual leadership theory' is about the cultivation, promotion, and maintenance of virtue in, and for the benefit of, the collective endeavour. Examples might be, how the organization hires staff ensuring there is congruence with the company's mission statement or policy; or requiring attention is given to nurturing organizational vision, and corporate character, teaching staff ethics, or valuing its staff in 'away' days.

When it comes to spiritual leadership specifically, secular definitions vary as 'spiritual leadership is itself in the eye of the beholder',[115] though generally it is considered that spiritual leadership will connect virtue with transformation for social good. Leadership

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[114] Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion, first established 2004 by Routledge.
[115] Scott T. Allison, Craig T. Kocher, and George R. Goethals, *Frontiers in Spiritual Leadership: Serving the Better Angels of our Nature* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 4.

academics at the Jepson School of Leadership suggest that spiritual leadership refers to the process by which a person or persons within a group give it life-affirming aims and the power to bring those aims to fruition. Spiritual leadership will have the ability to elevate, it will have transforming capacity, and serves a higher moral purpose.[116] 'Effective spiritual leaders are virtuous individuals who sanctify everyday experience, possess a socially relevant purpose in life, have a well-developed conscience, and are committed to promoting human values.'[117]

A characteristic of contemporary workplace spirituality is a focus on spiritual practices. So, for example, Margaret Benefiel asks how work practices combine to create a workplace that fully engages the human spirit so that the individual can find fulfilment and purpose. She critiques the fact that very often religious individuals are trained for individual spirituality but not for and in 'organizational spirituality'.[118] Benefiel goes on to argue that one will be an effective leader if one is spiritually grounded in spiritual practices in community.[119]

Another feature of contemporary spirituality is that the workplace itself is identified as being a 'spiritual location'. Ritter and Mahan write that 'although the workplace has been largely considered a secular space since the industrial revolution, this is changing … today the workplace is often understood as a location for the sacred'.[120] The focus of these authors is in showing how attention on the spiritual is particularly well suited to, and necessary in, a digital age which has opened up new ways of working. This entails new ways of constructing self in the 'online' social space, reintegrating shared vision, collective

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[116] Allison, Kocher, and Goethals, *Frontiers in Spiritual Leadership,* 2.
[117] Ibid., 6.
[118] Margaret Benefiel, *Soul at Work: Spiritual Leadership in Organizations* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 2005), 11.
[119] Ibid*.,* 147.
[120] Ruth Ann Ritter and Jeffrey H. Mahan, 'Spirituality at Work: Servant Leadership in the Western Workplace,' in *Practical Spiritualities in a Media Age,* eds., Curtis D. Coats, and Monica M. Emerich (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 36.

approaches, and re-discovering connected understandings of who we are, and how we lead ourselves together. People now 'seek to develop and articulate individualized spiritual identities and practices, to come together in networks around shared values and creative projects, and to be engaged by leaders in less hierarchical, and in more conversational ways'.[121]

The exponential nature and internal synergy for good that spirituality brings means that ideal leadership leans into a vocabulary of the mythic, the hero, and ultimately the sacred and sacrificial. It is also noted that a blended discourse is widely used, for example, in relation to the mode of 'servant' leadership which 'is understood as a spiritual practice that seeks to transform organizational performance and increase satisfaction for both the employer and leader'.[122] Referring to the work of Robert Greenleaf who first wrote about the servant as leader, Ritter and Mahan write, 'in essence, Greenleaf invited business audiences to think of leadership as spiritual practice'.[123]

However, when I turn back to the ecclesial leadership discourse within the Church of England, even though there is interest in personal retreats, spiritual direction, and tertiary orders following different spiritualities, I do not see an equivalent language of spirituality, or a call for workplace spirituality, being incorporated into leadership discourse in the same way. The cultural shift towards an expressed or explicit spirituality does not seem to be likewise reflected in the public leadership discourse of the church. Yet in the secular sphere, spirituality is acknowledged to be 'the room' in which leadership operates. A notion of spirituality and of the sacred is understood to be essential. Keith Grint writes,

> I will also suggest that the sacred is less the elephant in the room – the thing which dare not be mentioned – and more the room itself – the space within which

[121] Ibid., 39.
[122] Ibid., 37.
[123] Ibid., 42.

> leadership works. That is one reason why it is seldom raised – because it forms the framework within which leadership works.[124]

Here the notion of leadership is being mapped onto the high value notion of the sacred as space-making. Suffice it to say, the notion of space and the sacred resonates deeply with the Christian scriptures which makes it all the more curious as to why ecclesial leadership discourse fails to make its spirituality explicit.

Martyn Percy, for example, wraps his pneumatology in terms such as implicit wisdom, sacred sagacity, empathy, and attentiveness. The register of spiritual language is muted and oblique. He seems uncomfortable in making direct personal mention of the Spirit. In fact, mentions are rare. So, for example, despite stating explicitly that he is introducing 'a discourse of spirituality into the discussion of leadership' in chapter 7 entitled 'Herding Cats? Leading the Church (of England) in a New Age', in Shaping the Church, there are just two mentions of the Spirit, and one of the human spirit in this chapter,[125] and in the concluding chapter, the Holy Spirit is mentioned only once, on the last page.[126]

Such scant usage has to be acknowledged as Percy is himself critical of a theologically deficient leadership discourse, which seems therefore to indicate an underlying disassociation or dissonance at work in his own writings. However, Percy is not alone in this and a disassociation around the person of Spirit is recognized in wider theological discourse by Simeon Zahl who has identified abstraction in soteriology.

Zahl's argument is that Christian experience and practice of God is to be understood and described first and foremost as experience of the Holy Spirit in actual lived ways in the world.[127] And his 'chief contemporary theological target … is a certain kind of

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[124] Keith Grint, *Leadership: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 117;
[125] Percy, *Shaping the Church*, 128, 'food for the spirit'; 129, 'the Holy Spirit', 'the Spirit'.
[126] Ibid., 176, 'in and through the life and work of the Holy Spirit'.
[127] Simeon Zahl, *The Holy Spirit and Christian Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 52.

complacency with theological abstraction that is often apparent in discussions of the Spirit'.[128] Zahl goes on to describe such abstraction as a 'swerve' away from experience and the Person of the Spirit.[129]

I will consider Zahl in the next chapter, but at this stage a dissonance in the leadership discourse of the church is noted. I observe that leadership discourse has absorbed a shift towards secularized approaches to the point that this has become the subject of many critiques, but the cultural shift towards spirituality has not been embraced in ecclesial leadership discourse in the same way.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explain why I approach leadership through discourse, and I outline my approach to discourse. There are four propositions on which I rely. I also highlight some of the ideas arising from the linguistic turn, and the significance for subjectivity that comes from word use in discourse. Put simply, what is said matters because in the saying, meaning is materialized.

I have then noted two oppositional shifts in cultural context that create the backdrop for Anglican leadership discourse. The first, secularization and related aspects such as managerialism, are the subject of critique by academics like Martyn Percy. These critiques identify several critical themes with a common complaint around theological deficiency such that Percy observes the church is 'over managed and theologically under led'.[130]

The second cultural shift is towards spirituality. I have noted the Kendal study, and that within the secular workplace there is positive engagement with spirituality. However,

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[128] Zahl, *The Holy Spirit,* 70.
[129] Ibid., 71.
[130] Percy, *Future Shapes of Anglicanism,* 29.

curiously, engagement with spirituality is less obviously reflected in ecclesial leadership discourse and instead an abstraction around the Spirit is noted.

Therefore, given the nature of the cultural context in which the Church of England now finds itself, and the fact of the reforming agenda that is still being pursued within the Church, I believe there is merit in investigating the leadership discourse further to see how God is being portrayed theologically. How does discourse 'say' God – what does it 'tell'? Indeed, if the practices and ways of leading are being found to be problematic theologically, then given the constructing and constituting effect of discourse, questioning how the leadership discourse 'speaks' of God or portrays God becomes materially important.

So, therefore, if I want to find out how leadership discourse 'speaks' of God, arguably I need to start with the most foundational question of all:

How does leadership discourse 'say' God's name?

Chapter 2

Reviewing the Literature

In this chapter I will locate my study in practical theology and survey some of the existing literature that pertains to ecclesial leadership.

A practical theological endeavour

Practical theology is intrinsically interested in the nature of the church, what it does, and how it does it. It is therefore 'inherently inter-disciplinary' with a 'focus on the lived practices of persons and communities within their social contexts'.[131] In this thesis I am drawing together into conversation systematic theology, ecclesiology, and leadership studies, and by virtue of this inter-disciplinary stance it is sited within the field of practical theology.

Furthermore, because I want to answer the question posed at the end of chapter 1 using content analysis, I need to situate my research within a sub-discipline of theology that provides the tools for empirical research. This again means it is rightly located within the field of practical theology, which is actively engaged with, and embracing of, empirically based investigative methods.

Thirdly, this thesis sits in the field of practical theology because the intent is to be not only explicitly inter-active, but also integrative. Practical theology affords an integrative opportunity within the field of theology and allows for inter disciplinary approaches across the social sciences to 'speak' to each other. The integrative quality of practical theology means that it can engage with both spirituality, and pneumatology. So, although one

[131] Joyce Ann Mercer, 'Interdisciplinarity as a Practical Theological Conundrum,' in *Conundrums in Practical Theology,* eds., Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Joyce Ann Mercer (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 163.

might assume a practical theological approach to be out of place within the academic theology department of the University of Oxford, I would argue that on the contrary, practical theology can be very much at home, creating integrative conversation between sub-disciplines, allowing for synergetic subject outcomes.

From a theological perspective, the imperative towards both inter-disciplinarity and integration is necessary if this thesis is itself to be true to the nature and activity of the Holy Spirit. Pneumatology is inherently integrative, connective, and creative, and thus engagement in this field demands an integrative method that reflects this. Therefore, I am seeking to pull pneumatology and ecclesial leadership into creative conversation, and seeking to employ a method that will allow a proposal to come forth that is itself integrative, and unifying.

Claire Wolfteich, however, has written that practical theology and spirituality are best understood as disciplinary 'partners' since the study of spirituality keeps practical theology focused on the lived experience of faith.[132] But rather than a partnering that retains distinction, I am aiming for a more realized synthesis between pneumatology and practice. This is to counter 'silo' thinking and the separatism so prevalent in classical approaches to theology. I want to allow for a synthesis of ideas to emerge that is entirely original while simultaneously acknowledging being deeply rooted sociologically, theologically, and ecclesiologically.

Lastly it is the reality, and the day to day expression of belief in leadership that sets the agenda for my thesis, which is why a closed theological method is inadequate for this task.[133] I am concerned with the embodiment of religious belief in our leading and whether

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[132] Claire E. Wolfteich, 'Spirituality,' in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. B. J. Miller-McLemore (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012), 329.
[133] Paul Avis, *The Methods of Modern Theology: The Dream of Reason* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986), 216.

what we do is theological 'all the way through'.[134] A practical theological approach brings an assessment to that articulation of faith, and therefore as part of the broad practical theological endeavour it is warranted to question whether there is a theological deficit underlying leadership discourse.

On the other hand, the fact that I am placing this project in practical theology when my starting point is a consideration of discourse brings me up against the priority that is usually assigned to practice in practical theological approaches. However, for the reasons outlined at the beginning of chapter 1, discourse is being treated as a form of social practice, and given it is socially shaping, a discourse-led approach is consonant with a practical theological enquiry.

In addition, by starting with discourse, I am not striking out alone. Andrew Todd, for example, also begins a practical theological project with a discourse analytic approach: he considers the interaction of different voices in the work of biblical interpretation by analysing conversation patterns in three bible study groups.[135] He discovers that interpretation is led less by a set reading strategy or specific theological stance, and more by the specific turns in conversation that project a preferred response. Interpretation then becomes something that is negotiated within a group through their conversation. That the group's hermeneutic is derived through conversation identifies that for the group their most important outcome is insight rooted in a shared learning experience.

Todd's accent on conversation is of interest to me and I will explore in chapter 9 the idea of conversation as a carrier of meaning-making for a group.

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[134] Helen Cameron, and Authors, *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 51.
[135] Andrew J Todd, 'The Interaction of Talk and Text: Re-contextualising Biblical Interpretation,' in *Practical Theology* 6, no. 1 (2013): 69-85.

Marcus Moberg, as far as I know, offers the only other critical discourse analysis undertaken of Church of England synodical documents.[136] Moberg's focus is new market and media driven ideations within the formal leadership discourse of the established Protestant Western church. Within this work, which includes analysis of strategy documents, reports, protocols, and policy documents representing the official voice of leadership in the established churches, Moberg looks at a few texts from the Church of England General Synod.

Moberg takes a structuralist view of discourse and relies on Norman Fairclough quoting extensively from his work. Moberg's aim is to show that change in the character and function of social institutions tends to be discourse driven 'to a considerable degree',[137] and that religious institutions are no exception. Moberg argues that apart from a few notable exceptions, sociological studies of religion have,

> rarely devoted any serious attention to the role of language and discourse as a key component in contemporary processes of religious change. Indeed, in spite of the wide proliferation and establishing of discourse theory and discourse analysis throughout the humanities and social sciences, discourse analytic approaches have only fairly recently started to become more widely utilized in the academic study of religion.[138]

Moberg's focus is the way in which the discourses of marketization and mediatization have worked to effect institutional religious change. He writes, 'it is important to recognize … that actual, practical changes in the organizational structure, communication practices, and modus operandi of social institutions tend to be preceded by changes in discursive practices and changing institutional and organizational imaginaries'.[139] This is significant for my project since the Church of England is in a process of reform.

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[136] Marcus Moberg, *Church, Market, and Media: A Discourse Approach to Institutional Religious Change* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).
[137] Moberg, *Church, Market, and Media,* 153.
[138] Ibid., 11.
[139] Ibid., 153.

His analysis shows that marketization is already underway with new ideational and discursive ideational frameworks in place within the European church. The church is not immune to its own socio-cultural context. Moberg's main point is that the adoption of a marketization discourse, and new public management (NPM) ideals, on the part of the institutional Christian church, serves to introduce new language, and ideational and discursive formations (IDFs) into the ecclesial discourse. Through these new Church imaginaries are constructed and new church practices therefore become possible.

To obtain this evidence he conducted a content analysis by screening each document for keywords and traced the vocabulary and ideational networks around 'marketization' and 'mediatization' through each of the texts.

Moberg shows that the general order of discourse within the Anglican church is adopting and internalizing ideational and discursive formations that originate in the marketplace. There is recognition of the adoption of a market metaphor to underpin the thinking of the nature of the entity of church, and the adoption of market language then assumes a correlation of organizational type between church and secular organization. His argument is that these discursive forms permeate through ecclesial thinking and then reproduce, such that they become embedded in Anglican practice.

Moberg's identifies a narrative of radical decline post war. 'Since the early 1990s, the CofE has consequently devised a number of strategic initiatives aimed at stemming the state of perpetual decline that it finds itself in'.[140] Examples are the Fresh Expressions initiatives which extended across parish boundaries, the Mission Shaped Church Report of 2004, and more recently the Reform and Renewal initiative.

[140] Ibid., 102.

Part of the change narrative Moberg identifies is the extension of a 'strategy discourse', for example, paragraph 39 of the Resourcing the Future report, 2015, where the discourse around strategy is identified as 'critical' because the recommendations of the report are identified as being 'critically dependent' on the capacities of dioceses to be strategic. The language of the report is around 'strategic capability' and 'strategic capacity' which is named as being pivotal for growth. Moberg argues that the use of terms such as 'strategic capacity', 'institutional agility', and 'proactive investment in growth', illustrates 'the employment of market- and NPM associated vocabulary and terminology and the technologization of discourse' in the Church.[141] The repetition of these words creates emphasis. The formalized style is prescriptive offering measures that the Church of England must necessarily adopt to achieve their goals.

Another example Moberg offers is the 2014 document, 'Talent Management for Future Leaders and Leadership Development for Bishops and Deans: A New Approach, Report of the Lord Green Steering Group', in which he identifies a 'complex meshing of religious genres with inspirational, strategy and managerial genres'.[142] The report intends 'a 'conscious inter-weaving' of 'spiritual and strategic formation' among its senior ordained leaders' revealing an intention to form clergy who demonstrate 'strategic and spiritual gifts'.[143] Moberg identifies this to be an example of a 'hybrid' discourse.

Moberg writes that the 'hybrid' quality of the discourse reveals there is a new type of professional church leadership that has taken on the characteristics of the corporate manager. So, for example, there is deployment of an entirely different lexical field around notions such as risk which is a managerial concept. Phrases such as 'advocating credible risk', and 'creating spaces of safe uncertainty', 'proposing radical step change', and

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[141] Ibid., 104.
[142] Ibid., 105.
[143] Ibid., 106.

vocabulary such as, ‘skilled’, ‘robust’, and ‘compelling’ are used persuasively to ‘sell’ these ideas.[144] Moberg argues that the report adopts this management concept of risk, and the language around ‘safe uncertainty’ with a view to persuading and creating sustainable organizational change within the church.

Moberg refers to the Cohort Programme for Diocesan Bishops module which he says is ‘an even more pertinent illustration of increasing efforts to redefine the nature and character of church leadership’.[145] Leaders are to be assessed based on the effectiveness of the teams they lead, and they are to learn the art of ‘change management’. Moberg writes that by using a phrase such as this, the report makes clear its connection to the world of strategic management and NPM associated values, and it suggests new criteria are necessary for effective organization. He notes in passing that the text strives to soften its strong managerial emphasis by stating that the ‘spiritual focus of the programme will be underlined’.[146]

Moberg ends his look at the Anglican church by arguing that the Reform and Renewal programme initiatives have served only to spur the creation of further strategic initiatives. The discourse within the Church of England will continue to be determined by an ‘intensifying technologization of discourse on market values and imperatives, at least for the foreseeable future’.[147]

The scope and depth of Moberg’s analysis is this book is limited in relation to the Anglican church, but it does provide an example of a content analysis of the leadership discourse of the Church of England. In his most recent work[148] he aims to explicate and illustrate the

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[144] Ibid., 106.
[145] Ibid., 107.
[146] Ibid., 108.
[147] Ibid., 109.
[148] Marcus Moberg, *Religion, Discourse, and Society: Towards a Discursive Sociology of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2021).

value of discourse in the sociological study of religion. Significantly for this thesis, he argues that the sociological study of religion has so far rarely devoted any serious attention to the role of language and discourse as key components in processes of religious change. Moberg's work is important to reference because he is making a link between discourse and change, and doing so in the context of ecclesial leadership discourse.

Pneumatology in Wider Theological Discourse

At the end of chapter 1, I was beginning to note an abstraction in leadership discourse around the person of the Spirit despite there being calls for a deeper theological conversation to counter secularization, and a cultural backdrop of interest in spirituality.

I now turn to consider those who have noted a lack of pneumatology in theological discourse. In 2020, Simeon Zahl published 'The Holy Spirit and Christian Experience' in which he identifies the lack of experiential and embodied language around the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. Zahl examines the language and theological rendering of soteriology and finds a lack of direct Spirit language. He observes the unhelpful separation of experiential spirituality from modern theology.

> Over and over, at just the point when you expect some attempt at a description of the experiential dimensions of the Spirit's work in, for example, salvation or sanctification, theologians make a kind of swerve into non-experiential, usually metaphysical, language. Instead of talking … about the effects of the Spirit's work on real bodies in time, theologians revert instead to ontological language about union with Christ, about salvific participation in the Godhead, of about deification and theosis.[149]

In this way, concrete experience slips from view. He notes there are 'long-standing Protestant anxieties about subjective experience',[150] which means there has been complacency around abstraction within Protestant ecclesial discourse. So, he wants to

[149] Zahl, *The Holy Spirit,* 71.
[150] Ibid., 233.

draw attention to ‘a widely used register of theological speech that relies on ontological language that may sound and even be theologically ‘correct’, but which serves in practice to obfuscate the question of how doctrines … have experiential impact in human lives’.[151]

One theologian taken to task by Zahl is Kathryn Tanner, ‘Tanner’s claims are so underspecified and abstracted from experience that they in no way answer the basic pneumatological question of how the Spirit makes salvation real to us’.[152] Zahl argues that in this way there is a risk that the Holy Spirit is ‘reduced to a generic divine power, banal, clinical, and dehistoricized. And our ontological statements risk becoming mere theological words … a register of theological speech that gives the illusion of having said what needs to be said’[153] without being able to address the practical meaning of the theological claims.

Instead, he argues that ‘good pneumatology cannot be content with this kind of abstraction. The Spirit … moves in the real world, in real bodies, liberating people from concrete fears, circumstances, and sufferings’.[154] In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit’s primary sphere of operation ‘is the concrete world of embodied, historical human existence, not some idealized realm of the theologically ‘real’’.[155]

To counter this trend, Zahl proposes ‘an affectively attuned theological method’ that takes into account the ‘practical recognizability’ of the Spirit’s work.

> The primary function of the term ‘practical recognizability’ is to draw attention to experience of the work of the Spirit in the world, in bodies and in time, and to distinguish it from other forms of interaction with the Spirit that focus on effects taking place ‘before God’, … Thus, if we wish to correct a tendency towards abstraction in theological discussions of the Holy Spirit, an excellent way forward is to begin by focusing on the more concrete, experiential dimensions of the Spirit’s work.[156]

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[151] Ibid., 73.
[152] Ibid., 72.
[153] Ibid., 73.
[154] Ibid., 233.
[155] Ibid., 74.
[156] Ibid., 75.

This invites application and he recommends that,

> there are many further topics in pneumatology that would benefit from this method of analysis. Particularly fruitful here would be the set of activities associated with the Spirit's work of supporting and guiding the mission of the church, including vocation and calling, … If my argument about the Holy Spirit and Christian experience is correct, then there will be practically recognizable dimensions of the work of the Spirit that can be usefully analysed and explored in each case.[157]

Thus, Zahl helpfully sets up an invitation to see whether a similar pneumatological 'gap' or abstraction sits in the set of activities associated with the work of leading in the church arguing 'theologians should seek where possible to give a plausible account of the affective and experiential dimensions of the work of the Spirit'.[158] I return to Zahl's work again in Chapter 7.

A writer who does seek to pin down the 'practical recognizability' of the reception of the Spirit is Oliver Davies who offers an outline of a neuroanthropological pneumatology. Davies identifies the link between Spirit and speech, and identifies the Spirit already active at a pre-thematic level prior to linguistic consciousness. Thus, speaking is the coming to expression of the interior world as created and formed by the Holy Spirit.[159] The prophet thus who speaks is bringing to bear the life of Spirit. He takes part in participatory sense-making through the power of speech.

Eugene Rogers is another theologian who considers the Spirit in theological discourse. He observes that the Holy Spirit seems to have 'floated free' of bodies.[160] This is significant for practical theology, and he argues for more Spirit-talk since the Holy Spirit must be directly connected to what we do and how we live.

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[157] Ibid., 236.
[158] Ibid., 234.
[159] Oliver Davies, 'Freedom, Community, and Language' in *The Testimony of the Spirit: New Essays*, eds., R. Douglas Geivett, and Paul K. Moser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 168-171.
[160] Eugene F. Rogers JR., *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources outside the Modern West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 1.

To illustrate his argument, Rogers conducts a content analysis of the pneumatological content of some of Barth's writings.[161] He observes that even when writing ostensibly about the Spirit, Barth falls back into Christological language. Rogers writes that Barth in his work 'In the Promise of the Spirit', takes 'twenty pages to mention the Spirit, abandons it for fifty pages, and finally reaches the title topic on page 351, just for 18 pages out of 93, or less than 20%'.[162] Another apparent treatment of the Holy Spirit runs to seven hundred pages, but the Spirit only appears on fourteen. So, Rogers wonders, 'if Spirit-talk appears for variety or ornament?'[163]

There is also a pattern of theological displacement that Rogers observes, such that 'Christ-statements render Spirit-statements superfluous. Spirit-statements are reduced to Christ-statements. Pneumatological statements prove dispensable'.[164] And he objects to the way the activity of the Spirit is lost to the Son and he seeks to retrieve their intra-trinitarian distinctiveness; 'I do want a livelier appropriation of God-talk to the Spirit, to overcome the tendency in modern theology by which, to put it crudely, anyway of talking appropriated to the Spirit might be appropriated to the Son'.[165]

Human beings cannot have the integral personal relation with the Divine Persons that the Persons have amongst themselves available because of their common essence. Humans have union through the communicative being born again agency of the Spirit.[166] The Spirit is the link. The Spirit relates to body and matter, and thus to what is done in the body, and to practice. Thus, in similar kind to Zahl, Rogers is arguing for a practical and actual

[161] Rogers, *After the Spirit,* 19-23.
[162] Ibid., 22, note 15.
[163] Ibid., 22.
[164] Ibid., 20.
[165] Ibid., 9.
[166] Ibid., 66.

rendering of the Spirit and the Spirit's work in human experience and discourse. I refer again to Roger's work in Chapter 7.

Even in 1978, C.F.D Moule noted that 'there are times when one is tempted to call the Credal statements about the Spirit an afterthought'.[167] And in relation to the lack of presence of the Spirit in the Gloria, he noted that the Spirit only 'comes in a parenthesis in a relative clause in the section addressed to Christ', 'it looks like an afterthought, and, in a sense that is what it is'.[168] Despite Moule's own theological position, which would allow him to write in relation to the Trinity that 'threefoldness is, perhaps, less vital to a Christian conception of God than the eternal twofoldness of Father and Son',[169] he pointed out, over forty years ago, the discursive dilemma with which I now grapple.

There are other voices also who note the absence of pneumatology and seek to root conversation about the Spirit in practice. Mark McIntosh writes, 'I doubt very much whether theology can do any useful task by walking away from the concrete particularity of mystical language'.[170] Veli-Matti Karkkainen writing from a Pentecostal churchmanship, argues that it is the task of theologians to try and set forth some guidelines to make our human speech about the divine more appropriate.[171] He writes that the Trinity is the structuring principle of Christian theology rather than 'an appendix to Christian talk about God'.[172] Douglas Geivett and Paul Moser write in their Preface:

> [t]he topic of the testimony of the Spirit of God … has suffered from a lack of due attention in recent work in theology, biblical studies, and the philosophy of religion.

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[167] Moule, C.F.D., *The Holy Spirit* (Oxford: A.R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1978), 43.
[168] Ibid., 44.
[169] Ibid., 51.
[170] Mark A. McIntosh, *Mystical Theology, The Integrity of Spirituality and Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1998), 141.
[171] Veli-Matti Karkkainen, 'How to speak of the Spirit among religions': in *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism,* ed., Michael Welker (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 2006), 49.
[172] Ibid., 51.

> This book aims to correct this deficiency to some extent. It does so from an interdisciplinary perspective.[173]

Walter Wink observes that modern theologies have made little attempt to comprehend the inner spiritual dimension of an institution, and that within everything there is 'the inner divine lure'.[174] He argues that in the West we have witnessed a compensatory 'one-sided emphasis on the material, often in utter disregard for and even denial of the spiritual'.[175]

Theologians offer differing reasons for the loss of visibility of Spirit in theological discourse. For example, Gavin D'Costa links the gender representation of the persons of the Trinity with why the Spirit has been 'shadowy and inchoate, and so shamefully neglected'.[176] Andrew Louth suggests it is 'the division between thought about God and the movement of the heart towards God',[177] a disassociation of sensibility that reflects the division between theology and spirituality. Others argue that theological discourse is under-resourced pneumatologically because of historical division over doctrine, so for example, Thomas Weinandy, seeking to create inter-ecclesial dialogue between East and West, offers a theological approach that brings the Spirit to the fore in the procession of the Son: the Second person of the Trinity is begotten in the Spirit of Sonship.[178]

Robert Jenson identifies the 'mis-step' of Augustine – the Spirit as 'invisible' bond between Father and Son – as the reason for a lack of differentiation in the development of doctrine in the West. He argues that Augustine collapses the distinction between identity and *ousia,* losing the differentiation of relation. The issue 'is a tendency of the Spirit

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[173] R. Douglas Geivett and Paul K. Moser, eds., *The Testimony of the Spirit: New Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), vii.
[174] Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament, Volume One* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 146.
[175] Ibid, 124.
[176] Gavin D'Costa, *Sexing the Trinity: Gender, Culture and the Divine* (London: SCM Press, 2000), 1.
[177] Andrew Louth, *Discerning the Mystery: An Essay on the Nature of Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 2.
[178] Thomas G. Weinandy O.F.M., *The Father's Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2010).

simply to disappear from theology's description of God's triune action, often just when he might be expected to have the leading role'.[179] However, there has to be an eventful differentiation within God if we are to be true to the Biblical narratives – and thus Jenson speaks in terms of the *'dramatis dei personae'*.[180] The identities of God *ad extra* achieve an undivided unity not because they are indistinguishable, but because they are perfectly mutual.[181]

It is surprising however, to find an occlusion of Spirit in the field of practical theology where a pneumatological perspective is inherently integrative, and practical. Yet many practical theologians speak about practical aspects of their religion while still omitting mention of the Spirit or engaging with pneumatology. This 'lacuna' is noted by the editors of 'Evangelicals Engaging in Practical Theology' where they admit that an area that would benefit further exploration is 'how the role of the Spirit in practical theology could be articulated more precisely'.[182]

Mark Cartledge too has found that there is broadly a lack of engagement by practical theologians in biblical studies, and almost no engagement with pneumatology. Cartledge is specific in his critique, and he names amongst others Bonnie Miller-McLemore and Pete Ward both of whom I engage with at length later in this project. Cartledge writes that the 'majority of books on Practical Theology simply ignore pneumatology altogether. There is a theistic or Christocentric assumption in the theological discourse rather than a fully explicit Trinitarian framework. This means that pneumatology is largely excluded'.[183]

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[179] Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology, The Triune God,* Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 153.
[180] Ibid., 86.
[181] This was the insight of the Cappadocians.
[182] Helen Morris and Helen Cameron, *Evangelicals Engaging in Practical Theology: Theology that Impacts Church and World* (Abingdon: Oxon, Routledge, 2022), 224.
[183] Mark Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids: MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 56.

One of the academics who comes in for specific criticism is again Bonnie Miller-McLemore who edits a work 'designed to map the field of practical theology … It contains fifty-six chapters, the majority of which do not refer to the person and work of the Holy Spirit or indeed the doctrine of the Trinity because the dominant discourse simply uses the terms "God" and "Jesus" '.[184] This leads Cartledge to state in his chapter conclusion that work 'on the role of pneumatology in practical theology is virtually non-existent'.[185] 'This lack of attention leads to a very clear deficit in practical-theological discourse, and this deficit is detrimental to the development of the discipline.'[186]

Having said that, Cartledge does acknowledge the work of Ray Anderson who places the role of pneumatology centrally within the methodology of practical theology.[187] And he acknowledges that Anderson makes a 'critical move' when aligning Christian experience in practical theology with the person and work of the Spirit.

Having found the theological deficit in practical theology, Cartledge then goes onto argue that the lacuna in the literature can be informed by a Pentecostal theology which has the capacity to address the pneumatological deficit and make a distinct contribution to practical theology. He argues that practical theology is grounded in the intratrinitarian ministry of the Father towards the world as mediated by the Holy Spirit, and that practical theology needs to attend to spirituality though not only through the lens of Catholic tradition or mysticism. He encourages instead more investigation into the agency of the Spirit in concrete expressions of church.

One notable caveat to the overall deficit Cartledge identifies is in 'Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life', where Sarah Coakley offers perspectives from

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[184] Ibid., 60.
[185] Ibid., 60.
[186] Ibid., 61.
[187] Ibid., 57.

ascetic and mystical theology. Coakley makes the point that it is through practices that one can come to know God and 'breathe his very Spirit'.[188] She argues that the practices have an incorporative telos of beliefs and in particular the Trinity which 'is no longer seen as an obscure though authoritative ecclesial doctrine of God's nature, but rather a life into which we enter and, in unbreakable union with Christ, breathe the very Spirit of God'.[189] Sarah Coakley is an unusual voice in a practical theology volume, but in her own systematic theological work she is specific about the 'daring invitation … to make that problematic 'third' in God, the 'first' in human encounter'.[190]

An example of a text that makes specific its intention to offer spirituality but then fails to give any prominence to the Spirit is by Paul Ballard and John Pritchard. These authors lay out a practice for a reflective pastoral cycle, but only in chapter 11 do they ask, what kind of spirituality is equal to the task of nourishing a 'practical theologian'?[191] In the subsequent fourteen pages, there is only 1 reference to the Spirit of God, which does not suggest a robust engagement with pneumatology at all equal to the task.

However, two practical theologians who do engage with pneumatology, though in differing ways, are Richard R. Osmer, and Claire Watkins. Osmer shapes his consideration of practical theology around the interpretative task of the ecclesial leader.[192] Within the literature this offers a rare combination of engagement between practical theology in the context of leadership, with a focus on spirituality. All three of which are subject areas of

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[188] Sarah Coakley, 'Deepening Practices: Perspectives from Ascetical and Mystical Theology' in *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, eds., Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C Bass, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 2002), 92.
[189] Ibid., 93.
[190] Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'on the Trinity'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 334.
[191] Paul Ballard and John Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action: Christian thinking in the service of church and society* (London: SPCK, 2001), 153.
[192] Richard R Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 2008), 17-18.

this project. I give attention to this work in the next chapter when I consider variations of the pastoral cycle in more detail.

Clare Watkins who seeks to integrate a pneumatological view into an account of practice, draws attention to the tension that has always existed between the church concrete and the church mystical. Watkins argues that in the pragmatist materialist culture of the West, the church has become an organized concrete social reality in which the doctrines of the church have been abstracted. Instead, she wants to locate 'the theology and practice of church structures, orders, and authorities within a practical and deeply theological account of the Holy Spirit'.[193]

Her method is intentionally non-correlational, believing that integrated methodologies better reflect theological tradition, and 'better equip us to make whole-theology articulations of the work of God's Spirit in the world'.[194] Yet Watkins finds that articulating 'whole-theology' is complex. There is a 'scarcity of explicit, or even clear implicit reference to the Holy Spirit in the Accounts of Practice'.[195] And, it is 'striking how rarely the questions of authority, ordination and power are explicitly linked with the Holy Spirit in the Accounts of Practice'.[196] Where the Spirit is mentioned in relation to power 'it seems a difficult theme to handle'.[197] Even so, she maintains that there is 'a lived reality of church which can be better understood through the doctrine of the Holy Spirit than through a more incarnational, Christological account of Church'.[198]

It is this dissonance between faith and practice, and the lack of articulation of 'whole-theology' that Watkins identifies, that suggests that the question I am asking about the

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[193] Clare Watkins, *Disclosing Church: An Ecclesiology Learned from Conversations in Practice* (London: Routledge, 2020), 200.
[194] Watkins, *Disclosing Church,* 7.
[195] Ibid., 198.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.

presence and role of pneumatology in relation to leadership discourse remains pertinent. The difficulty in finding explicit testimony to the Spirit, and the consequential reliance on 'implicit' readings, or 'glimpses' in accounts of practice, supports my enquiry into whether a full account of the Holy Spirit is given in leadership discourse, and wider ecclesial structuring.

In addition, despite Watkins repeated reference to 'whole-theology' and acknowledging the Spirit at work in and through all sociality, nonetheless she seems to fall back into a limited rendering of where and how one engages with the Spirit when she writes, 'such a pneumatological emphasis will necessarily privilege the contemplative, and prayer over the simply organizational, managerial and strategic'.[199] I want to suggest, however, it is this kind of dualist assumption embedded in leadership and ecclesial discourse and which then seeps into practice, that needs to be overcome if one is to express 'whole-theology'.

Richard Roberts also seems to intimate a need to articulate the Spirit at work in our 'work' with his use of the word 'ecology' which suggests there is a wider web of interactivity to be found. He writes, 'our present state demands consideration of, … from a Christian point of view, the discernment of an "ecology of the Spirit" in which that religion may be discovered in practice. Such consideration and discernment will demand not least, the deployment of the whole armoury of the inter disciplines of religious studies and theology'.[200]

Leadership Studies

As I turn to consider the subject of ecclesial leadership and ministry, I acknowledge that I can only refer to a few of the very many commentaries on this subject so the ones below

[199] Ibid., 200.
[200] Roberts, *Religion, Theology and the Human Sciences,* 189.

pertain to an aspect of this project. I also note there is an assumption as to the orders of ministry and that critiques tend to focus on the secularization of approaches.

Lyndon Shakespeare distinguishes his analysis from others on the basis that other theological critiques of leadership or organization do not express a satisfactory understanding of the church as a social body. He argues that a functional and mechanistic account of the human body has opened the way for 'an instrumental-rationalized approach' which 'has proven caustic … to accounts of the church as the body of Christ',[201] leading to a 'managerialist' logic in the organization of that institutional 'body', the church.

Adopting a Thomist-Aristotelian perspective, he argues that the human body is ordered to God for *beatitudo*, the end blessing, and the body is an inseparable part of that blessing. Then it is by analogy that Shakespeare argues that the Body of Christ also finds its organizing logic as a particular social body as it is ordered rightly towards God. And, that there needs to be an account of leadership that takes this holistic, anthropological approach seriously. Shakespeare constructs a 'metaphysical framework to account for how the church exists as the social body in which human persons can, through sacramental participation, be made members of Christ and each other'.[202] Managerialist accounts of the church fail in part because 'the church settles for goals and purposes that fall far short of the *telos* of divine beatitude'.[203]

Shakespeare argues that the way the body of Christ essentially is provides the logic for the way it then should operate because the way 'something is *essentially* provides the logic' for its operation.[204] But Shakespeare stays with the concept of *prudentia* and

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[201] Lyndon Shakespeare, *Being the Body of Christ in the Age of Management* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016), 118.
[202] Shakespeare, *Being the Body,* 118.
[203] Ibid., 197.
[204] Ibid., 191.

proposes an organizing rationale around right practical reason offering three criteria for church leadership: good service, good sense, and the roles and offices of ministry principally formed around the sacraments.

Furthermore, although Shakespeare acknowledges that the Body of Christ is a supernatural reality, he displaces the Divine constituting and essential eschatological role of the Holy Spirit in that Body. So, he states that in the church 'the sacraments communicate the bodily presence of Christ, and this sacramental order is the presence of the risen body of Christ to the world, the source of his Spirit in the world'.[205] At the very least, this statement reveals a subordinationist taxonomy within the Trinity and ignores the pneumatological constituting of the church, and the way it is, essentially.

Shakespeare argues his account of ecclesial leadership, directed by the possessing and exercising of good sense or right reason, can accomplish what managerial-based techniques cannot. 'The form of leadership prescribed through the exercise of *prudentia* overcomes the reduction of leadership to the application of techniques through the attending to the place of good service, proper order, and faithful activity.'[206] Such right practical reason is based on virtue which makes the possessor good and the work good, likewise. He writes, the 'application of *prudentia* means that a person operates with a deep sense of what is needed in a particular situation to reach a goal, and with a flexibility to discern in new situations the means to reach the desired goal'.[207]

Lyndon Shakespeare's work is an illustration of how a managerialist logic within the established church is often critiqued but without the pneumatology necessary to provide a Christological-pneumatological grounding of that church. Shakespeare is unspecific about

[205] Ibid., 191.
[206] Ibid., 182.
[207] Ibid., 185.

the agency of the Spirit, instead a sacramental theology is foregrounded. An account of the Spirit's grounding relation to, and leading relation within, the Body of Christ is missing.

There are therefore questions about the theological assumptions and perspectives that underwrite or subvert leadership discourse. Such questions drove the enquiry of the FAOC into Senior Church leadership in 2015. I will consider the report in chapter 4, but the theological reflections published alongside it note lines of concern. For example, Tim Harle reflects that the FAOC report could have explored fundamental theology even further than it did in two respects, the first of which is the Trinity which is only referenced through a Pauline lens. Higton offers a social Trinitarian approach as an example where leadership can be reconceived and thus experienced differently so that 'total ordering is achieved without any one being in a permanently subordinate position to another'.[208]

However, Higton does affirm the FAOC definition of leadership – namely that a leader is one who assists others in the performance of a collective practice – though he resists a quick division between leaders and the led and instead prefers language around a 'complex ecology of multiple forms of assistance and encouragement, building up the whole body together'.[209] His argument is that if one starts with a vision of the Body of Christ, we won't think of senior leaders 'as people who have come out on top of some hierarchy of excellence or importance',[210] but as those with specific kinds of calling: ''seniority' is potentially a very misleading word … It is, rather, a call to occupy one specific niche in the overall ecology of the Church's ministry'.[211]

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[208] Tim Harle, 'Creating Meaning Together,' in *Faithful Improvisation? Theological Reflections on Church Leadership,* eds., Loveday Alexander and Mike Higton (London: Church House Publishing, 2016), 212.
[209] Mike Higton, 'Faithful Improvisation or Talent Management? A Conversation between the FAOC report and the Green Report,' in *Faithful Improvisation? Theological Reflections on Church Leadership,* eds., Loveday Alexander and Mike Higton (London: Church House Publishing, 2016), 196.
[210] Ibid., 197.
[211] Ibid., 198.

Mike Higton also addresses an issue of discourse and the perception that the FAOC report was a counter to the Green Report. This apparently was not the case though he argues there is value in bringing the two pieces of work into conversation as they both consider the relationship between theological and corporate language of leadership. Higton notes that leadership language is used on every page of the Green report, and that the FAOC specifically looked at the rise of such leadership language concluding that rather than resisting it, it was better to use such language well.

The reflections of Mike Higton are notable for the way in which he seeks to lay hold of the lexicon and offer a defence of episcopacy. For example, there is a recurrence of the word ecology: 'church's ecology', 'complex ecology' and 'overall ecology', four times between pages 196-200. This repetition works to change the image of church structure from being a hierarchy to a multi-level community, or from something that is unnatural to that which is organic and natural. He also uses the word 'niche' four times in three pages. This is a clever alternative to words that suggest position, role, or a job. Just the insertion of these two new words cleverly combine to suggest to the reader that the church is a more lateral organization than it is – one where the role of the bishop is in fact, very small, and just a 'niche' job amongst many.

The language, by being measured and conciliatory, attempts to ameliorate the strength of objection to the Green report, and the rhetorical devices serve to defend the thrust of the Green report which is to select out and develop senior leaders. Higton ends his thoughts by recommending a prayerful discernment process, he emphasizes the need for prayer and suddenly uses the words 'spiritual discipline' twice, in his last paragraph.

The third contribution in these reflections that is pertinent to this project, in that it supports an inter-cultural conversation with secular leadership studies, is from David Hilborn. The point Hilborn is making is that Evangelicalism has for many years taken its cues for leadership from generic leadership, management, and organizational paradigms. Hilborn

notes the concern of Bishop Steven Croft around the way leadership language may affect 'the traditional understanding of public ministry as encoded in the formularies of the Church of England',[212] and that the early church was deliberately shy of leadership language. But Hilborn writes, that the 'interplay between 'secular' and 'sacred' models of leadership has been a feature of Evangelicalism from its earliest days', and that too stark a contrast between these sources risks denying the sovereignty of God over all creation, and leadership in particular.[213]

In the literature, different solutions have been sought for what might be called the secularization or professionalization of leadership. One solution is to move more closely to a notion of priesthood, as for example Graham Tomlin.[214] An alternative is to re-engage with the broader ideation of 'ministry' first, or in contrast to, notions of ordination and leadership *per se*. Leadership then becomes just one gift, or one part, within the larger cause of the ministry of the Church. The three very different works mentioned below deliberately seek to re-route the discussion away from leadership by making 'ministry' their focus, and all three employ the vocabulary of 'imagination' to reenvisage what that ministry might be.

The first is from 1971, by the American, Urban Holmes. Holmes critiques the fact that in the minds of many, 'the Church's ministry is gathered up in one office represented by the local pastor and his assistant(s) … In fact, it can be said for many of us he is the Church'.[215] Thus he argues to 'undo the clericalism of the post-Reformation' and 'to avoid

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[212] David Hilborn, 'Evangelical Models of Leadership,' in *Faithful Improvisation? Theological Reflections on Church Leadership,* eds., Loveday Alexander and Mike Higton (London: Church House Publishing, 2016), 166.
[213] Ibid., 185.
[214] Graham Tomlin, *The Widening Circle: Priesthood as God's way of Blessing the World* (London: SPCK, 2014).
[215] Urban T. Holmes III, *The Future Shape of Ministry* (New York: Seabury Press, 1971), 3.

the crass professionalism that clericalism tends to attract'[216] there needs to be an exercise in imagination.

He notes how structures in the early church created to meet needs have become instantiated enduring as some sort of expression of the will of God long after those needs have changed, and he identifies a 'loss of theological nerve'.[217] If we were to recover 'the theological fundament of ministry, I think we would be free to read our times more clearly and find the courage to move to meet them unencumbered by various shibboleths such as congregationalism, professionalism, liturgical, ecclesiastical, or biblical fundamentalism, historicism, and social and behavioural scientism'.[218]

He argues for a retrieval of a 'charismatic liminal quality' to be brought alongside professional characteristics. 'The heart of the Christian ministry is its charismatic, liminal quality. Without question there is a place for professional capacities in ministry, but it is the charismatic character of the church that lends strength' to its 'professional' work.[219] Holmes also goes onto consider the kind of education required for future ministry – his chapter heading 'Formation or Education or Training' anticipating in some way the thinking of Anthony Clarke.

Anthony Clarke writes from a Baptist perspective and prefers a discourse around ministry rather than one shaped around a discourse of leadership because of the distinct 'cultural and pastoral imagination' that ministry inhabits. His point is that the ways of ministry, will vary depending on whether 'the pastoral imagination' is shaped by either a *habitus* of 'leadership' or a *habitus* of 'ministry'.[220] The pastoral imagination shaped by a leadership

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[216] Ibid., 283.
[217] Ibid., 286.
[218] Ibid., 286.
[219] Ibid., 248.
[220] Anthony Clarke, *Forming Ministers or Training Leaders? An Exploration of Practice in Theological Colleges* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2021), 40.

habitus speaks more to the management of tasks, strategy, and delegation, whereas a pastoral imagination shaped by a *habitus* of ministry understands ministry to be about bearing the 'Word' in worship, preaching, presiding, pastoral oversight, and pastoral care,[221] rooted in an understanding of servanthood. The 'pastoral imagination' shaped by the practices, theology, and language of leadership tends to emphasize the 'few', categorizing some as leaders, oversight not being shared, and with greater emphasis on management.[222]

He thus identifies what he calls the leadership challenge – how the ministry of the few and the many are related ecclesiologically. He writes that both ministry and leadership are ways of understanding practice that are structured, cooperative, and creative, and both are shaped by the interplay between practice, theology, and the language used, making it highly complex.

He argues for the benefits of a uniquely Baptist ecclesiology because it best holds 'the creative tension between the ministry of the many together with the representative ministry of the few'.[223] This does not mean that there is no leadership exercised by anyone else, 'ministers, deacons/elders and a whole congregation exercise leadership. But as an overall description of the role of the few called by God, ministry is the most appropriate language'.[224]

So, what do those few set aside do? Clarke suggests their task is to be attentive to God in, with, and through, the congregation (which recalls Osmer's descriptive-empirical, and interpretative tasks). He writes that 'those in ministry are engaged in a practice. What a minister does over time is not a random set of actions, but if studied and analyzed will

[221] Clarke, *Forming Ministers*, 38-39.
[222] Ibid., 40.
[223] Ibid., 40.
[224] Ibid., 41.

have distinct patterns to it. It is these patterns that make it a practice'.[225] Thus Clarke shapes his understanding of ministry around the idea of 'a cooperative practice, which persists over time and provides something of a corporate and structured *habitus* within which the individual minister may creatively improvise'.[226]

This is an important reference for my thesis, and I will explore the ideation of practice later because I want to extend the application of practice not only to 'ministry', as Clarke does, but also to the activity of leading itself.

The third work is 'Reimagining Ministry'[227] by Anglican David Heywood. Heywood calls for a 'reimagining' of ministry as being the task of the whole Body of Christ participating in the mission of God's kingdom in the world. He notes that mission has rightly become a more central focus of the church, and that this requires a shift in the way the church serves the requirements of that mission in contemporary society. A notion of a separate institution with a professionalized clergy is inappropriate and offers a 'defunct' model of ministry.[228]

Heywood roots his understanding of ministry in servanthood and shapes the model of ministry around the biblical example of the Servant of God as outlined in the servant songs of Isaiah.[229] But, he retains the structure of ordination as necessary for the church to fulfil its vocation; the minister is one who inhabits the paradigm of Servant to the church who is Servant to the world.

Heywood seems to accept that leadership will operate within the role of the ordained, but his description calls for 'leaders with the discernment to recognize the way God is working and call the church to join in' [230] because the leadership of God's people is to be seen as

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[225] Ibid., 9.
[226] Ibid., 10.
[227] David Heywood, *Reimagining Ministry* (London: SCM Press, 2011).
[228] Ibid., 198.
[229] Ibid., 177.
[230] Ibid., 183.

collaborative. Heywood makes the point that there is only one single leader in the New Testament, namely Jesus, and after His resurrection, 'the church is expected to discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit together',[231] even when local communities of Christians appoint elders or overseers. It is the appointment of elders that later came to align with ordination of a single priest, although Heywood argues that the 'single hierarchical leader only develops after New Testament times and represents a departure from the clear biblical pattern'.[232]

However, Heywood avoids the issues around whether ordination is functional or ontological by rooting the ideation in relation, so that 'the ministry of the ordained 'animates' that of the whole church'.[233] In ordination the minister is placed in new relationship with the church. 'This new relationship both requires certain tasks and moulds the ordained minister's identity. She will be exercising leadership, but this is not so much a task in itself; rather, leadership is exercised through *the way she carries out other tasks*.'[234]

This is helpful for this project as Heywood is beginning to shift leadership from being something one does or is – an entitative understanding – and indicates leadership to be a 'way' of being or doing a task. Heywood then identifies three key qualities or dispositions that are needed to lead in this way, namely being a listener, being able to discern the leading and direction of the Holy Spirit, and being an apt teacher.

As already mentioned in chapter 1, John Drane has written against the inculturation of an organizational rationale in the church and acknowledges the need to respond to the cultural hunger for more spirituality. 'There can be little doubt that the emphasis on the

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[231] Ibid., 183.
[232] Ibid., 184.
[233] Ibid., 184.
[234] Ibid., 185.

rational and cognitive aspects of faith that dominated the last two or three centuries has ignored (and sometimes denied) the transcendent dimension of the Christian tradition.'[235] The phrase Drane uses is a 'new spirituality' which affirms the serious search for meaning and purpose that is at the heart of the mystical strand of Western culture.[236]

However, in discussing what leadership approach might be needed, Drane does not think a presbyterial or congregational leadership model – where everything is decided by committee – is workable.[237] It does not 'really deliver on its original theological promise of offering an inclusive way of being in which many people have an equal part … even the spiritually sensitive committee can find its recommendations overturned by one of two people who throw their weight around'.[238] Instead he proposes a model where there is power alongside, rather than power over, or with.

Drane's ideas for a leadership that 'comes alongside' cohere with those of Chloe Lynch, who is also asking how theological narratives better resource a discourse of leadership. Like those mentioned above she too critiques what she calls 'the dominant consciousness' in the church – managerialism – which fails to recognize ecclesial leadership's proper source and context. Instead, she too offers a work of 'prophetic imagination' and proposes a new discourse of leadership 'coded in terms of friendship'.[239]

Lynch is important to consider because she engages directly with discourse, using a vocabulary around re-imagining leadership (like Heywood), and seeks to understand leadership as a process, or activity, of influence towards a telos of deepening participation

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[235] John Drane, *'Do Christians know how to be Spiritual?' The Rise of New Spirituality, and the Mission of the Church* (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 2005), 134.
[236] Ibid., 137.
[237] Ibid., 162.
[238] Ibid., 162.
[239] Chloe Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership as Friendship* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2019), 179.

in Christ's life and ministry.[240] In so doing, Lynch stakes leadership back onto Christological ground, and writes that, 'Christ alone is the ground of the church'.[241]

She acknowledges those who advocate a Trinitarian hermeneutic, but she argues counter that close correspondence with the Trinity leads to models that are unhelpful. So she writes, 'better than a Trinitarian theology is to employ the incarnation as lens for articulating a better construction of ecclesial leadership on the basis that the context of ecclesial leadership is a people constituted by their relationship to Christ'.[242]

Then anticipating criticisms concerning a Christological preference, she writes 'a specific Christological focus, however, must not be understood as excluding a pneumatological element',[243] so that 'leadership amongst the people who are in Christ cannot be anything but Spirit-empowered'.[244] She ends this section by saying that the 'marriage of Christological and pneumatological emphases' will be fundamental 'in the ensuing work of deep remembering and of coding a discourse of leadership'.[245] Yet what are these emphases, and what does it really mean, in practice? Does such abstraction around the work of the Spirit arise from a reticence to engage with practical pneumatology?

Lynch considers the incarnation as a pattern for leadership. But she argues that this often leads to leadership models based on notions of servanthood or kenosis, which is unsatisfactory as it is impossible to replicate the incarnation, and notions of servanthood are problematic.[246] Instead she advocates friendship as being the appropriate incarnational discourse through which to frame ecclesial leadership. Using the biblical text John 15.12-17, she argues friendship is cruciform, obedient, intimate, and mutual. These

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[240] Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership,* 120, 208.
[241] Ibid., 37.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Ibid., 38.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid., 69-71.

four aspects lead to a community of love. Her main point is that friendship offers a new discourse by which an incarnational ecclesial leadership can be re-imagined.[247]

However, framing leadership as friendship can carry as many problems as it does benefits. Given the difficulties of 21st century social media and safeguarding, as well as the power dynamics of leadership, aligning leadership as an offer of friendship, or a work in befriending, would seem to increase the complexity of that mix. Lynch does deal with some of these issues, but she is running against a societal tide.

What really stands out is the inherent incongruity that arises by Lynch making very little mention of the person of the Spirit in the context of a piece on friendship. For example, in chapter 8, on friendship as love's ideal, there are only 2 mentions of the Spirit (in relation to affection).[248] Yet Jesus himself introduces the Spirit in relational terms that are arguably based on befriending – as one who comes alongside for the journey, as comforter, or advocate, and guide. Jesus introduces the Spirit to us to be our friend.

Further, the incarnation itself becomes problematic and isolating when a partnering pneumatology is not placed alongside – when Christology is not befriended by pneumatology. An inner logic of hierarchy is retained if one starts with Christology and only adds the Spirit in as additional power, and to ground the church solely in a Christological view is to misunderstand the nature of the incarnation itself, and fatally subordinates the Spirit to the Son. Arguably therefore, the weak pneumatology of this work subverts the notion of friendship as theological resource for leadership discourse.

When looking at the leadership literature there are many examples of works that offer a blended organizational approach with spiritual practice. Often these works sit across both the academic and popular fields. An example of this is 'Leading the Congregation' by

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[247] Ibid., 127-139.
[248] Ibid., 154-169.

Heuser and Shawchuck, a work aimed at the practitioner in ministry but written by academics.[249]

Despite the clear adoption of organizational language and principles, these authors press towards practical spirituality, identifying that '[i]n our work with congregations, we are left with an abiding impression: A vast gulf sometimes exists between the spirituality espoused by a congregation and the spirituality lived out by its members'.[250] Thus the practice of spirituality they claim has become a performance. 'Indeed, the leaders of the congregation must see it as a major responsibility to tend the spirituality of the congregation so that its espoused spirituality becomes its lived spirituality.'[251] They go on to prescribe practices that promote that lived spirituality, and how a leader lives out a model of spirituality for the congregation.

They identify that leaders in a Western model of spirituality focus on a spirituality of doing, therefore, they say it is vital to 'develop the capacity to be still, to be transparent, and to pay attention to the gentle nudges, imaginations, and insights by which the Spirit guides us ever closer to ourselves and to God'.[252] They go on to discuss the prerequisites for spiritual formation that help the leader discern God's leading 'in order to get in touch with the interior movements of the Spirit'.[253] In relation to establishing vision, the authors refer to the 'still small voice' and they frame this leading in terms of 'intuition, or a divine impulse, or a blessed hunch'.[254]

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[249] Roger Heuser and Norman Shawchuck, *Leading the Congregation: Caring for yourself while Serving the People* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010); part of a series by Norman Shawchuck et al, *Marketing the Congregation: Choosing to Serve People more Effectively,* 1992, and *Managing the Congregation: Building Effective Systems to serve the People,* 1996.
[250] Heuser and Shawchuck, *Leading the Congregation,* 211.
[251] Ibid., 212.
[252] Ibid., 217.
[253] Ibid., 219.
[254] Ibid., 256.

The remaining chapters speak of transformation and change, and the book transitions to organizational, operational, strategy.

Within secular organizational studies there is a large category of work around what is called Spiritual Leadership Theory (SLT). There are too many examples to cite, but an early example is 'Discernment and strategic decision making; Reflections for a spirituality of organizational leadership',[255] in which the authors note how intertwined the practice of leading is with decision making and that the contemporary challenges involved in decision making have prompted an interest in coupling the insights from older wisdom and spiritual traditions with modern decision theory.[256] So they ask what might the Christian practice of discernment offer to a 'normative strategic decision making process' since for the business executive the call of God lies in the midst of the very activity of leading one's organization.[257]

The authors make the explicit point that the Christian discernment tradition does not see a dichotomy between sacred and secular and that the entire work week of the executive is to be permeated with the Mystery of God 'and decisions must take this Mystery into account'.[258] For my perspective, this kind of work sits positively within an applied response to the '*missio dei'* of God allowing spirituality to permeate all of life.

In 'Leadership: A Communication Perspective', Craig Johnson and Michael Hackman write that, the topic of spirituality 'once relegated to the margins of organizational and leadership studies, has entered the academic mainstream'.[259] Most secular leadership handbooks will therefore now include the subject of spirituality when considering

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[255] Andre L. Delbecq, et al., 'Discernment and strategic decision making; Reflections for a spirituality of organizational leadership', in *Spiritual Intelligence at Work: Meaning, Metaphor and Morals*. eds., Moses L. Pava and Patrick Primeaux (London: Elsevier, 2004), 139-174.
[256] Ibid., 147.
[257] Ibid., 147.
[258] Ibid., 148.
[259] Craig E. Johnson and Michael Z. Hackman, *Leadership: A Communication Perspective* (Long Grove, IL.: Waveland Press, Inc., 2018), 422.

leadership development. 'Workplace spirituality is about integration and connection, not separation and differentiation.'[260]

Investigators are finding that spirituality fosters learning, creativity, improves morale, generates higher productivity, encourages collaboration, and enhances commitment.[261] For example, Laura Reave has found a correlation between spiritual values and leadership effectiveness.[262] She identifies five 'spiritual' practices that add value namely, treating others fairly, expressing care, listening responsively, appreciating the contributions of others, and engaging in reflective practices.[263]

However, critics of Spiritual Leadership Theory (SLT) argue against the enlisting of the ideals of spirituality for functionalist ends, thereby mechanizing 'spiritual life'. It is argued that this reduces spirituality to method or technique, and subverts spiritual values by using the appeal to spiritual wellbeing as a means for increasing profit and productivity.

To avoid this kind of critique, four British academics make a distinction between generic workplace spirituality, and a Christian perspective. They want to offer a specifically Jesus-centred interpretation of 'spiritual leadership', and they follow this by proposing a model that links personal spirituality to ethical leadership in business.[264] The argument is that the teaching of Jesus provides a spiritual foundation for ethical decision making and they offer five practical ways for leaders who want to pursue ethical leadership in business and

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[260] Ibid., 423.
[261] Ibid., 423.
[262] Laura Reave, 'Spiritual values and practices related to leadership effectiveness' in *Leadership Quarterly*, 16, (2005): 655-687 quoted in Craig E. Johnson and Michael Z. Hackman, *Leadership: A Communication Perspective*, 423.
[263] Ibid., 423-424.
[264] Christopher Mabey, Mervyn Conroy, Karen Blakeley, Sara de Marco, 'Having Burned the Straw man of Christian Spiritual Leadership, what can we Learn from Jesus about Leading Ethically?' in *The Journal of Business Ethics*, 145, no. 4, (2017): 757-769). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3054-5.

close the gap between the theory of ethical and transformational leadership and actual practice.

The spiritual practices that are proposed are private, and function as a resource for the ability of the leader to withstand situational pressures. There is a distinction made between the moral person and the ethical leading, and they argue the spiritual practices pertain to the former and so that 'personal spirituality need not morph into the promulgation of spirituality in the workplace; rather it is best seen as the root of ethical and indeed authentic, servant, and transformational leadership. The leaders' spirituality is, essentially, a 'private' matter, something Jesus insists upon'. Jesus never taught 'us to become spiritual leaders; he teaches us to become spiritual individuals'.[265]

Conclusion

In the sweep of literature included in chapters 1 and 2, I have sought to touch on several disciplines which bear on ecclesial leadership discourse. In leadership studies it is the rise of managerialism that tends to be the focus, as for example in Shakespeare's work. Theologians resist the inculcation of a secularized discourse and seek to find alternative ways of explicating ecclesial activity. I noted three authors who have preferred the language and model of 'ministry' into which the role of leadership is then folded.

However, such commentaries on ministry still tend to end up with an entitative expression of what the ministry or the leadership model ought to be. Leading folds back into existing structures such as ordination. I have not found a non-entitative expression for leading in the literature. The closest is arguably the rendering by Lynch of leadership as friendship, but then here there is Christological emphasis that is arguably problematic for practice.

[265] Ibid., 761.

I have also acknowledged that in secular leadership studies there is engagement with a widened understanding of spirituality which responds to the cultural shift in interest noted in chapter 1. This can span from organizational workplace spirituality to advocating personal spiritual practices.

In relation to pneumatology in wider theological discourse, it is apparent that the abstraction I noted at the end of chapter 1 is a wider theological issue as revealed by the work of Simeon Zahl and Eugene Rogers. In practical theology, Mark Cartledge has noted a lack of engagement with pneumatology and this assessment undergirds my own enquiry. Thus, given the ontological swerve around the person of the Spirit in theological discourse that Zahl points to, and the lack of express engagement between practical theology and pneumatology that Cartledge identifies, there is warrant to investigate ecclesial leadership discourse to see how it 'speaks' of God, and ask whether it gives an account of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Lastly, as explained by Moberg, examining the discourse theologically is justified when discourse is understood to be constituting for practice, and a driver of institutional change. The Church of England is in a process of reform, and the changes that will be enacted in practice will, to a large degree, be directed by the discourse directing and leading that process of change, for example, the Reform and Renewal reports. So, if leadership practices are viewed by some as problematic (as explored in this chapter), and outcomes need to be improved, it makes logical sense to examine the directing – meaning-making – discourse itself.

Chapter 3

Method and Discourse

Introduction

In chapters 1 and 2, I have argued that it is warranted to interrogate the leadership discourse in the Church of England. How to undertake this investigation is now the subject of this chapter. I intend to:

- consider practical theological approaches,
- narrate my search-encounter-transformation arc,
- explain this project and proposal as co-constructed conversation,
- establish an epistemological approach,
- offer a more detailed introduction, explanation, and evaluation of the content analysis.

Practical Theological Approaches

A practical theological endeavour starts with the presumption that God is already at work in the world and in the people of God. Thus, a practical theological approach is shaped by the imperative for response in recognition that all we say and do as expressions of faith can only ever be a response. This rightly humbles any investigation and ensures any outcomes are appropriately framed.

However, notwithstanding this, practice-driven thinking is oriented towards a desire to interrogate that response, to question the response of faith, such that our personal and corporate response to God is ever-increasingly Christ-like. As a result, it is an approach that stays close to the ground, close to, and attentive to, praxis.

The traditional starting place for practical theological investigation is the enquiry of observation and exploration, ‘what are we doing?’ ‘What is happening?’ The event or

practice – the 'what' is then investigated and reflected upon in a process usually referred to as theological reflection in that the practice is evaluated, readdressed, and then re-formed. An example of this is laid out by Ballard and Pritchard as a pastoral cycle,[266] which at its core is a correlative approach holding practice up against belief or theory, asking, 'is what we do what we believe to be true?'

Swinton and Mowat advocate a reflective cycle based on a process of critical correlation.[267] Here the event or situation which is being challenged or critiqued is correlated against the Christian scriptures and creeds which they argue, from a critical realist position, are logically prior. The process of reflection proceeds by way of questions seeking understanding and then an evaluation of the activity in the light of the Scriptures and ecclesial traditions, which then leads to a revision and re-forming of the practice towards increased theological faithfulness.

Richard Osmer is another practical theologian who takes the pastoral cycle and amends it. He is important to review here because he is unique in re-articulating the pastoral cycle through specific engagement with leadership and spirituality. He begins by laying out the four tasks of the practical theologian which he argues make up moments in a larger interpretive circle. These are the descriptive-empirical task, answering the question 'what is happening?', the interpretative task, answering the question 'why is this happening?', the normative task answering, 'what ought to be happening?', and the pragmatic task, offering an answer to 'what do we do in response?' He argues that together these tasks shape the basic structure of practical theological interpretation, and he imagines the

[266] Ballard and Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action,* 77-8.
[267] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 95.

practical theologian/the congregational leader moving round these tasks in a kind of spiral.[268]

However additionally, Osmer wants to map onto these four tasks of the practical theologian, the interpretative tasks of the congregational leader thereby drawing together the academy with ministry.[269] He describes the ecclesial leader as being 'interpretive guide' whether ordained or not.[270] The interpretative tasks are outlined as guiding the congregation as a community of interpretation, guiding interpretation when the congregation is 'brought up short' by an experience, and guiding the dialogue between a theological view and other fields of knowledge.[271]

Further, he argues that the role of interpretive guide is open to anyone, as '[c]lergy are not the only people who provide guidance in congregations. Indeed, a strong theological case can be made that mutual guidance belongs primarily to the whole people of God and only secondarily to people set aside by this community in ordination'.[272] So he portrays leadership as 'broader than the official leaders of a community or organization'.[273] Leadership is described as modes of communication, through which influence is carried collaboratively.

Lastly, having brought together the four tasks of the practical theologian with the interpretive task of congregational leaders, Osmer then places the four tasks outlined at the beginning within a more complex schema of a theology of leadership giving special attention to the spirituality of that leadership. He states that leadership 'in the Christian community is inherently a spiritual matter',[274] and he describes spirituality as being the

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[268] Osmer, *Practical Theology,* 11.
[269] Ibid., 13-14.
[270] Ibid., 18.
[271] Ibid., 24-5.
[272] Ibid., 25.
[273] Ibid., 26.
[274] Ibid., 27.

'leaders' openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as she forms and transforms them toward the image of Christ in his body and in the service of the church's mission'.[275] Leaders, 'must learn to rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, rooted in their spirituality. Their being and becoming in the Spirit are integrally related to their doing and leading in Christ's body and this body's service of the world'.[276]

What is salient to note is that Osmer feels he needs to defend his stance 'offering a theology of the spirituality of congregational leaders, I move away from a general description of the tasks of practical theological interpretation that are found in the writings of many contemporary practical theologians. I offer a theological perspective that is my own'.[277]

However, Osmer's work is significant for my project as it intentionally links the tasks of leadership with the work of the Holy Spirit in discerning and guiding the leader, and the congregation. At its core though it still relies on a process of correlation, and before I can adopt a correlative method – whatever the iteration – I need to acknowledge the reasons why for some it is unsatisfactory as a method.

First, the pastoral cycle may not be very realistic for a practitioner who is unlikely to follow a set of prescribed steps in practice. This has led to practical theologians finding ways to offer a more integrated and embedded approach that takes their individual contexts seriously. This approach seeks to start from 'within' the practice rather than from 'without'.

An example of this is the work of Helen Cameron who uses the pastoral cycle to examine the ways in which churches resource mission. Though she is using the pastoral cycle, the underlying commitment is to view situations in a 'multi-dimensional' way. In this instance,

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[275] Ibid., 27.
[276] Ibid., 29.
[277] Ibid., 27.

she outlines these to be to understand the practice and its effect, to explore what affects that practice, to understand the context, and fourthly to know the history and traditions. All four are needed to observe and engage with the practice in full, or in the round. She argues that at its best the pastoral cycle is more than a series of mechanical steps but is 'a commitment to a way of seeing that involves participating in oral and written traditions as well as a commitment to reflect upon your practice'.[278]

Another example of an integrated approach that specifically avoids the pastoral cycle is found in the book, 'Talking about God in Practice'. Here Cameron and others engage with discourse and practice through the working tool of a four-voice typology. This heuristic tool uses the different voices of discourse to clarify from within what is believed in practice, and by whom. All four voices in discourse – formal, espoused, normative and operant – are present in any one activity or event and by identifying what these voices are, and what they are saying, one is better able to interrogate how the practice 'speaks' of God. Each 'voice' offers a different perspective. This methodology is important as it indicates how closely inter-related discourse and practice are.

Pete Ward is another who is seeking to orient practical theology towards mission and ministry, and he too finds the pastoral cycle problematic, suggesting it has origins in Marxist adult learning programs. However, he also resists rejecting the 'applied theology' approach which starts from a theological position because starting 'with practice' only puts practical theology on the liberal side of debate in modern theology.[279] So he suggests that the issue itself ought to determine or prompt the method adopted.[280]

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[278] Helen Cameron, *Resourcing Mission: Practical Theology for Changing Churches* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 13.
[279] Pete Ward, *Introducing Practical Theology: Mission, Ministry, and the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 8.
[280] Ward, *Introducing Practical Theology,* 82.

Secondly, the pastoral cycle has been critiqued because it relies on correlation which suggests a presupposed interpretative stance and a prior standard against which the practice is measured. Correlation is questioned in post modernity because it presumes a normative rule. This can be problematic as who chooses what is normative and then, how does one interpret that normativity? Given everyone's context is different everyone's interpretative stance will likewise differ. Even so, Swinton and Mowat argue that in a practical theological framework, logical priority is legitimately given to the teachings of Jesus, and to the Christian scriptures and creeds. Arguably though, this is still problematic as any Scriptural 'standard' that is employed can be manipulated ideologically.

Thirdly, correlation has received criticism for an essential incongruity. The correlative method seeks to marry theory with practice or 'bring together' experience and practice with theology and belief, assuming a separation between the two. Watkins[281] finds fault with this because it leads to the incongruity of relying on the very separation it is seeking to erase. Thus, as a method it perpetuates a presumption of disintegration and dissonance, while trying to overcome it. Instead, Watkins analyses accounts of practice using the four-voice typology of Cameron et al., as discussed. This methodology is important for Watkins as she argues it is intrinsically integrative and avoids the incongruity implicit within the correlative strategy that is central within a pastoral cycle.

The issues raised by these writers are acknowledged. Trying to correlate the Anglican leadership discourse against a perfect 'version' of itself, or against my interpretation of what I think the New Testament says about 'leadership', is never going to be fruitful or persuasive. The subject of leadership and the language of leadership is highly contested within ecclesiology and there is no straightforward or plain explanation of it in the New

[281] Watkins, *Disclosing Church,* 6-7 and 42-43.

Testament. Therefore, a simple correlative method cannot be intellectually reasonable, nor theologically meaningful.

Therefore, and instead, I look to Mark Cartledge who makes a specific case for empirical research in practical theology. When practical theology is conceived as an empirical discipline, it uses the tools and methods of the social sciences to map out the beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices of individuals and communities. This epistemological approach values both engagement in the life of practice, as well as a more structured investigative strategy to gain distance. Cartledge advocates both qualitative and quantitative research methods as '[p]ractical theologians in their use of social science methods and techniques will bring a distinctly *theological* epistemology that is influenced by a Christian worldview and spirituality'.[282]

The overall practical theological strategy is described by Cartledge as being a dialectic process: one of conversation between the twin poles of 'lifeworld' – praxis, reality, and experience – and 'theory' of belief/faith and theological system. He speaks of practical theology being a conversation between the two poles, a process of oscillation – a back and forth – between the two. It is interesting to note that he retains the binary at the heart of the practical theological endeavour, the twin poles of praxis in context, and belief/ theology, but instead of correlation, he speaks of conversation.[283]

In addition to this dialectic, Cartledge seeks to bring alongside a charismatic spirituality that seeks to emphasize that God himself, by his Spirit, is involved and animating the process of the practical theologian. It offers an understanding that 'God is not absent but deeply present'.[284] The charismatic perspective consciously brings to the conversation an

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[282] Mark J. Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003), 82.
[283] Cartledge, *Practical Theology,* 28-9.
[284] Ibid., 25.

understanding that God's life to and in the church, is bestowed by the Spirit, 'who is involved and active in the process. The church thus seeks to draw people into a relationship with the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The means of such a relationship is by the Spirit of God'.[285]

Cartledge describes the process or journey of spirituality in terms of a common 'search–encounter–transformation' pattern.[286] Then, in similar fashion to Osmer, Cartledge overlays this spiritual pattern onto the 'conversation' of the practical theologian. So, he describes the dialectical conversation of the practical theologian in terms of a spiritual process that follows the same search–encounter–transformation arc, and in so doing recasts the practical theological method.

Cartledge lays out this model as a detailed series of conversations that move back and forth between the twin poles of theory and praxis.[287] First there is the search and question stage at both poles – both lifeworld, and theory or theological system are questioned, and the issues are described and delineated. Then the process moves to an encounter phase which seeks understanding and engagement at both poles. This is the stage of engagement with theology and beliefs, as well as analysis of lifeworld/practices, allowing qualitative or quantitative data to be collected, and investigation, review, and engagement in the social sciences and inter disciplinary exploration. These first two stages can oscillate back and forth through search and encounter until, lastly, there is a creative outcome offering both renewed practice, and or revision in theory and belief. This is the transformation stage.

Cartledge argues that this dialectical model has the advantage of taking seriously the priorities of each pole. So when starting at the theory/theology pole, that is given priority,

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[285] Ibid., 19.
[286] Ibid., 18.
[287] Ibid., 28.

whereas when starting the search questions at the praxis/lifeworld end, there the lived reality is given precedence. But all the time, there is informed conversation between the two.

> This leads to a very creative part in the process as the oscillation between praxis and theory generates insights. This phase is an encounter phase. The experience of the people in the concrete reality is brought into fruitful encounter with the academic literature on the subject. This encounter primarily includes theology … Scripture gives insight and meaning to experiential reality. Theological normativity is located in Scripture and can challenge and modify the values embedded in the theological praxis.[288]

The process continues allowing for further collection of data and for any empirical realities to be interpreted and reflected upon theologically. At the end of each encounter phase there is either an articulation of more questions, or a proposed transformation of praxis. He makes the point that since this is being framed within a charismatic spirituality, as well as recommending change at the level of orthodoxy or orthopraxis, a charismatic theology through engagement with Spirit will invite change at the level of affection, attitudes, and behaviour.

However, even within this conversational approach, there is still an element of critical correlation at work. Cartledge allows for the Christian scriptures and doctrine to stand behind the process adopting a critical realist posture. This is because, as he says in his conclusion, he is seeking 'renewed theological praxis wherever possible'.[289]

Mark Cartledge's approach speaks most powerfully to this project as while he embraces empirical methods, this is incorporated within his spiritual paradigm of search–encounter–transformation. He takes seriously the concerns of a post-modern context by valuing interdisciplinary study and the methods of empirical enquiry but within a spirituality that acknowledges the present activity of the Holy Spirit.

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[288] Ibid., 29.
[289] Ibid., 31.

Further his approach offers me meaningful connection as it identifies the importance of discourse. Practical theology operates as a mediating academic discipline in that it advances theological discourse through dialogue with the Christian tradition and the social sciences by means of original empirical research.

Therefore, having reviewed a few practical theological approaches above, I want now to lay out my method using my own version of Cartledge's search–encounter–transformation arc to produce a piece of practical theology that engages with empirical method while also seeking itself to be spiritual practice.

Search–Encounter–Transformation Arc narrated in stages

The Search Phase

In chapter 1, I laid out a structuralist view of discourse grounded in four underpinning propositions that derive from the linguistic turn. I identified that discourse is constructing for meaning and determining for practice. Thus, what is said and how, is constructing for knowledge, and determining for experience of that ideation in practice.

In the context of a reforming program, I have considered two cultural shifts which provide a backdrop to ecclesial leadership discourse. The first was the cultural influence of secularization, and the consequent critiques about managerialist practices, and the incursion of a secular leadership language. The second shift noted was the cultural shift towards spirituality and subjectivity. Yet this move towards an expressed and experiential spirituality was not found to be likewise reflected in the leadership discourse.

So then, if reform is proving problematic, might there be a subverting factor in discourse given discourse's meaning-making and shaping effects? I need to ask how the leadership discourse speaks of God.

In chapter 2, I considered the literature around leadership and pneumatology and found that there is little examination of the discourse of leadership from a theological perspective. In addition, in wider theological discussion there is an absence of Spirit-talk. The implication I draw from a structuralist view of discourse, and following the work of Marcus Moberg who undertakes a content analysis, is that such absence in discourse will have effect, and affect any program of change. It is therefore warranted to interrogate leadership discourse further.

In chapters 4 and 5, I undertake a content analysis of a wide sample of texts that comprise the written ecclesial leadership discourse of the Church of England. The content analysis is an inductive exercise that starts in the texts. I am asking the question, 'how do they speak of God?' Or, simplifying still further to how they identify Him as subject, 'how do they say God's name?' To answer this an audit is made of the names of the Godhead to see how God, Father, Son and Spirit, is engaged, addressed, or described in the texts. The audit of the names provides a set of numbers, a quantitative result which provides evidence from which I can make an assessment.

Using this tool relies on the relational supposition that referencing a person by name or addressing a person – speaking to them and about them, or calling on them, asking things of them, or praising them – indicates a knowledge of, and a relationship with, that person. The naming of a person indicates personal connection and knowledge. This speaks to the identifying, relational, and ideational functions of language mentioned in chapter 1.

The numbers obtained provide a result which allows me to deduce a line of reasoning – though the data that comes from the content analysis cannot uncontrovertibly prove a position – even so I apply the logic 'if this is the outcome – then that'. So, using the quantitative data collected from the audit I use the logic that, if there is inequality in the numbers, then that reflects an inequality or imbalance in the way the Persons of the

Godhead are named and addressed which I deduce indicates relational differentiation in the discourse.

Further, any such imbalance or inequality in relationality, and thus subjectivity in the discourse, between the Persons of God speaks to or reflects the 'theology' of that discourse – that is, literally, what it says about God and how it speaks of God. Any bias or disparity in the naming of the Persons of the Godhead would suggest that there is a theological bias or preferencing in play. And relying on a structuralist view of discourse, any such bias or disparity in theological view within the leadership discourse will have constructing, constituting, and shaping affect, on leadership practice.

To be as reflexive as possible, I ensure that in the counting I work against myself so as not to 'find what I am looking for'. I make sure that the counting is weighted away from any presupposed result or any suggestion of preference at work.

Further, I am clear that the results I obtain do not represent the reality of leadership discourse. They can only reflect the position as derived from these documents. I also acknowledge that the discourse moves on fast and encompasses more than written texts. It is, however, realistic to draw the line somewhere.

The Encounter Phase

In distinction to the abovementioned process of Cartledge, this is not envisioned strictly as an oscillating process moving back and forth between the two 'poles' of practice and theory. Rather, I move through three linked but different inter-disciplinary conversations which are envisaged as being linked laterally. These conversations in different fields are intended to inform and build upon each other.

This encounter phase is found in chapters 6, 7, and 8, where I engage with systematic theology, ecclesial practice, and secular leadership studies. More particularly my three conversation partners are Wolfhart Pannenberg, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, and Joseph

Raelin and the ‘as-practice’ approach to leadership. I deliberately avoid choosing a charismatic or Pentecostal theologian as conversation partner so as again to ‘work’ against any critique around preference.

My dialoguing with these inter-disciplinary partners is intended to indicate an ongoing and open process. It is meant to be a living – Spirit-led – way of discerning how to address any bias or fill any gap I might find. This is meant to reflect and model the ‘as-spiritual practice’ approach itself which forms the subject of my proposal at the end. Thus, this whole project is intended to be an example in the making of the very thing it is proposing – a co-constructing conversation shaped by the Spirit. I consider this more fully in the next section.

This idea of a co-constructing conversation is not the same as the ‘critical conversation’ advocated by Stephen Pattison. This is because different fields – systematic theology, leadership studies and ecclesiology – all speak into the issue of my enquiry which is leadership discourse. Pattison on the other hand, speaks of a critical conversation between one’s own beliefs and perceptions, the beliefs and perspectives of ecclesial tradition, and the contemporary situation being examined;[290] very different conversation partners.

The step towards encounter is not overtly correlative as there is no imposition of standard against which the discourse is simply measured. My use of the dialectical approach is intended to sidestep any critiques that might arise over a simplistic correlative method that seeks to conform the language of leadership with ‘what the Bible says’. This is not possible given that a normative theological position about leadership is contested.

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[290] Stephen Pattison, ‘Some Straw for Bricks: A Basic Introduction to Theological Reflection,’ in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology,* eds., James Woodhead and Stephen Pattison (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2000), 139.

However, what could be called ‘a hermeneutical conversation’[291] with a systematic theological position is allowed to bring understanding into the practices of discourse. So even though I choose not to engage in a simple correlative exercise that might have been indicated by the traditional pastoral cycle, the conversation is still taking place within the confines of the prior and priority claims of the Christian scriptures and creeds. At points, these will influence such that there is opportunity for new understanding and for the creative ‘fusion of horizons’ of which Gadamer speaks.[292]

The Transformation Phase

Having heard from my conversation partners, I then propose an ideational synthesis to repair or renew the leadership discourse. I propose leadership-as-spiritual practice which is an ideational formation that allows for an account of the Spirit to be given in discourse. My understanding is that an interpolation into the discourse can have meaning-making, socially shaping effect on practice, and according to Moberg, operate as a driver for institutional change.

The above is a narrative of my ‘search–encounter–transformation’ journey. The process is a dialectical model around conversation. Another way of describing my method is to observe its movements: it moves through an inductive to deductive to creative stage. This can be further simplified as: In–From–To. I start in the text, work from other disciplines, and move to a new alterity.

The Project and Proposal as Co-constructed Conversation

What I believe is significant about the method outlined above, is that it reflects the nature of the synthesis I propose at the end. This thesis is itself a process of ‘co-constructed

[291] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 406.
[292] Ibid., 406.

conversation'. And, if '[c]onversation is a process of coming to an understanding',[293] as per Gadamer, then shaping the methodology of this project around the notion of 'conversation' is not only a creative move but a necessary one if I am to seek a new coming-into-understanding of God in leading, and even leadership itself. And Gadamer makes the specific point, that this 'coming to understanding' can be applied to 'conversation' with written texts, such that, as mentioned above, there is a 'hermeneutical conversation'.[294]

In addition, because the nature of discourse has determining effect, the proposal offered in chapter 9, being based on a 'co-constructed conversation', means it can have ongoing determining affect in use. The very conversational nature of the model means it is best able to take advantage of the constructing, and ongoing creating, ability of the discourse at work. It runs with the grain of the functioning of discourse. Thus, I want to suggest that the nature of the final synthesis carries increased ideological weight, precisely because it is based upon the root idea of co-constructed conversation.

However, it might be argued that my approach is negative or just an example of post-modern deconstruction of a discourse. I want to argue that this process is in fact positive – for though it is reading the texts in the negative so to speak – it is intended to offer a creative and prophetic opportunity. Jantzen describes the process of de-construction as a positive one: 'de' is 'of' 'construction', and it involves 'an uncovering and bringing to consciousness the unacknowledged foundation of a particular theory or position, which then opens the way for thinking otherwise'.[295]

Jantzen argues that in 'close and careful commentary on a text or discourse, one can discern its blind spot, the assumption it makes or the word it uses which, while absolutely

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[293] Ibid., 403.
[294] Ibid., 403 and 406.
[295] Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, 205.

necessary to the discourse as it stands, also shows its gaps, reveals an opening for a whole different way of seeing'.[296]

She adopts the activity of a 'double reading', which she argues is 'a methodological tool for changing the ground'.[297] This is a reading which 'pays close attention to a text, but which, in that very attention, discloses a rupture in that text which requires a radically different reading of it, thus destabilizing it and in the undecidability thereby created opens the possibility of thinking otherwise'.[298]

In the same way, I am seeking to pay close attention to the texts in such a way as to reveal any blind spot or lacuna and open up the space for a different way of seeing that changes the ground. In careful and close analysis of the text, I read the shape, meaning, lexical field, and intent of the texts. Then, secondarily, I look for the gaps. The content analysis is the tool or device I use to help me discover or uncover those gaps, the shadows. It is a concrete method to show what is minimized, hidden, or deliberately back-grounded in the leadership discourse.

If any gap is found or if there is a lacuna, then the project pivots to become one of encounter and repair. The aim therefore is not just to uncover a gap and leave it, but rather to engage creatively with that gap, and find an interpolation that offers a means of repair – one that has creative meaning-making effect offering opportunity to think otherwise.

An Epistemology

Having said all the above, it is acknowledged that it is the fluidity of meaning through discourse (language and praxis) and the ongoing interpretation of that discourse, that has

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[296] Ibid., 73.
[297] Ibid., 61.
[298] Ibid., 61.

led some in post-modernism to argue that meaning itself, or the assigned understanding of language, is unstable – such that discourse cannot be critiqued since what is said, and deemed true, is always in flux. In post-modernist thinking, this forms part of a 'post-structuralist' approach to discourse. This views everything as being part of the discursive 'text' such that there is no place or stance outside of the discursive realm, and this 'text' itself is continually in flux such that asserting fixed meaning is thereby impossible. The chain of re-contextualization – the ongoing re-saying of an ideation – requires that meaning is always being deferred, and thus there is no fixity since meaning is always being put back. Since the discourse is deemed to be in permanent flux, any critique as to meaning is immediately thereby outdated.

It was Jacques Derrida who in 1967 wrote that, 'there is nothing outside the text' and who began the thinking around the nature of deferral and the need for deconstruction.[299] However, James Smith argues that when Derrida writes that one can never get behind or outside of the text, that is not to say there is no reality other than 'textual' but that 'there is no reality that is not always already interpreted through the mediating lens of language'.[300] Smith argues that many theologians misread Derrida as a linguistic idealist which would challenge any transcendent reality, when in fact he is speaking of the ubiquity of interpretation, and that interpretation goes all the way down to the ground.[301]

The epistemological approach called 'interpretism' understands knowledge is to be interpreted and is constantly being re-interpreted, and is thereby a product of human agency. There is no reality, only multiple perspectives, and layered interpretation. The constructivist methodology approaches truth and the pursuit of knowledge always aware that it is 'a' constructed view, and subjective. This approach is opposite to that often

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[299] James K.A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Post Modernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard and Foucault to Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 34.
[300] Smith, *Who's Afraid of Post Modernism,* 39.
[301] Ibid., 54.

named as ‘naturalism’ or ‘positivism’, or ‘empiricism’, which is a scientific methodology based on direct observable reality and fact. It assumes an objective truth.

The relatively new approach of ‘critical realism’ seeks to bridge these two. Also called scientific realism, or empirical realism, critical realism cuts across the methodological divide holding that while human agency and the construction of discourse in a post-modern era means interpretation is complex, and must always take place, there is nonetheless a reality, a real world, independent of text.[302] ‘Critical realism embraces the reality of objective truth but recognizes that it is personally interpreted.’[303]

This is the position taken by Norman Fairclough who, as I mentioned in chapter 1, developed the field of critical discourse analysis. The analytic tool of content analysis is located within a discourse analytic approach. As a critical realist, Fairclough acknowledges that ‘ontology must be distinguished from epistemology’ and the need to ‘avoid the ‘epistemic fallacy’ of confusing the nature of reality with our knowledge of reality’.[304] Thus the promise of critical realism is it foregrounds ontology against a preference for epistemology.

In addition, Fairclough does not adopt the post-modernist view of post-structuralism because he believes the discourse, though in flux and ever changing, is nonetheless stable enough to be studied. All methods of discourse analyses rely on this realist view. The realist position is one that offers a hermeneutical framework that conceives what and how we think is contingent upon a distinct ontology, what is. So, in this project, when I interrogate leadership discourse starting from the texts, an inductive approach, I am

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[302] Paul G. Hiebert, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 37.
[303] Donald Guthrie, ‘Integral Engagement: Christian Constructivism and the Social Sciences,’ in *Christian Education Journal*, 16 (3), (2019): 445-457. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739891319875155.
[304] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis,* 355.

relying on the fact that the texts exegete a reality that lies behind them, and which exists independently to those texts.

Thus, while I am acknowledging that deferral of meaning can and will occur within a discourse as part of a process of social construction from a Christian biblical perspective, and in the context of ecclesial history, it is maintained that meaning and subjectivity can still crystallize within discourse. The deferral of meaning within a historical Christian context is not so fast as to render any study of that discourse futile. The discourse is deemed to be intransitive enough to be studied and studied as causal.

The critical realist approach to discourse and textual analysis, offers me an appropriate and helpful epistemological position. It allows me to say that the revelation of God – how God is known – is open to interpretation, and that these interpretations will vary such that practice will also vary, while maintaining a belief in that transcendental reality. The interpretative task assumed in a post-modernist approach does not extinguish the need to take a critical look at leadership discourse as practical theologian. Rather, the role of the practical theologian is properly established and arguably finds its reason within a post-modernist perspective.

Further, a process of deconstruction can sit alongside a critical realist view since deconstruction is not destruction of text or meaning but the process of opening up the discourse for questioning. It is about space-making. A deconstructive strategy shows how creative alternatives can be opened up.[305] Deconstruction allows for a questioning of the dominant and institutionally received interpretations of reality and it listens out for 'interpretations' that might be marginalized or silenced. 'This is the constructive, yea prophetic, aspect of Derrida's deconstruction'.[306] A deconstructive strategy assumes

[305] Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, 61-62.
[306] Smith, *Who's Afraid of Post Modernism,* 51.

discourse is constructive for social meaning-making so that it is all the more important to uncover or disclose that which is hidden and silenced, especially in any process of reform.

Accordingly, I am interrogating the texts as a critical realist from a critical realist perspective, but how I interrogate the texts is deconstructive as I am seeking to open up the discourse to reveal what is subverted or hidden.

Therefore, I seek to hold both to the ongoing constructing nature of discourse for social practice (as explained in chapter 1), while taking a realist position in relation to the texts themselves that represent that discourse. I am saying it like this intentionally to avoid any muddle – confirming a constructive or constructing role for discourse is not the same as adopting a 'constructivist' epistemology.

The Content Analysis Introduced

In chapters 4 and 5, I begin my interrogation of leadership discourse. I want to find out how the discourse 'speaks' of God, and to do this I go back to the simplest signification of a subject by asking 'how does leadership discourse say God's name?' The aim is to discern how subjectivity is foregrounded and whether there is difference that might be shaping practice.

As practical theologian, I do not wish to shy away from the empirical methods of the social sciences as I believe they can more properly ground the work of reflexivity that follows. Thus, I use content analysis as a means by which I can obtain a set of quantitative results from the leadership material. It is a method that produces a quantifiable measure. Undertaking this content analysis allows me to secure the originality of the project as any development of ideas or re-vision of leadership discourse will derive from the results I obtain.

The ecclesial leadership discourse in the established church in England is a complex, large and multi layered discourse, so to try and manage this the focus on synodical

documentation was narrowed to the seven year period 2015 to 2022. In addition, as indicated in Chapter 1, I am aware that the discourse of the Church of England is broadly stretched across oppositional ideals. This is a feature of the Anglican church but might also be seen as a weakness. It makes the ecclesial leadership discourse noticeably binatarian in character. The binary pairs are well known, and the arguments about leadership tensed across these pairs mean that thinking about leadership is often characterized as dualist. Obvious pairs are lay or ordained, stipendiary or non-stipendiary, conservative or liberal, diocesan or parochial, episcopal or presbyteral, and so on.

This dualist nature of the arguments around leadership means that any discussion is already pegged onto prescribed intellectual territory, or to a predetermined linguistic field, which then forces highly defended position taking. I have noticed that it is almost impossible to talk about leadership change without very quickly coming up hard against any one of these axes of thought. Any thinking outside of the 'previously pegged' discursive ground is apparently untenable. Discussions can then flounder because of the inherent dualism that assumes only an either-or scenario. (This recalls the discussion in chapter 1.)

Another important observation to make as I approach the discourse, is to recognize the deep undertow of the discourse itself through the materiality of synodical structures, institutional set up, and the historical liturgy, all of which accept as normative the practices and historical institutional structures that reflect and direct leadership. Any deconstructive strategy would need to subvert a leaning towards the inherent self-preservation, and protectionist normalization, of that materiality.

It is therefore with trepidation that I approach Anglican leadership discourse, since as the discourse establishes and then normalizes and maintains 'what' we believe, so constructing 'how' we believe (and thus how we experience that faith), there is a double bind. It becomes doubly hard to change and doubly hard to critique positively or engage

with the discourse in practice. The whole social expression of church is caught up. Not only is what we believe at stake, but who we are and what we do. The discourse has become a personal event. Any undoing of the meaning embodied in the discourse will therefore be threatening to that institution and is likely to be defended.

The Content Analysis Explained

1). The rationale for choosing a content analysis is that it offers a way of achieving an empirical base for this project.

Content analysis is a method by which one determines the presence or not of a certain theme, word, or concept (the unit of analysis) in given qualitative data. It is a socio-scientific method for analysing qualitative data to produce a quantitative result. It thus allows for a quantitative assessment of a text. As Lindsay Prior writes 'CTA has a role to play in integrating quantitative and qualitative modes of analysis in a systematic rather than merely an ad hoc fashion'.[307] As an analytic strategy it can be incorporated into a variety of research approaches.[308]

The data in this case are public leadership texts that arise out of and from within Anglican leadership discourse. The texts are drawn from different perspectives. Since the discourse operates at many different levels it is acknowledged that there can never be a perfect selection of texts and materials to fully exhaust my research question since the choices for that study are inexhaustible, and ever-changing. However, this project can make a claim for validity since it seeks to take account of a broad sweep of 'voices' within the leadership debate.

[307] Lindsay Prior, 'Content Analysis,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research,* ed., P. Leavy (ProQuest Ebook Central, 2014), 361.
[308] Prior, 'Content Analysis', 377.

Post analysis there are numbers, a quantitative result, which allow me to make an assessment or comparison as to how often the persons of the Triune God are referenced in the documents. The content analysis is not evaluative. Rather, it offers a starting point for a deductive assessment to be made.

Further, the results of the content analysis allow any conclusion or criticism of this project to be measured back as true or false against the numbers derived from the texts. The results offer an evidential base for the assessment that I make, and by basing my arguments on a quantitative set of results, the ensuing argument is strengthened.

2). Content Analysis is an appropriate method for the Anglican denomination.

One of the reasons why I have chosen a textual approach is that it flows from the nature of Anglicanism itself. Obviously, there are limitations that immediately impinge from making a case study out of one denomination, but these notwithstanding, there are benefits in choosing an Anglican perspective. The Anglican discourse is one that has a long history. Anglicanism 'prides' itself in being a church that believes what it says and prays – *'lex orandi lex credendi'* – and thus it is a discourse that is ripe for an investigation around the relation between the two.

i) A simple but important benefit of choosing the Anglican discourse is that it is well documented. The Church of England is a liturgical church, it lives by its words, written prayers, its hymns, its written history. It also still produces many words, documents, books, papers, and reports. It is therefore a fertile lexical field for investigation.

It is arguable that the spirituality of Anglicanism can be characterized as being 'word based'. The shape of worship, for example, each week for centuries has been led by the repetition of a set text. Anglicans are known for their liturgy, common prayers, and common worship texts, and for their essays, poems, hymns, and sermons. A textual approach therefore runs with the grain of the subject matter being appraised.

The value of studying qualitative data is that one can take in a wide number of texts and documents that represent a wide range of views and 'voices' within the discourse such that one can arrive at a 'thick description' of that discourse.

ii) In addition, textual analysis 'sits' well or flows naturally from the subject of leadership itself because leadership within Anglican worship is marked out by a textually based practice each week. This is quite distinct to other traditions that for example, are more reliant on music or on an improvisatory oral style. The nature of leadership itself and the understanding of what leading is within Anglicanism has been shaped by and through literary forms repeated weekly for decades. The expression of Anglicanism at a primitive level literally flows from a verbalization of these texts. Therefore, testing and interrogating that expression is reasonable.

iii) So strong is the reliance on the written form and text within the Anglican church that even though there might be other forms of expression that some desire to see come to the fore, these forms and different expressions of worship do not affect the essential praxis of liturgy. Indeed, where there are 'charismatic' or 'fresh' expressions of worship these rarely influence essential practices of the church, rather being channelled into midweek services, or youth services, pure music events, or being reserved as private. This is another reason why this project – even though there is a practical theological aim – engages first with textual analysis of that discourse.

iv) The method of content analysis works well within an Anglican context because of the complexity of discourse which operates hetero-phonetically. Senior leaders display this hetero-phonic quality when they speak from both ministerial and academic spheres, and thus speak with two voices. Many bishops will include their academic credentials in their styles.

v) Content analysis allows for a broad view and a wider interrogation of different and varied texts to be considered alongside each other within one exercise. A wide selection

of different types of text can therefore be included, which adds interest and experimental strength. Critics might argue that any interpretation is limited since the analysis can only ever be partial, and subjective. It is to pre-empt this concern that a large number of different texts are brought alongside each other, allowing a broad corpus of material to be addressed within the discourse.

By examining the discourse, instead of watching a physical church council meeting for example, or any one individual expression of leadership, I can analyse a cross section of discursive material from a far wider expression of practice and consider much more material across the years. This in turn means that my analysis is far more reaching and any judgement I make can be applied more widely or generally. It makes the project useful.

vi) Content analysis, as opposed to the more discrete discourse analysis, is the appropriate approach because I am going back to the texts for a purpose other than that for which they were written. This is not primarily therefore a look at the way the document is constructed, or an examination as to why the document was written but rather a look at what the document contains, and how it might impact praxis.

Studying written reports, books, and texts only as opposed to, for example, records of interviews, minutes of meetings, personal conversations, or social media posts is a sensible and reasonable line to draw in the collection of the material. This offers a logical boundary between what data to consider, and what to exclude.

vii) Lastly, this method of content analysis allows me to draw out that which is implicit in, or beneath, the text that appears on the page; that is, those presumptions or presuppositions that have been omitted but which exist prior to the text and operate so as to subvert that which has been written.

3). The process

i) I selected documents from the leadership discourse to consider. The selection had to be broad, but also manageable, so a set of texts was chosen within the time frame of 2015-2022. The documents chosen fall into three categories:

The formal and public documents of the Church of England – those for and emanating from Synod which is the governing body of the church. It is made of three groups, the house of bishops, the house of clergy, and the house of laity. The synodical voice is the voice of governance, the official view. All constitutional, legal, and directing decisions are made through Synod. The Synod documents determine, define, and then describe the leadership processes at work. This is where change is effected.

The second set of writings is taken from the episcopacy, and three bishops all of whom influence the leadership discourse and who are presently working on leadership change more widely. They are Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, Bishop Steven Croft, and Bishop Andrew Watson. These men are notable because they 'speak' in different registers within the discourse, and fully aware of this, they deploy their influence across different spheres. The significance of these writings is therefore that they appeal across academic, ecclesial, and popularist registers.

Thirdly, I look at some liturgical instruments which determine leadership practices in services of worship. This includes the liturgy of the service of ordination which is intended to shape the mandate for ministry.

ii) I establish the unit of analysis. This is fixing the theological focus – 'what' it is that I am looking for.

One of the marks of a successful content analysis is to make the unit of analysis simple enough and easily identifiable enough while remaining meaningful, so that another person

who mined the document for the same unit would achieve the same result. This requires a unit of analysis that is clear cut and unambiguous to achieve a consistent result.

Since I am asking how the discourse 'speaks' of God or how it makes God subject, in order to achieve the level of consistency needed, the unit of analysis chosen for this project was reduced to the simplest unit possible that denotes God – His name. The name of a person is viewed as the most direct way to refer to a person, and it is an irreducible and compressed way of indicating a relation with that one. The name indicates presence of a person in the text whether subject or object, it speaks of 'being', form and nature, it implicates identity, knowledge, and relation. The presence of a name in a text allows for subjectivity for that one to be achieved in the 'coming-to-understanding' in the use of language.

I am aware however, that the name of God is denoted in Scripture as 'Father Son and Holy Spirit' as in Matthew 28.19, where Jesus tells his followers to baptize 'in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit'. This is the composite Name for the Three-in-One God. However, in the practice of our faith we routinely refer to one or other of the relations in God, and it is the relative referencing that I am seeking to discover. Accordingly, this exercise is not a derogation from the one-ness of God but rather a discursive tool for a discrete analysis.

Thus, the units of analysis are the names of the persons of the Godhead. When a Person of the Trinity is identified and named it operates as an irreducible indicator of the coming-to subjectivity of that Person in the text, and as a signifier of the relative subjectivity that Person is afforded within the leadership discourse. It also indicates a potential for relation with that one.

It was tempting to include personal pronouns, but in the end, this would have complicated the task, which might have undermined the strength of the results. I decided, therefore,

that the reference by name was more conclusive, offering a neat and definable unit to count.

Making the Divine names of relation the unit of analysis allows me to assess how the texts speak of God. The names offer me a way to assess how present God is in the discourse, and to identify whether one person is spoken of more than another, or whether one is not spoken of at all – is God as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit named equally, and or evenly in the texts? In this way, I can take an audit of the relative subjectivity afforded to the persons in the discourse.

iii) I set guidelines to decide what to count and what to leave out. So, for example, early on it was decided that the word 'Lord' most often referred to Jesus but could be a reference to the Triune God. It was therefore not counted. On the other hand, the word God, although technically referring to God as Trinity, is most often used to refer to the First Person, in contrast to the Son. So, references to God were placed under the Father column.

Where there were multiple names in any one reference, it was counted as only one reference. So, 'our Saviour, Jesus Christ your Son', was counted as one reference even though it is made up of a conglomeration of four titles.

iv) I read the documents looking for the unit of analysis and counted these units.

Taking a critical realist view, since the name represents the person, I assume a name to be evidence or a marker of the presence and activity of that person himself. The relative frequency of references was totalled giving a numerical total for the frequency of references to that person in any one text. In this way, the material was converted into a specific quantitative account revealing how many times the different Persons of the Trinity appear in the text.

There were no fixed preconditions nor preconceptions as to findings. Where choices had to be made as, for example, which part of a book to sample, I worked against myself and the question motivating this thesis, and I chose the chapters most likely to reference the Spirit. There was no allowance for avoidance.

v) Analysis was undertaken in several readings. (I did not have a data mining software package.) The first reading of the text assessed the subject matter and the overall thrust of the document. The second reading involved counting the names of the persons of the Trinity. Then a more detailed lexical analysis was made of word choices, links, and patterns. The lexical field signifies different priorities and values as the writers 'foreground' some ideas and 'background' others, so the use of verbs, rhetorical tropes, and metaphors, and any other linguistic devices that play a semiotic role, were noted. In some texts, the whole document is noted in others such as the books, sections of chapters are sampled.

Further, when a person is present as a subject or as an object, that person is given a 'verb' or is ascribed an adjective which allows the reader to 'enter in' and relate more fully to that person and to what he is doing. Where there is no presence, there can be no verbal activity attributed to that person, nor any description made. The person remains hidden behind the text, and unknown.

vi) The rationale for this analysis is that frequency of use indicates a priority of meaning within the text. If there is a dominance of a word or concept within a text it is evidence of priority being assigned to that subject within that text. The number of references to a subject reflects the importance, value, or priority being offered to that subject. Conversely, a lack of referencing will indicate the subject is of low priority and importance and carries less relevance within the document. Accordingly, by counting the references, the documents can be mapped for the relative priority they give to differing subjects. This is concept mapping.

The quantitative results I obtained allow me to make a qualitative assessment as to the relative priority given to, and the subjectivity of, the Persons of the Trinity within the texts. From this assessment I was then able to make a deduction as to what this reveals theologically.

The Content Analysis Evaluated

1) Choice

The very advantage of choosing Anglican leadership discourse because of the enormous supply of leadership texts, also became its weakness. It was very difficult to choose the documents and limit their number. There is an endless supply of leadership and leadership linked texts, and Synod never stops working. Evermore documents are produced so there was a strong anxiety about being outdated before I had finished the analysis. Drawing the line on current material was hard.

Even as I write, Synod is in session and sweeping changes to governance have been voted through. Sir David Lidington is quoted as saying that some church bodies were taking decisions without legal authority and the 'current bureaucratic tangle hindered effective leadership' posing reputational risk, and a huge lack of trust within the church.[309]

2) Ensuring breadth

I wanted to give a sense of the variation within the discourse but could not cover all the blogs or media content. Therefore, I stayed with the Synodical documents, leadership books, and liturgical publications.

[309] David Lidington quoted in the Church Times, 9th July 2023, General Synod Digest, 1.

3) The need for rules

It was difficult in the data mining exercise to formulate a consistent approach. For example, how do I assess the use of the word ‘God’, or ‘Lord’? How does this count? ‘Lord’ was excluded from the count unless it obviously referred to Jesus as direct speech. In this way, I gave the benefit of the doubt to the writers of the documents, allowing for a presumption towards Trinitarian renderings, rather than assuming (as a plain reading might suggest) that the term Lord refers to Jesus.

In addition, where there was obvious repetition of a response in a prayer, or a liturgical form which repeated a reference to Jesus, these were likewise excluded. Examples of this were responses such as ‘Lord have mercy’, the Kyrie Eleison, and the Agnes Dei. Accordingly, many references in the liturgical material to the Father and to the Son have not been included.

In these ways, I allow the method of analysis to ‘work’ against me and any presumption that might be assumed to be built in.

4) Pronouns

The data mining exercise worked to the extent that it gave me some figures as to the use of the names of the Persons of God on the face of the texts. It offered a way of forming an assessment as to the relative referencing.

However, this count could never, and did not, adequately reflect the actual relative presence of the Persons in the discourse, or the relative subjectivity given to them on the page of the different documents. This is because, for example, in the liturgical material there is much direct speech, and therefore much use is made of subjective, objective, and possessive personal pronouns. For example, many of the prayers, collects, and petitions speak to ‘you’, and then go on to describe for example how ‘He loved’, or how ‘He came’,

or ‘His work on the cross’. These pronouns were not counted, even though they indicated a person.

In addition, there were many instances of phrases that could reference two persons but were counted as only one. For example, is ‘your Son’, or ‘your Father’, a reference to the Father, or to the Son, or in either case, to both? The repetition of these instances meant that much personal referencing was omitted.

There were therefore many instances when Jesus Christ was very ‘present’ in the text, but this could not be accounted for in my analysis since pronouns were used instead of his name. This means that the numerical assessment for the Father and the Son, is actually much lower in my analysis than in fact it should have been from the texts.

Noticeably, the Spirit was rarely, if ever, addressed as ‘you’, nor as ‘he’, nor ‘him’, and never as she.

5) Thick Descriptions

Another difficulty in the analysis was how to handle the way the text loaded the names and descriptions for the Father and the Son. So, for example inter alia, references to ‘Our Father, the Lord Almighty’, ‘Almighty God our heavenly Father’, or ‘your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ’. In Order Two of Common Worship, the First person of the Trinity is addressed in the Preface as ‘O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty and everlasting God’, and there are at least nine such loaded descriptions in Order Two. Are these counted as two, three, or even four names at a time, or is this just one reference? Again, in order to ‘work against’ myself, I counted this as just one reference. This means that again, the numeric results are significantly lower for the Father and the Son than they by rights should be.

Further, the numbers fail to address the fact that the text is richly layered when it comes to the First and Second persons of the Trinity, adding weight, description, and characterization to these two persons. Through this fuller characterization and the varied

descriptive terms used, these persons become more ‘relatable’ to the reader and worshipper. These persons are fleshed out with personality in multiple ways describing attributes, qualities, and referencing their activity. As one speaks to, engages with, prays to, and worships, these identities become Persons one can relate to.

In contrast, the Spirit is referred to as ‘your Spirit’ or ‘the Holy Spirit’. There is a spare quality assigned. The contrast is stark. For example, if I take the collect for the Day of Pentecost, a day when one might expect a more fluent and expressive treatment about the nature, person, and activity of the Spirit, there are only three references: ‘the light of your Holy Spirit’, ‘by the same Spirit’, and ‘in the unity of the Holy Spirit’.[310] The Spirit is present in this collect but the level of characterization and any connection into His activity for the worshipper is weakly portrayed. There is a lack of adjectives and figures of speech, so any potential for layering networks of meaning is also missed.

In addition, the language used around the references to the persons was often highly metaphorical. Numerous linguistic devices are employed. So for example, simple phrases – such as, by the strength of your word, or whose voice shakes the ground, or whose life-giving word – use metaphorical language that cast up and organize further networks of associations for the reader and listener. The resonances can go deep, subconsciously shaping how the text is then understood, operating as cognitive suggestions. Where there is no such language apparatus around the naming of the Spirit, these cognitive potentialities are missed.

The content analysis as a method was unable to account for this textual variety. The quantitative approach told me the number of times the Persons were referenced, but struggled to capture the writing style, pictorial language, or offer explanation as to the

[310] Common Worship, (Church House Publishing, 2000), 405.

ways the Persons are referenced, the nature of address, and so on. The lack of characterization and description of the Spirit did not therefore appear in the figures.

Having said that, the quantitative approach does allow a basic readout and the content analysis produced numbers that allowed me to evaluate the discourse qualitatively. The content analysis operated as a neat device by which to reveal the bias, and thus open a debate. And, given the ways I allowed the analysis to 'work against' me, I believe the results obtained offer a firm place from which I can move to make a theological deduction. Even after allowing for the ambiguous, and any repetition, to be lifted from the results, the figures are clear.

The content analysis follows in the next two chapters. The data figures are attached as an appendix to this project after the Bibliography.

Chapter 4

The Content Analysis, Part 1

Introduction

The next two chapters are a content analysis of leadership texts in the Church of England. In this chapter, the official voice of discourse through public and policy-making documents of Synod, is considered. In chapter 5, I turn to other voices in leadership discourse that emanate from the institutional centre. The numbers are laid out in the Data Summary attached as an Appendix to this thesis.

Synod Documents

Synod is the formal legislative body of the Church of England, given its identity under the 1969 Synodical Government Measure. In practice it performs a significant non-legislative role in the governance of the national Church also. Most national policy initiatives are put before the Synod in non- legislative form in order to gain Synod's approval prior to the governance bodies proceeding with any practical next steps or bringing legislative proposals back to Synod. As is stated in the Review GS 2239, it is 'difficult to conceive of any national initiative – legislative or non- legislative – which could proceed against the will of the General Synod. Therefore, Synod does have a role in decision-making as well as its legislative role'.[311]

Synodical reports form the basis of debate in Synod and across the Church, and lead to policy resolutions that determine the way the Church governs itself. These documents that represent the discourse, frame the arguments, shape language, perception, leadership practice, and steer practical policy change. They reveal what the institution

[311] Report of the Governance Review Group, September 2021, for Synod November 2021. GS 2239, 28, paragraph 122.

says about itself, and so give insight into its theology of its leading. They represent the formal and public record, and to that extent, they carry significant authoritative weight speaking as they do 'top down' into wider leadership discourse. The documents are written in report form, offering both commentary and strategy, reportage, and data analysis. They are thus a combination of qualitative and quantitative material written in numbered, carefully constructed, formal paragraphs.

The synodical documents that have been selected pertain to the leadership and management of the Church of England from the beginning of 2015 to 2022. This period is marked by a new process of reform initiated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and closes seven years later with new Vision and Strategy proposals initiated by the new Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell. Each document is named and then discussed in turn. The numerical findings are written into the text as well as being in the Data Summary.

In February 2015, Archbishops Welby and Sentamu introduced a new programme of 'reform and renewal' for the Church of England in line with the three goals adopted in 2010. These were, namely: to promote numerical and spiritual growth, contribute as the national church to the common good, and reimagine ministry in the 21st century. In just twenty-three paragraphs the scale of the reforming task is outlined in **'In Each Generation' A Programme for Reform and Renewal, January 2015 (GS 1976)** as the findings of four task groups that had been set up a year earlier are introduced to Synod.

There is a limited but noticeable repeating lexicon. For example, the word 'challenge' is used 5 times,[312] 'impact' 4 times, while the words 'funds' or 'funding', 'finances' or 'business', are used 15 times. These are linked by a repetition of 'necessary', 'need' or

[312] The number of instances of lexical use are denoted by numerals.

‘needed’, 11 times. In contrast, Jesus Christ is referred to 3 times, God is named 3 times, and ‘God’s Spirit’ is named once.

The semantic pair ‘numerical and spiritual growth’ is repeated 3 times, twice as ‘numerical and spiritual’, once as ‘spiritual and numerical’, indicating some conscious prioritizing. The naming of the ‘spiritual’ life of the church as distinct to, but connected with, the numerical size of the church, suggests spirituality is going to be treated as a discrete category. It might also, on the face of it, suggest some equivalence in the minds of the writers.

There is no connection made in the text between leadership structures and the change agenda. The dualism ‘lay and ordained’ is used and there is emphasis on ‘ordination rates’ and stipendiary funding. The fact that existing leadership forms are assumed creates an unwritten pre-text for reform.

Developing Discipleship, January 2015 (GS 1977) starts with an expression of discipleship but acknowledges a failure within the church to disciple, §34. Examination of the lexical field reveals that the persons of the Trinity are named unevenly. Overall, God is referenced 43 times, Jesus Christ or Christ 29 times, and the Holy Spirit, 10 times. The report mentions ‘spiritual and numerical growth’ 4 times, and references both ‘spiritual worship’ and ‘spiritual leadership’ once. The Holy Spirit is not mentioned in thirty paragraphs (§17-46). In the Ten Marks proposed, Jesus or God are referenced 7 times in the ten paragraphs. No reference is made to the person of the Holy Spirit though ‘spiritual leadership’ is affirmed.

In §38, the report identifies consequences arising from a lack of common understanding about discipleship in the church. The last of these is that the ‘witness and mission of the

whole church is impoverished'. It then goes on to reference two earlier reports[313] which specifically link the role lay disciples, lay participation, and lay leadership play in church growth, and it concedes that the vision of these earlier reports has yet to be fully realized. The 'biggest obstacle in lay development is the clericalized culture of church and ministry', §33. At the end, to improve delivery of discipleship and to encourage lay participation 'marks' for dioceses to aim for are offered, §44, and a revised 'Catechism'.

The writing in the 'Ten Marks' is notable for the creation of dense ideational formations such as: 'facilitation skills, 'strategically promote opportunities', 'develops support networks', and 'current theologically rooted plans, projects and programmes'. What these are to mean in practice is not explored, nonetheless, the build-up of such phrases offers a sense of technicality, modernity, and suggests a level of managerial expertise at work.

The use of the term 'catechism' alongside such ideations is thus a contrast. The revival of an old device, and ecclesiastical language that has fallen out of contemporary use, is evidence there is some discontinuity at work arguably creating dissonance within the discourse.

The subject of spirituality is expressed obliquely or implicitly within the text. For example, in §15 phrases such as, 'disciples are called to dwell deep in Christ', and 'as we dwell deep in Christ … so we are continually renewed in the grace of the Holy Spirit' point to there being a pneumatological perspective. 'Dwelling deep' is defined as teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. Verbs that might have identified the personal work of Spirit are elided into the one word 'renewed'. In §15 the two mentions of Spirit assign no active verb; Christ dwells by his Spirit, and we dwell in grace of Spirit.

[313] 2014 'From Anecdote to Evidence', Report to the Archbishops Council and the Board to the Church Commissioners of the Church of England, and 1945 'Towards the Conversion of England', Report by the Church of England Commission on Evangelism.

In §21, the report argues that ‘nurturing this sense of discipleship’ is the essence of ‘promoting spiritual and numerical growth’. The word ‘nurturing’ is used 3 times in four lines, but such ‘nurturing’ of the ‘spiritual’ is not assigned as activity of the Holy Spirit, who is omitted. Details around what practical spirituality is for today’s disciples are omitted. There is talk of more process (‘debate’ is referenced 5 times in the first five paragraphs).

The report admits to a lack of focus on lay ministry and enabling people of God more widely into shared responsibilities. The key point is made in §37, a theology of discipleship ‘has not been fully absorbed into the lifeblood and culture of our Church’, and again in §38, ‘the whole church is impoverished as Christians are neither encouraged nor sustained’. The report acknowledges that an ‘understanding of ministry’ is ‘lopsided’ and ‘an immense amount of reflection has been invested over the last 25 years on ordained ministry’, and as a result, ‘our understanding of service’ is ‘restricted’ or ‘too narrowly focussed on the church’, §38.

Overall, the report identifies a lack of coherent understanding and practice of discipleship, and a deficit in the leadership discourse around an imperative to disciple the whole Body of Christ for service acknowledging bias towards ordination as leadership.

Resourcing the Future of the Church of England, November 2014 with the attachment dated January 2015 (GS 1978), is technical and couched in transactional terms as it deals with proposals amending financial formulae and arrangements. Tied up with this is the way clergy are paid, and parishes are funded. The case for change is emphasized: ‘decline’ is repeated 4 times on page 1, while growth is repeated 12 times, and ‘growth’ and ‘growing’ are used 55 times overall. Of these, there are set phrases that operate as determining slogans, such as ‘mission and growth’ 14 times, ‘investment in growth’ 13 times, and ‘numerical and spiritual growth’ 5 times.

The theme of reorganization is a sensitive topic. The tone and tenor of the questions appended to the end of the report reveal an underlying scepticism, and a defence of the

structures currently supporting leadership. The lexicon of organizational leadership is used in contrast to the report above where the lexical field for leadership is framed around a notion of 'ministry'. The scarcity of references to God indicates that the leadership discourse separates God from leading in the financial task. This is the 'business' end of church. God and Christ are named 3 times. The power of the Spirit once at the end of a prayer.

The report **Resourcing Ministerial Education in the Church of England, January 2015 (GS 1979)** addresses how to 'develop proposals for the most effective use of resources for ministerial education'. There is some question however as to whether the proposals it puts forward match the discourse's own ambitious remit for 're-imagining' ministry', §9 and §10. The focus is on funding and technical change. As a result, the report's proposals seem to cut across its own high aims and offer instead organizational changes such as changing the date of ordination.

In §10, the writers say that they have been working through 'theological reflection' and developing a 'theological understanding', a process hidden from the reader. However, the language following in the report does not support this claim. This might indicate that the theological exercise has been subordinated to the 'work' of the report itself. The financial proposals may offer benefit, but a critique would be that this report does not re-imagine or rethink its way to something new. There is arguably, borrowing Urban Holmes' phrase, 'a loss of theological nerve'.[314] Rather, the existing ecclesial forms are retained, ecclesial processes are amended and not reconsidered, and ordination or not remains the sole vocational option. Thus, the existing roles and forms in which leadership can operate remain in play unchallenged, even when there is an expressed vision to see 'collaborative

[314] Holmes, *The Future Shape of Ministry,* 286.

leadership in mission and to be adaptable in a rapidly changing context', and 'rapid development of lay ministries' §8.

There are 3 references to both the Father and the Son, and two to the Spirit. The vocabulary is predominantly organizational and bureaucratic largely around improving numbers and resources. There is only 1 use of the word Spirit in the text in connection with 'seeking to discern the mind of the Spirit' at the meetings of the Task group itself.

GS 1980 and GS 1981 are organizational dealing with the process of Simplification and Inter-generational equity. These have been omitted from consideration as reports dealing with organization have already been included.

Discerning and Nurturing Senior Leaders: Senior Ordained Leadership – a new approach to development of those with potential for posts with wider responsibility and to the leadership development of bishops and deans; January 2015 (GS 1982) written by Stephen Cottrell (now Archbishop of York) brings to Synod in February 2015 the report by the Lord Green steering committee on 'Talent Management for Future Leaders'. The aim is explicitly stated: 'the body of Christ, needs to be nurtured and stewarded, shaped and guided so that its organizational life can serve effectively the Great Commission that it has been given', §3. Supporting the recommendations of the Green report, the intention is to present the Green report to Synod, and in doing so to locate the report in its wider context, and 'connect the theological underpinning of this work with the organizational language of the proposals', §2.

The new leadership development programme is intended to 'enhance the priestly and prophetic, theological and apostolic ministries of those called to demanding leadership roles in the Church', §9. The underlying impetus of the report is to implement a new approach to equip bishops and deans with management and organizational expertise, and it is this that informs the language. The vocabulary is one of organization and process.

The name God is referenced 4 times, Christ twice, but the activity and movement of the Holy Spirit is missing. There is no reference to the Spirit. That the leadership discourse does not tackle spirituality or prioritize spiritual formation for its senior leaders is noted. This offers some evidence that there is a dimension to the exercise of leading and being led that remains unexpressed in the public discourse around senior leadership.

Talent Management for Future Leaders and Leadership Development for Bishops and Deans: A New Approach. This is the Report of the Lord Green Steering Group, presented to Synod in February 2015. It is a significant piece of work of 33 pages.

There are 19 references to God, and 19 references to Jesus, Christ, or the Risen Lord. The Spirit is named once, embedded in a quote from Pope Francis in §15. Where there could be a reference, it is couched in terms of 'prayer' §10, presence and transcendent values §13 (again a quote), and then with use of words such as 'energy' in §10 and §12.

Paragraph 17 is notable for 4 references to the 'spiritual'. Leaders are to be filled with 'grace and power' through 'action learning sets' and 'spiritual exercises by engagement with contemplative communities'. The intention is to form clergy with 'strategic' and 'spiritual' gifts, the language inter-weaving the two. How these spiritual gifts are to be developed in practice is not clear. There is no reference to the person of the Spirit.

There is reference to a person's 'spiritual and theological depth' and the need for maturity in Step 3 of the set criteria needed to join the 'Talent Pool' in Appendix 3. This location in the document signals that the spiritual is not at the foreground of the report's concerns and is deemed a discrete attribute. There is no active conversation as to how the spiritual might affect and interact with organizational life or decision-making processes. There is little evidence of a theological and organizational interface in the text.

Instead, spirituality is referenced in relation to the arena of retreat, personal contemplation, and engagement with monastic communities. It is separated out from the

'main' conversation around leadership skills, and the activity of senior leadership. This is evidenced for example, in §36 where it is noted the 'action learning sets' will form the basis for prayer and spiritual reflection 'between' each module. Indicating that spirituality is referenced but outside of the learning modules and material. This would suggest an underlying acceptance of, and presumption towards, a separation of subject matter.

In GS1982, that report stated in §15, that one of the criterion for choosing a leadership training partner was 'a real willingness to engage in the interface between theology and organizational practice', yet the Green Report itself arguably struggles to do that. The vocabulary is binatarian rather than Trinitarian, references to or acknowledgment of the Holy Spirit, and His activity, are omitted. Any working out of a practical pneumatology in the practice of leading within this curriculum is absent.

The **Response by Justin Welby on 16th December 2014[315],** seeks to defend the leadership development programme and the Green Report with a wider discussion of lay ministry and the discipleship of the 'whole people of God' which will lead to 'spiritual development'. The Spirit is named twice. This writing is penned as personal and is published on the Archbishop's own internet portal. It serves as a qualifying note from him personally.

The paper **Nurturing and Discerning Senior Leaders: A Report to General Synod from the Development and Appointments Group, July 2016, (GS 2026)** reports on the learning programmes initiated by GS 1982 and the Green Report, 2014. Three of these will be considered in chapter 5.

[315] The Green Report: A Response, Church of England Website: http://cofecomms.tumblr.com/post/105362114252/the-green-report-a-response. Accessed 2/1/2018.

This report has a lexical field similar to the documents above which reinforces and embeds within discourse word choices and phrases. There are two uses of the names God and Christ: ‘kingdom of God’ §3, ‘call of God’ §26, and ‘Christ’s people’ and ‘body of Christ’ §5. Yet there is no mention of the person or work of the Spirit. He is not named. This works to subvert one of the report’s clear aims, for example, to ‘ensure a profoundly prayerful cadre of Bishops and Deans who are confident as leaders and evangelists, releasing energy for mission and growth’, §3.

A vision and narrative for Renewal and Reform, July 2016 (GS 2038) restates the intent to influence and direct leadership discourse: ‘Renewal and Reform is a body of work which seeks to provide a narrative of hope’. The report writer is shaping the series of reports as a ‘story’, but notably the title for that story has now changed. From ‘reform and renewal’, priority is now given to renewal. It is therefore especially noteworthy, given the focus is now on renewal and transformation, that there is no mention of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

In contrast, Jesus or Christ is mentioned 9 times, God is named 13 times. For there to be no frame of reference given to the pneumatological in a discussion of renewal and change is notable. Instead, the lexicon is shaped around the theme of growth with the attendant vocabulary of planting, watering, seeds, and harvest which do carry a resonance with the theme of spirituality, but this is not made explicit.

In paragraph §6, it is stated that the church will be a place where ‘followers of Jesus are faithful witnesses to the transforming love of God in word and action’. It might be argued that the Spirit is assumed within such a statement, hidden within words such as ‘love’, or ‘faithful’, or within the action of transforming love. Likewise, in §10 there are verbs such as ‘growing’, ‘building up’, ‘working’ for the common good, ‘equipping’, and ‘serving’, words that might be argued offer an implicit reference to the Spirit in the Body of Christ, but no

explicit reference is made in the text to the Third Person of the Trinity. All such activity is assumed within a Christological frame, rather than a Trinitarian one.

In the **Update on Renewal and Reform, January 2017 (GS Misc.1150)** the lexical field is managerial and provides 'an update on the various workstreams both in terms of core developments in 2016 and plans for 2017'. This paper could be issued by any secular charity. There is no mention of God, bar a reference to the report 'Setting God's People Free'. It is an organizational managerial response.

This is well illustrated by the section on Resourcing Ministerial Education. For example, in §20 since the first 'RME' proposals, 'a substantial programme of consultation' has taken place; in §21, a steering group was set up, 'to oversee the process of consulting and implementing the proposals'; in §25 the Ministry Council set up a 'theological development and formation reference group to hold the RME proposals to account'; in §23 two working groups were established to develop proposals for funding. This is language of group, process, and consultation. The same is to be found across other sections such as lay ministry, growing vocations, lay leadership, nurturing senior leaders, and simplification.

In § 27-30, there is affirmation of the Setting God's People Free report (considered below), yet the only three 'changes' advocated are that the church 'reflects' more thoroughly on lay ministry, 'encourages' a belief and theology that ministry is shared, and shifts lay ministries away from a role based or identity-based ministry, §29. That these are stated as 'changes' indicates an underlying weakness in practice. 'Reflecting', 'encouraging', and 'seeking to shift', does not suggest much will happen. This might suggest a lack of underlying impetus around shared ministry.

In this chapter so far, I have looked at the Reform and Renewal Programme that has driven different conversations around leadership. From my analysis, I note that the persons of the Trinity are not named evenly. There are 15 references in total to the Holy

Spirit in these papers which date from January 2015 to January 2017. This contrasts to 70 references to Jesus, or the Christ, and 90 to God, Almighty, or the Father. At this stage therefore, it is fair to say that the naming of Spirit is low in these leadership texts, and that the Third Person of the Trinity is named less than a quarter as much as the Son.

I now turn to three much larger pieces of work produced by the Archbishops' Council and the Faith and Order Commission (FAOC). These works written by committee seek to resource the Church of England theologically, they carry significant influence and authority, and in the case of the report, Setting God's People Free, comes with 'a high-level implementation plan'.

Senior Church Leadership: A Resource for Reflection, July 2015. This report of the Faith and Order Commission (FAOC) is published in book form under the title Faithful Improvisation.[316] It positions itself within the discourse to be theologically directive in the face of increasing dis-ease around managerial and organizational approaches within the church. It is an important text for this thesis since it engages intentionally with leadership discourse, and specifically deals with the rise of 'leadership language'.

Its focus is on senior leadership, and it seeks to answer three questions, the second of which is 'what are the underlying *theological* principles that inform the exercise of leadership within the church?' §9. For this the committee acknowledges they turn to 'the church's traditional resources of 'Scripture, tradition, and reason'', §11.

The content analysis counted 148 references to God or Father, 85 to Jesus Christ, and 46 to the Spirit. Any references to Lord were excluded as were references to God where there was an obvious Trinitarian meaning. This means the imbalance in referencing I am

[316] *Faithful Improvisation? Theological Reflections on Church Leadership*, eds., Loveday Alexander and Mike Higton (London: Church House Publishing, 2016).

noticing so far persists, even when the work is a theological statement. The Spirit is mentioned half as much as the Son, and a quarter as much as the Father.

The premise of this work is that ecclesial leadership is described by a 'triangular' model between God, the people, and the leaders, §3.1. The writers assert as fact that '[t]his 'triangular' structure is deeply embedded in the language used for church leadership in the New Testament', §66, and then argue that the 'triangle' can be overlaid onto God, local, and trans-local contexts which then is later offered as a pre-text for episcopal leadership in the trans-local context.

Creating a theology around the triangle model is a big claim, and is arguably problematic separating out, as it does, the leaders from the people and thus compromising a more holistic vision for the Body of Christ. However, the report specifically critiques theologies of leadership that start with the Body of Christ as they struggle 'to provide a rationale for the particular calling of ordained ministry', §54. This is important for it reveals that this report is presuming that there *is* a rationale for ordination and for existing leadership forms. A pre-existing hermeneutical lens is thus already in place when approaching the Scripture texts. Instead, the report states that it is proposing a theology of leadership that 'starts with the action of God', §55. It identifies God calling individuals as leaders in different modes of leadership – priest, king, and prophet – and that Jesus himself called a select group of disciples.

The Spirit is mentioned in paragraph §55 but in terms of charismatic gifts. This points to the way the Spirit is referred to and framed theologically in this book. There are 46 references to the Spirit, and of these 24 are to leadership being a 'gift of the Spirit'. The refrain 'leadership is a gift of Spirit' dominates the portrayal. This means that leading is located as in the gift of Spirit, such that leading is pneumatologically sourced, but it also means that the understanding of that leading quickly becomes individualized – a 'personal' gifting of the Spirit to an individual – who is specially called to be ordained apart

from the people. In this way the discourse formulates leading to be something that is entitative – something given and received by someone.

By explicating leadership as 'gift' the writers of this book set up leadership to be specific to one person, or to a 'corner' of people in the triangle, and thus pull the ideation of 'leadership' itself out from the collective. How the leadership gift sits alongside other gifts of the Spirit within the other lists of gifts or offices, cited by Paul in the New Testament, is not made clear. Thus, this report provides ecclesial leadership with a pneumatic source, but by so focusing on leadership as a dedicated gift to an individual, the pneumatological basis for a wider or more fluid understanding of leading within the whole body of Christ is weakened.

Paragraphs §74-79 discuss leadership in the local church and expose presuppositions already at play in the discourse. For example, the report states that the three-way relationship is 'fundamental', and that 'this triangular set of relationships is deeply embedded'.

In §80-83 the discussion moves to a trans-local context where there is introduced the notion of 'spiritual leadership' which is linked to the role of oversight: 'Paul's letters testify to the exercise of spiritual leadership over distance and over time … this *trans-local* dimension…'. In §82 the report makes a linguistic move to distinguish those who assume itinerant oversight. It distinguishes those with 'charismatic offices' like apostles, prophets, and evangelists. These 'offer itinerant ministry rather than itinerant *leadership:* they have their own spiritual gifts, but they do not have the trans-local authority that marks out the *episkope* of the Apostles'. The report mentions Apollos, Philip, and Agabus as examples of those with itinerant ministry but not itinerant leadership.

What has happened in these few sentences is key: the notion of 'oversight' has been sifted out from the five-fold ministries what the report calls the 'charismatic offices', as listed in Ephesians 4.11. The concept of 'spiritual leadership' is now *only* held by those

with trans-local oversight. This oversight is associated with trans-local leadership, as opposed to trans-local ministry. By using the phrase ‘charismatic offices’ the report effectively ensures the ministries of the Ephesian’s list are pushed into the background within the leadership discourse, thereby separating them from being part of the ‘leadership’ task which is brought to the fore.

This means that the paper has manoeuvred to disentangle ‘charismatic offices’ from the verbal definition of, and the arena of, the exercise of leadership. And this despite the fact that those in the New Testament ministering in the so called ‘charismatic offices’ were likely to all intents and purposes offering leadership and oversight as well. I would argue this is evidence of the report’s own theological predisposition influencing its interpretational approach as the report goes on to map the role of a bishop onto the notion of ‘trans-local oversight’.

Part 3.4 describes the tasks of leadership, and §87 within that describes the fundamental task of leadership as being ‘to preside’, take charge, stand in front of. The language of leadership is oriented towards concepts of ordering, division of labour, delegation, and appointment. It is also noteworthy that the task of ‘apostolic leadership’ (and thus being a bishop) is linked explicitly with ‘witness’ and Acts 1.8, and Matthew 28. 19-20, verses usually applied to believers and the Body of Christ more broadly.

However, in §119, by its own account this report admits that the New Testament does *not* provide any single model for leadership but offers a picture of ‘fluid’ adaptation, and that development of leadership has been a ‘history of improvisation’ §122. There are then two references to Spirit in §123 in relation to the Spirit guiding the church ‘into deeper discovery of the nature of what it has received’. This is an expression of the view that ‘reception’ of the existing traditions and orders of ministry has been Spirit led, and it is this which then allows the report to retain a three-fold order of ministry and defend current

institutional structures. It is fair to say that the report does not explore other leadership forms or offer its own 'improvisation'.

Thus the report, though sensitive to the needs and criticisms of its own position, nonetheless argues for the inherited orders of ministry into which it argues leadership has been primarily folded. The category of leadership as a result becomes something that attaches by virtue of one's position within the structures of church. Leadership, and notably oversight, are distinguished from the 'charismatic offices' of Ephesians 4.11.

'Setting God's People Free', A Report from the Archbishops' Council, February 2017 (GS 2056), specifically identifies a lack of theological language and an omission of a practical expression of lay leadership in leadership discourse. It identifies the absence of 'any systematic theological framework for thinking about lay engagement and leadership', and argues people are not 'equipped with the vocabulary or enabled to connect with the resources of the Christian faith in order to make theological sense of their aspiration to leadership and service,'§3.1. This is compounded by a 'gaping hole in the Church's understanding of its … primary field of mission', §3.2 which means that lay perspectives, pressures, and leadership skills are marginalized and ignored. It thus identifies 'a theological deficit' that leads to weak lay involvement.

The report (omitting references to the title, and appendix), uses the name of Jesus, Christ, or the Son, 53 times, and refers to God, 42 times. The report, which is twenty-seven pages long, makes mention of the Spirit 7 times. These numbers do not seem to run with the grain of its own aims and theological critique.

Where the Spirit is mentioned, the references are a scripture quote or are indirect. On page 8 there are 3 references relating to the gifts of the Spirit, the outpourings of the Spirit, and the power of the Spirit. Later when outlining the perceived theological deficit within the church, there are 2 mentions of Spirit on page 14. Here the report states that 'the Father sends the Son and Holy Spirit into the world', and 'all Christians are

summoned through the Spirit to share in God's mission'. These references place the Spirit into the action of God in the world, but do not delineate the Spirit's unique move within the Trinity, and in the Body of Christ. Nor for example, is there discussion as to how in practice such 'summoning' actually occurs in practice.

The report offers its own theological diagnosis and identifies in §3.3, that 'sacramental authority, which is the distinctive feature of priesthood, has been conflated with ecclesial power to establish a potent, unyielding clericalism'. The dominant ecclesiology has preferred an institutional structural interpretation of church, and therefore a hierarchy of leadership around a narrow rendition of priesthood, rather than a more lateral organic understanding of leading in connection. It is noticeable, given the report is seeking to offer a theological explanation, that no theological connection is then made in the text to an informing Logos Christology and a concomitant weak pneumatology.

The phrase Logos Christology is used within theological discourse to indicate the dominant interpretation of the Anointed One as being the Word of God,[317] or as the Father's Governing Principle, or as being the Wisdom or Reason of God. The prefix 'Logos' operates as an interpretative key as to the nature of the Christ. This view arises from the description found in the Gospel of John (which links to the creation story in Genesis) where Christ is understood to be the preeminent governing principle for the created order. A Logos Christology will thus focus on the person of Jesus within the soteriological program.

A Spirit Christology on the other hand, understands the Anointed One, the Christ, as being anointed by, empowered, enabled, and raised by the Holy Spirit. It speaks to a soteriological program that gives place to the Third Person of the Trinity with the Son, and

[317] Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 80.

thus it is a Spirit Christology that speaks to the incarnation as being part of a larger soteriological program of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This perspective allows for the Spirit to find place within the life, death, and resurrection story of Jesus – and therefore within the church.[318]

Significantly the report calls for a shift in culture and suggests practical ways such a cultural move can take place. One such lever for change is to develop and narrate 'a practical theological understanding of lay engagement, lay leadership, discipleship and formation, and … articulate a far clearer, theologically grounded vision for the role of lay people', §4.1. The report repeats words such as narrative, vocabulary, voice, and articulation which come from the lexicon of discourse.

This is important for this thesis, as it shows the writers are aware of the importance of discourse and are trying to find a new narrative by which it will be driven. To that end, it recommends establishing a forum with the object of developing a strategy 'for the dissemination of its findings in ways that communicate a clear vision … We think that a clear, consistently communicated vision for lay people … will play a vital role' §4.1.

However, I observe that the report fails to link the deficit it identifies itself, in relation to lay participation and leadership, with the lack of articulation in ecclesiology of the role and activity of the Spirit of God in discourse and practice. Thus, despite identifying a theological deficit in the leadership discourse around lay leadership, there is I suggest, a theological deficit in the report's own language and contribution. There is an observable lack of language and vocabulary to describe the pneumatological. Despite the lexicon being noticeably different, nonetheless direct reference to the person of the Spirit and the spiritual life of the Body, is absent.

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[318] Ibid., 81.

The fact that problems in practice persist despite desire for change is identified in the next book. In '**Kingdom Calling' (GS Misc.1254),** a report by the FAOC to address the theological deficit identified in GS 2056, the opening sentence asks, 'what is the point of all these worthy reports, if they have no effect?' To try and answer its own question, the report aims 'to articulate a theological diagnosis' as to why discipleship and the ministry of the whole Body of Christ still fails to be encouraged and incorporated into the Body,[319] and why clerical leadership is so hard to shift when there is no strong argument in favour of the status quo? There are 'attitudes persisting in which ordained ministry is ultimately at the centre, and everything else is secondary and supportive at best, peripheral and distracting at worst'.[320]

Secondly, it offers a theological grounding that it hopes will operate as a lever for cultural change within the Church of England. It notes that this debate was sparked by the Reform and Renewal project begun in 2015. The FAOC specifically endorses the work and vision of the Setting God's People Free report and subsequent endeavours, acknowledging that there is real difficulty in effecting change in practice (p.3).

The report identifies a 'weakness of theological imagination' and in similar vein to the previous report, couches its critique in terms of a 'theological deficit', and 'impoverished understanding'. This indicates awareness of the need to disentangle the limiting effects of the established orders of discourse from practice. This supports the rationale of this thesis. I am arguing that unless the terms and language of the discourse itself are analysed, the discourse continues to construct the very realities it is seeking to change. The writers of this report are therefore making the case that there is a need to interrogate discourse itself.

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[319] *Kingdom Calling: The vocation, ministry and discipleship of the whole people of God*, Faith and Order Commission (London: Church House Publishing, 2020), 4.
[320] Ibid., 3.

However, this report is threading the needle of theological diagnosis very carefully indeed. While advocating models of leadership that are congruent with a 'participative shared view' of ministry for all believers, nonetheless the form of ordination is retained. This reveals that the underlying assumptions as to models and accompanying functions of leadership in the Church of England remain, and thus the possibility of new theological imaginary for what leadership might look like is already closed down within the parameters of the existing discourse.

There is also an observable omission of managerial and leadership language. This might be because the report seeks to avoid some of the criticisms levelled at the Renewal and Reform material, and any association with the dynamic of secularization. Instead, the leadership language is hedged around vocation, ministry, and discipleship. The repeated phrase is 'all God's people responding to God's call'. However, given the presumed institutional forms, it is hard to see how all God's people can respond in practice. The parameters for leading are hard to question since the emphasis is on a presumed priestly paradigm. This is, arguably, reflective of a dominant Logos-Christology which is traditionally linked to a male-centric and sacramental view of leadership. Referencing the 'riches of the church's Christology' assumes therefore that such 'riches' do not carry their own complexity when examined using a feminist hermeneutic.[321]

On page 23 of the book, the writers state that the Church is 'an outward, visible, and united society' expressing the communion of all humanity in God through the saving work of Christ', and 'the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign …'. Such statements reinforce the view that the church is only Christologically founded and shaped, as for example on page 12, 'God's world and Christ's saving work'. Or on page 15, 'our Christology should give us confidence in the presence and work of the risen Christ, who

[321] *Kingdom Calling*, 82.

promises to accompany and guide us in every part of life'. Yet a reading of Scripture might suggest that the role of presence and guide is recorded as being nominated by Jesus to belong to the Spirit.[322]

The Person of Spirit is notably omitted at key points and marginalized at others. So, for example, in the Preface and long Introduction, God is referenced 45 times, and Jesus/Christ 16 times. The Spirit is mentioned only 3 times, two of which are references captured in quotes. The references are in relation to the 'gift of Spirit',[323] and to the 'energizing' or 'power' of Spirit.[324] Overall, in this book there are 314 mentions of God and Father, 253 references to the Son, and just 39 to the Spirit. Only 30 of these occur within the text itself. This is less than an eighth as many references as to the Son.

In Chapter 1, there are two references (one is a quote) on page 20, with another reference to Spirit on page 29 (a quote from the Book of Common Prayer), the fourth reference is on page 38. Thus, there are only 4 references to the Spirit in Chapter 1, a chapter dealing with calling, discernment (a gift of Spirit), and witness, an area of activity usually attributed to Spirit. By way of sample contrast on just the first eight pages of Chapter 1, God is mentioned 70 times and Jesus/Christ 24 times. In the text of Chapter 2, there are 4 references to Spirit, 2 in relation to gifts. There are 5 mentions captured in quotes from the Ordinal, and an Anglo-Catholic report.

An example of textual backgrounding is the discussion around calling on pages 24-26 in relation to the letters Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, both of which do frame gift, ministry, and vocation around the gifting and leading of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is not

[322] John 14-16.
[323] *Kingdom Calling,* 2.
[324] Ibid., 3.

mentioned whereas in contrast, God is referenced 18 times, Jesus, or Christ 10 times. This is noted in a report purporting to identify a theological deficit.

The first use of the word 'leadership' comes in Chapter 2, page 47. The lack of use of the word leadership and leader more widely in this report is to be noted as it seems the writers are steering the leadership discourse towards a priestly and liturgically centred understanding of leadership within the ecclesial setting. The 'special' tasks identified are in fact discretely orientated around the performative aspects of services. Thus, despite identifying, and critiquing clericalism, a 'clericalizing ecclesiology – implicit or explicit – colludes with the secularist desire to restrict the church to a carefully boundaried zone',[325] the report does not challenge a clerically centred view. Instead, it legitimizes and preserves what it calls 'liturgical tasks' described as presiding, preaching, blessing, absolving, and baptizing.

Even though the report recognizes that the Renewal and Reform initiative sparked important debate about 'the form of leadership that is needed in the life of the church',[326] the vocabulary of the report preserves ecclesiological traditions, and the three ordained orders. The report, for example, quotes the Preface to the sixteenth century ordinal, 'it is evident unto all men …'. But that begs the question as to why, and whether it is actually still so self-evident to men and women that 'from the Apostle's time there have been these Orders of Ministers'?[327] On the face of the text, the report does not offer a hermeneutic for the derivation of these ministerial functions.

Chapter 3 deals with the area of discipleship where one would expect the role and leading of the Spirit to be foregrounded. Yet there remains a focus on Christology which has a distorting effect on both theology and practice. For example, on page 82, the report

[325] Ibid., 49.
[326] Ibid., 64.
[327] Ibid., 58.

states, ‘we need a spirituality of discipleship that draws on the riches of the church’s Christology, so that it can draw us into the fullness of the mystery of Christ’.[328] But what does this mean? Notably this text advocates drawing from Christology alone which suggests that ‘spirituality’ is explicated in discourse not by that which is of Spirit, but that which is of the Son. ‘We need habits that can train us in attentiveness to the presence of the Christ … above all in those aspects where it may seem difficult to name it or even discern it’.[329] And here the writers would seem to be admitting that the discourse struggles to articulate the Spirit as presence and has no vocabulary for the work of the Spirit in practice. To mention spirituality, prayer, and practices of presence without drawing on or mentioning the Person of the Spirit or the ‘riches’ of pneumatology, seems to invite theological tautology.

The first engagement with pneumatology occurs on page 74. There are 8 references to Spirit. A key sentence is ‘for Christian Doctrine, spirituality means life in the Spirit, and we cannot expect to be taught and guided in the way of Jesus Christ independently from our participation in that life’.[330] However, the location of these references so late in the book given what has gone before, seems to subvert any importance assigned. It reveals a subordination of subject matter that is hard to ignore. Further, the bunching of references to one page is evidence that the Spirit is being treated as a discrete topic necessitated by the reference to Doctrine, rather than as a theme that is directive, permeating the whole approach to ecclesial leadership.

Notably however, the report states that ‘the implication of the analysis in this report is that for the healing of our theological imagination, *we need spiritual practices* that can help us counter the restriction of spirituality to a zone that is closed off from the everyday world’

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[328] Ibid., 82.
[329] Ibid., 82.
[330] Ibid., 74.

(my italics).[331] But it fails to explain what these might be and makes no mention of the Person of Spirit in this regard. Given the aim of this report was to address a theological deficit, this absence in itself is problematic. Later, on page 85, there are 4 references to Spirit, making the point that spirituality and ethical living belong together. In the Conclusion there is just 1 mention of the Spirit in relation to gifts.

'Vision and Strategy', **November 2020** (**GS 2180)** indicates a shift away from the 'Renewal and Reform' programme, and a new agenda is introduced setting the stage for a new decade. The language is Christological – the repeating goal across these papers is 'to become a Jesus Christ centred and Jesus Christ shaped church' through the five marks of mission. Language around the need for 'spiritual and numerical growth' repeatedly used in earlier reports is omitted. This is a noticeable linguistic shift. The five marks of mission are based around five verbs – tell, teach, tend, transform, and treasure.

There is recognition that the means for present discourse are cumbersome. A new 'iterative and consultative methodology rather than the usual committee structure' is sought, §2. The whole process is presented as a diagram with a 'you are here' mark on it. It is noteworthy that Archbishop Stephen Cottrell and Bishop of Oxford Steven Croft, provide the theological underpinning and drive for this agenda. Cottrell writes the paper, thanking Steven Croft who 'underpinned our work with deep and rich theological reflections', §4. A signal maybe that the discourse ought not be questioned. The opinions and views of these two men more than any other are now shaping and directing leadership discourse.

The large report **'Simpler, Humbler, Bolder' July 2021 (GS 2223),** develops the Vision and Strategy paper above. The content analysis reveals that:

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[331] Ibid., 82.

Summary and Part 1 - God or Father is named 12 times, Jesus Christ/Christ 13 times. There is no mention of the Spirit apart from a quote taken from the ordinal in §7.

Part 2 – God/Father is mentioned 8 times, Jesus Christ/Christ 21 times, and there are 2 references to 'spiritual and theological renewal', and 2 to Spirit in an italicized quote from Romans 12.12-15 which heads up the written text.

Part 3 and 4 – There are 6 references to God/Father, 9 to Jesus Christ/Christ, and 1 reference to 'spiritual renewal'.

Summing these up means there are 43 references to Jesus Christ, 26 to God/Father, and 3 to Spirit. However, since 2 of the references to Spirit come as part of an italicized quote at the top of the page, it means that in the body of the text there is only 1 reference to the Third Person of the Trinity. These are striking figures. Even more so when the text itself states on page 12 that, a 'Christ centred ecclesiology must be centre. This leads us into God the Trinity'. Yet, the quantitative evidence is that it does not 'lead us' to the Trinity. This is an example of how pneumatology fails to be foregrounded in discourse even when the report's writer might have intended otherwise.

The vision is expressed in terms of the church becoming 'Jesus Christ shaped through the Five Marks of Mission' – five ideas that all start with the letter 't'.[332] This sounds theoretically good, and is linguistically pleasing, but it does raise the question as to whether the marks of mission can be so 'shaping'. This can be cross-referenced with the critique Simeon Zahl makes about the over confidence or over optimism so often placed in spiritual practices for spiritual transformation when there is no reference to the explicit work of the Spirit.

[332] See §14. And GS 2180 §6.

The last thing to note is that the report declares the work of witness and service to be the work of bishops, priests, and deacons, §7. Leadership is still placed within the paradigm of ordination. The discussion is for 'more leaders' in the context of 'clergy numbers', §24.

However, a follow up paper **GS 2238**, **November 2021,** 4 pages and 20 paragraphs, concentrates on one of the strategic priorities – that the church is a 'mixed-ecology'. The theme is leadership and there is an expressed wish from Archbishop Cottrell that ordained and lay leadership run alongside each other in a 'mixed ecology' of church form. But there are hints already that Cottrell is having to be defensive, reassuring that any new forms will work within existing parish systems.

Again, there is evidence of a linguistic shift. Words such as 'variety', 'vibrant', and 'revitalize' are repeated. 'Mixed ecology' appears 21 times. The word 'flourish' or flourishing appears 6 times. However, the pattern stays the same – Jesus Christ is referenced 12 times, God is referenced 4 times, and the Holy Spirit only once.

A Vision for Lay Ministries, November 2020 (GS Misc.1265) is written by The National Ministry Team of the Archbishop's Council. It seeks to offer 'a vision for the future' for a national strategy to encourage and implement lay ministry. What is noteworthy is the opening paragraph, which emphasizes lay ministry, also makes an immediate correlative reference to the Holy Spirit. This is a textual example of how a belief in every member ministry and lay leadership sits most easily within an ecclesiology that foregrounds the activity of the Holy Spirit within the Body of Christ – a realized practical pneumatology. Connecting the Spirit to active verbs, for example 'the Holy Spirit equips' (p.5), allows for a fuller characterization.

The emphasis in language is noticeably different with an interesting expansion and development of a 'garden' metaphor, along with the accompanying lexical field. There are 36 references to God or Father, 11 to Jesus Christ, and 5 to the Holy Spirit.

Setting God's People Free: Becoming a Jesus Christ centred and Jesus Christ shaped church in the whole of life, November 2021 (GS Misc. 1302). The title has been expanded to adopt the new emphasis and language of Vision and Strategy. The report is picking up the new phraseology and recycling it so that the lexical field is filled with ideations such as, 'missionary disciples' and 'mixed-ecology'. These are then used repeatedly. There is also the introduction of the phrase 'spiritual practices' which is referenced at least 7 times.

God is mentioned 30 times, (not including all the references within the title of the report), and Jesus/Jesus Christ is referred to 15 times. There is not one reference to the Holy Spirit in the whole report. This is notable given the emphasis on spiritual practices, everyday faith, and the need for participative ministry, all of which would suggest an intention to give place to a pneumatological aspect. The lack of a visible and articulated pneumatology is at odds with the aims of the first Setting God's People Free project.

After the Covid-19 pandemic, the **Governance Review Group Report, November 2021,** (**GS 2239)** was brought to Synod as part of the Emerging Church initiative. This triggered a new program of work concerning how the church is to be led, and its organizational structures**.** A further paper in **February 2022, (GS 2249),** asks Synod to welcome the GRG report so measures can be put in place to begin to implement its recommendations – notably under the auspices of the Bishop of Guildford, Andrew Watson (the third Bishop I consider in the next chapter). An update **GS 1319** is then brought to Synod in **July 2022** from this new National Church Governance Project Board (NGPB) which repeats the perceived problems, reiterates the aims for reform of the GRG Report, and reports on progress.

The GRG review, which begins with an Executive Summary, recommends that most national functions of the Church of England be brought into the jurisdiction and governance of a single body entitled Church of England National Services (CENS). It also

proposes radical reforms to the National Committee structure, that the role of Bishops be enhanced with the creation of a new lead bishop in a new board of bishops, and that Synod itself be reformed.

It states, the ‘Church requires theological and spiritual as well as professional leadership’ §18, which suggests that the spiritual, in line with former reports, is still seen as ‘distinct’ and different to the professional, rather than something that breathes through all practices of leadership. On the other hand, in §105 it states that ‘there is no conflict between the spiritual and administrative qualifications, or a dichotomy between secular and Christian leadership’.

In §21, the report states that the church ‘is gathered around the risen Christ and animated by his Spirit’. There are further references to Spirit in §30, ‘our task is to follow the lead of the Spirit and remain humble about our capacity to be church without God’s grace and Spirit’, in §55, ‘animated by the Spirit’, and §56 in connection with the Spirit ‘moving’ through the Body. These 3 references are rare as they offer three verbs, leading, animating, and moving.

The rest of the review is a technical piece on organizational best practice. The report acknowledges that leadership requires good organization and seeks to address existing poor decision-making processes.

God’s People Set Free: Living as missionary disciples in the whole of life, bringing transformation to the church and the world, February 2022 (GS 2248). This reports on implementation and brings this stream of work to a close. Noticeably the title has changed again indicating a determination to defend progress and assert that the original complaints have been met with the necessary culture shifts ongoing. It claims that the aspirations of the original report are now encompassed within the Vision and Strategy work begun in 2020.

This is a big piece of work charting process and development. It identifies two ways in which the aspirations of the original report have emerged into church life, via the Everyday Faith and Enabling Ministry projects. There are personal testimonies and stories, and like the reports previously, the style is positive and upbeat.

However, despite seeking to encourage and build discipleship and ministry across the Body of Christ, the vocabulary of the report still ignores a practical pneumatology. The content analysis reveals, 24 references to the Father, and God, 27 references to Jesus Christ, and no references to the Spirit.

The paper concludes with a large diagram describing how leadership operates and identifying the levers of change. This is an important statement about how leadership is perceived in this stream of work.

Evaluation and Conclusion

From this critical analysis of documents that represent the public and formal institutional leadership discourse of the Church of England over the last seven years, a clear and consistent pattern within the discourse is detectable, even in the more recent Vision and Strategy agenda since 2020.

The content analysis reveals that in the Synodical documents considered above (not including the two FAOC reports), Almighty God, or Father, is named 261 times while Jesus Christ the Son, is named 246 times, the Spirit is named 35 times. In broad terms, both Father and Son are referenced in approximately equal measure. References to the Spirit are a seventh of that. This means the persons of the Trinity are not present equally on the face of the documents. Where there is engagement with the Spirit it is uneven. References occur in limited bunched groupings or are caught by being in a Scripture quote.

In content analysis, where a high number of references correlates with high subject priority within a text, the quantitative data offers hard evidence as to a subject or person bias present in the texts. Accordingly, the wide numerical disparity I have uncovered in naming allows me to deduce that there is a disparity in subjectivity afforded the Persons in these texts.

This disparity in subjectivity allows me to deduce further that the bias towards naming the persons of Father and Son amounts to a theological deficit around the person of the Spirit. There is a lack of naming, whether as noun or pronoun, which means that the Spirit fails to materialize or 'come to' in these texts. This allows for a failure to disclose God fully as Trinitarian within these documents of the leadership discourse.

Where there are references in the texts, these tend to be in terms of being Jesus' spirit, in terms of providing sanctifying grace to the Body of Christ, or leadership being a gift of the Spirit. Any textual references to the Spirit are usually part of a scripture quote or subsumed within statements about the 'spiritual'. Most often the Spirit is referenced in connection with the 'gifts' or being a gift. This is reductive as active verbs fail to be assigned to the Person of Spirit and to the Spirit's activity. Thus, both subjectivity, and activity, are lost and the Spirit recedes from view. A full account of the Person and activity of Spirit is not made in the texts.

This theological deficit is revealed in the discourse in other ways too. For example, the focus on ordained leadership is often acknowledged, but the reports fail to identify that this points to a particular ecclesiology and arguably to a weakly realized pneumatology within the Body of Christ. Further, practical engagement with the Holy Spirit – spiritual know-how – is left out of the leadership frame. Sensitivity to how one is led by Spirit, or how one exercises spiritual leadership is not articulated even though there are numerous references to the need for spiritual growth, and a renewal in spiritual decision making.

This reveals the incongruity of the church seeking spiritual growth yet with a weak and poorly realized pneumatology in practice.

Further, because of the positions in which references to ‘spiritual’ occur in the texts, or because the treatment of the ‘spiritual life’ reads as discrete, or as oblique, that which is ‘spiritual’ is unspecified, and thus marginalized. It becomes a topic for retreat rather than a means for broader engagement with life, and integration into mainstream leadership discourse. Noticeably that which is ‘spiritual’ is de-coupled from the Spirit in the texts.

There is in these reports the acknowledgement of the need to change the theological and linguistic frame in which the levers of leadership operate, but because the underlying ecclesiological assumptions of the institution remain unchallenged, clericalism and the attendant institutional problems around managerialism persist.

I note that I have not found any engagement in the texts around the different kinds of leadership structures that emanate from a Logos-Christology as opposed to a Spirit-Christology. Thus, although some of the ways of leadership are criticized, as for example in the lack of lay leadership or discipleship, the underlying Logos-Christology or Christomonism that arguably drives these ways, are not.

This is linked to the issue that, despite many mentions of a need to disciple the whole church, and the need for ‘lay’ members to lead, there is not the theological underpinning present to make that a reality. The predominant Logos-Christology subverts any change to hierarchy, while the acknowledged poorly developed discipleship and lack of shared participation in ministry is the evidence in practice of a weakly realized practical pneumatology in the Body of Christ. Lay leadership only sits alongside established leadership forms as an uncomfortable necessity.

Lastly, unquestioned ongoing use of terms such as ‘ordained’ or ‘lay’, and service that is ‘full-time ministry’ or ‘mission’, presumes agreement in the discourse with these ideations.

There is no discussion around alternative conceptions of leading and the ideation of leading is most often discussed in its noun form. Leadership is a something. Any real systemic change cannot therefore, truthfully, be on the agenda as the existing language and repetition and recycling of these ideas in these forms only serves to reinforce the traditional consensus. Even where there is discussion of a 'gift' of leadership, that gift is most often attributed to the one ordained rather than, for example, to the ongoing present movement of the Spirit.

It is concluded therefore, that there is a theological critique of discourse to be made. The order of discourse, as recorded in the documents of Synod considered above, fails to name God fully, or speak of God as Three Persons, and fails to give an account of the Person of the Spirit, or of his activity, such as leading into truth.

What is positive is that in the FAOC report on Senior Leadership, the notion of 'faithful improvisation' is offered as having the potential to be developed further. That report is useful in establishing that the assimilation of leadership language into theological discourse is not to be rejected, it is 'impossible to sustain a simple opposition between Christian and secular ideas of leadership. Our tradition has always been in the business of assimilating and transforming material from the world around it', §164.

In addition, the report states in §39, that a leader is someone 'who assists others in the performance of a collective practice … he or she will be good at participating in that practice in such a way as to draw others deeper into it'. Notably also, the Preface speaks of 'the practice of leadership', and the FAOC book 'Kingdom Calling' (2020) makes use of the ideation of 'spiritual practice' as a means by which the theological imagination around leadership might be healed.[333] Here then are instances of the FAOC pulling together

[333] FAOC, *Kingdom Calling,* 82.

ideations of leading, practice, and spiritual practice, and specifically approving an improvisational approach that assimilates inter-disciplinary language.

It is the invitation into improvisation that offers opportunity for further inter-disciplinary conversation about how the practice of leading can engage with pneumatology. An invitation I accept in the encounter phase to come.

Chapter 5

Content Analysis, Part 2

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first considers the writing of three bishops in the Church of England. The material in the second section relates to how leadership ideas and practice are shared and taught. Lastly, I look at liturgical forms that determine the practice of leading Anglican worship in England.

The Bishops

These texts are written by men who currently serve as Diocesan bishops, and in the case of Stephen Cottrell, as Archbishop of York. The role of bishop is essentially one of oversight over churches and the functioning of ecclesial ministry. This can include the exercise of disciplinary authority, pastoral care, and teaching, as well as decision making and organizational authority. The voice the bishop exerts has wide influence on and over the discourse since their voices carry across the church to those who are linked culturally or socially within a diocese, and geographically across the country.

These books make a proposal for what ecclesial leadership ought to be, what it espouses, its function, and ideal. They carry significant weight within the multi layered discourse of the Anglican church because they 'speak' from the position of authority vested in being a bishop. This significance is not lost on the authors, and all three writers use, overtly, the fact of their positional authority to be persuasive, and to advance their views within the strict hierarchy within the Church of England. This means that not only is the discourse of leadership influential in its own right, as for example in the previous chapter where the texts set policy and legislate, but in these texts, there are additional dynamics of power and pressure because of the relational aspects in operation.

Stephen Cottrell, now Archbishop of York, has written '**Hit the Ground Kneeling, Seeing Leadership Differently'**. A mark of this book's influence is that even though not an

academic work, it still finds its way onto the reading list of the Contemporary Christian Leadership Module (CM1), at St. Mellitus Theological College (2013 -2014) as part of the taught master's programme in Leadership Studies.[334] Moreover, Cottrell himself undertook a MA in Leadership at St. Mellitus while Bishop of Chelmsford.

On a first reading, the writing is warm, accessible, and light hearted. It is engaging and seeks to connect by being 'real', using language that is 'everyday'. The chapter headings are pithy, idiomatic, and proverbial. For example, 'reinventing the wheel', 'spoiling the broth', and 'jumping off the bandwagon'. Cottrell draws from his own experience and therefore much of the writing is personal.

The book's main premise is that 'wise leadership flows from contemplation. The best leaders are not busy but focused'.[335] So Cottrell writes, 'the advice of this book so far and all that follows is to hit the ground kneeling. In order to exercise any kind of fruitful, transforming and enabling leadership, the first foundation stone we lay must be space and time'.[336] This is expanded thematically to embrace the processes of listening and prayer, which then launch his ideas around, for example, offering vision, strategy, conflict resolution, finding solutions, and learning sensitivity.

On a second reading, it is noticeable that despite a reliance on an understanding of a specifically Christian expression of contemplation, the practice of prayer advocated ignores any engagement with pneumatology. For example, the words used to describe contemplation all offer an implicit sense of spirituality and of a spiritual practice but nowhere does Cottrell mention the presence of the Spirit central in a Christian contemplative exercise. The language of practice is disassociated. Similarly, the concept

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[334] St. Mellitus is the largest training college for Anglican ordination in the United Kingdom.
[335] Stephen Cottrell, *Hit the Ground Kneeling: Seeing Leadership Differently* (London: Church House Publishing, 2008), 80.
[336] Cottrell, *Hit the Ground Kneeling*, 27.

of wisdom (‘*sophia’*) is free floating offered as a human resource, or way of ‘being’, rather than as a quality rooted in the character of the Spirit. Cottrell writes, ‘there is some ancient wisdom in the Christian tradition that the Church needs to rediscover, and that the world could benefit from learning’.[337]

Another example relates to listening prayer.

> There is also another sort of listening that arises directly out of a spirit of contemplation. It is about listening to the signs of the times, being in tune … And also listening to your own self. Christians will of course speak about listening to God … I want to direct you to that way of listening that is about perception and instinct, where we catch hold of a mood, or lay claim to a deep-seated conviction, or yield ourselves to a new insight.[338]

Given this is written ‘from a Christian perspective with Christian leaders in mind’ as Cottrell admits, ‘I suppose my primary audience is clergy and other Church leaders’,[339] the lack of the necessary pneumatological underpinning for the task of contemplative prayer is significant. The leadership practices offered around personal life coaching, or management advice suggest a personal self-reliance on the face of the texts.

Later in the book Cottrell writes that leadership is ‘best modelled by Jesus himself’, whom he then describes as ‘an impossible role model’.[340] Christians believe that ‘Jesus shows us what being human is supposed to be like; and they believe that with God’s help this is a way of living – and a way of leading – that we should all aspire to’.[341] Yet for the reader, with no mention of the Spirit in the life of Jesus nor of the Spirit as given to believers for enabling and empowering, the role model offered in Jesus Christ is indeed impossible, and the leading model of Jesus remains remote.

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[337] Ibid., xiii.
[338] Ibid., 8.
[339] Ibid., xiii.
[340] Ibid., 75.
[341] Ibid., 75.

Thus, the main critique is that there is no naming of Spirit. There is a clear absence of pneumatology, and theological specificity around the Person of Spirit. The closest and only verbal alignment is a reference to 'spiritual discipline' in relation to prayer.[342] The absence of a pneumatological ground for 'leading like Jesus' must be noted since Cottrell is writing primarily for ordained leaders with the intention to affect practice.[343] Moreover, the fact that this popular book is addressed to all members about the ways in which they are to lead in the local Body of Christ, means that this lack of practical pneumatology infiltrates discourse across the church.

More recently, in 2020, Stephen Cottrell has written **On Priesthood: Servants, Shepherds, Messengers, Sentinels, and Stewards**.[344] This is a look at the inheritance of a priestly model for leadership seeking to answer the question, 'why do we have priests?' Cottrell argues priesthood is a form of leadership and ministry that is rooted in Christ, and since he is writing specifically for those being ordained into ecclesial leadership, he uses the Ordinal[345] as the basis for his reflections.

Unlike his former work of 2008, this book does reference the Spirit, and seems to offer a more Trinitarian vision of life in the 'ecclesia'. His vocabulary is now specific, so that there is evidence of pneumatology at work. For example, on page 48 there are 3 references that relate the person of the Spirit to leadership: 'The Holy Spirit has already led them onto something else', 'the Holy Spirit is Lord of the Church', and '[al]low the Spirit to lead you'. Later he states that 'the virtues that mean we lead out of our own dependence on the Spirit of God are vital for every priest'.[346]

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[342] Ibid., 23.
[343] Ibid., xiii.
[344] Stephen Cottrell, *On Priesthood: Servants, Shepherds, Messengers, Sentinels, and Stewards* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2020).
[345] The set of services used at the ordination of deacons, priests, and bishops.
[346] Cottrell, *On Priesthood*, 55.

The empirical data, ignoring all references to ‘Lord’, and counting references which contain several names as one reference, is as follows: in chapter 1 there are 37 references to God, 30 to Jesus, or Jesus Christ, or Christ, 2 references to the Spirit. In chapter 2, there are 23 references to God, 25 to Jesus (Christ) or Christ, 7 to the Spirit. In Chapter 3, there are 32 to God, 30 to Jesus, or Jesus Christ, 7 mentions of Spirit. This pattern continues throughout and in chapter 8 there are 56 references to God and Father, 32 to Jesus, and 11 to the Spirit. The comparative totals are 148 names of God or Father, 117 names of Jesus or Son, and 27 references to the Spirit.

In the other chapters the figures for naming the Spirit are: 6 mentions in chapter 4, 1 in chapter 5, 5 in chapter 6, 1 in chapter 7, and on the last three pages of chapter 8 there are 11 references to Spirit. In total in this book this is 40 times the Spirit is named. Most of these are caught up in quotations of passages of the Ordinal.

These figures show a disparity in how the persons of the Trinity are referenced and discussed. Across the whole book there remains a differentiation in the way the author attributes significance to the persons of the Trinity. The tally of 40 only arises from Cottrell’s writing being pinned to the words and sentiments of the Ordinal which is the piece of work he is exploring. Despite this uptick in referencing the disparity found so far remains the same. The Spirit is present, but arguably this is implicit, as he is not named and present on the face of the text in the same way as the Father and the Son.

What seems absent is a worked-out pneumatology, and a functioning, practising connection with the Spirit as person. The relational aspect is missing. Cottrell acknowledges the Spirit as Lord of the church, acknowledges His ministry, gifts, and so on, but there is no indication about how we access this, or any relational ‘know-how’. So for example, on pages 95-98, in an extended section on listening and hearing God, there is no mention of Spirit. Further, because of the emphasis is the priesthood of Christ, the Spirit is conveyed as the spirit or power of Christ, rather than as Third Hypostasis or equal

Person of the Trinity. Thus, there is the hint that Cottrell's theology tips towards a spiritually enhanced Binatarianism, rather than a fully expressed Trinitarianism.

Cottrell's ecclesiology is Christologically centred and focused. He writes the church is *formed* by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and is transformed by the Holy Spirit.[347] This means his notion of leadership is also essentially Christological, 'wrapped around' the person and model of Jesus Christ, and his expressed understanding of what leadership is, is based on sacramental priestly function. Repeatedly he writes that 'leaders are to lead like Jesus', for example pages 149 and 150. It is not surprising then that this emphasis is also found in the Vision and Strategy reform documents which are also written by Cottrell.

The most obvious bunching of references is at the end of the book; there are 11 references to the Spirit on the last three pages of chapter 8, pages 152, 153, and 154. The Spirit is affirmed as 'Gift', as 'the great minister in the Church', the one who inspires, and sustains, and the one who gives gifts, particularly the gift of love. So, for example leaders are 'filled by the Holy Spirit and overflowing with love the world needs'.[348] The activity of Spirit is shaped in terms of ministering rather than leading. Cottrell ends the book by affirming that he is writing for the next generation of leaders, and he places that leadership firmly 'around God's table at the Eucharist'.[349]

So, at this stage I detect a distinction can be made. There are the works where no mention of Spirit is made, or where there is no worked out pneumatological view, as in approximately a third of the synodical documents in the previous chapter, and as in Cottrell's first book. Then, as with this second book, there are those works in discourse which do make mention of the Spirit but in such a way as to reveal a limited or

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[347] Cottrell, *On Priesthood*, 13.
[348] Ibid., 153.
[349] Ibid., 153.

underdeveloped practical pneumatological perspective. There is a pneumatology, but it is implicit rather than explicitly worked out in practice. This distinction becomes important as I engage with the work of the next two Bishops below.

The Bishop of Oxford, Steven Croft, has written '**The Gift of Leadership According to the Scriptures'**.[350] This is a short book of ten reflections on leadership based on Old Testament passages focusing on leadership figures for people in all walks of Christian leadership. Themes cover aspects such as beginning well, learning to see and leading change.

There are no references to the work of the Holy Spirit. This is so even where there is analogical connection in stories such as Elijah and the 'still small voice', or the 'breath' in the valley of dry bones, or the 'river' running out from under the temple. The scriptural resonances to the work of the Spirit within the economy of God are ignored. There are 5 references to the Holy Spirit in the book, and 2 references that are embedded in Scriptural quotes.

'**Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and Leadership in the Local Church'** by Steven Croft is an entirely different text.[351] It has come to find its place on most Anglican reading lists for ministerial and leadership training, indeed it has become a 'text' book on the Common Awards Theology programme for ordination training accredited by Durham University. It is a significant and far-reaching contribution within the Anglican ecclesial leadership discourse. Croft proposes a 'theology of leadership' [352] that seeks to rework a ministry model for contemporary culture that has, he argues, the inbuilt capacity for flex in

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[350] Steven Croft, *The Gift of Leadership, According to the Scriptures* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2016).
[351] Steven Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and Leadership in the Local Church* (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 2008). This is the second edition with an additional chapter added to consider recent developments. It was published whilst Croft was Fresh Expressions Team Leader and so is directly concerned with the future of mission and ministry in the Church of England.
[352] Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions,* Chapter 3.

the future. The traditional focus of the ordained is 'primarily in sustaining the existing parish system and traditional patterns of ministry'.[353] But, he writes that one-dimensional order of ministry centred around a priest is 'no longer adequate either for the missionary task' or 'for the clergy's own self-understanding'.[354]

Accordingly, he sets out to establish an alternative paradigm that stands up against the uncritical adoption into the church of the term 'leader', and the associated ideas and world view that come with it. He seeks 'an understanding of the ministry and role of the ordained which more closely matches the needs of the whole people of God in the present generation',[355] and therefore argues for a three-dimensional understanding of ministry for all the ordained which embraces diaconal, presbyteral ministries of word and sacrament, and oversight. The idea is that staying with the requirement of ordination, but irrespective of designation, the minister will move across the three dimensions of ministry at different times and ways.[356] 'The calling of all the ordained is to ministry in three dimensions'.[357]

The lexical field is ecclesiological offering liturgical examples, descriptions of dioceses, ministries, orders, parishes, clergy, and congregations. Then there are closely associated word fields around service, sacraments, the exercises of prayer, teaching, pastoring, and vision and growth. It is noted that there are a few references to the metaphor of the body, but no lexical use of an 'organic' ideal, nor language around a 'mixed-ecology'. Croft's lexicon offers a distinctly structured and institutionalized feel. The editing and format are also 'serious', the text is littered with italicized Greek words, extended notes, and Scriptural references, while the second edition offers an additional chapter and material.

[353] Ibid., 204.
[354] Ibid., 41.
[355] Ibid., 41.
[356] Ibid., 188.
[357] Ibid., 210.

The message from this presentation is ‘here is deep theological work, which is verifiable, and reliable’.

Where does the Spirit fit in to all this? Croft names the Spirit but does so in terms of Spirit being a ‘gift’ or ‘giving gifts’ to the Church. So, for example, Croft writes in critique of other books on Christian leadership that draw on Old Testament models, that ‘there is only rarely any acknowledgement that ministry, death and resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Spirit to the Church might have profound implications for the way in which leadership is exercised and direction given to the people of God’.[358] On p.38, he writes, ‘a Christian understanding of what it means to exercise leadership within the Church must take account of, be mediated through and be integrated with our understanding of Jesus and his mission, the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church, and our understanding of the church as the body of Christ.’

Arguably, hidden within this conceptualization by Croft (as of any Augustinian derivation), there is a leaning towards a passive pneumatological perspective. Being rendered as ‘gift’, means that the delineation of Spirit is not as one being active in himself and by nature, but as one who is given by another. This use subverts the discussion around the nature of Spirit as fully Active God. Rendering the Spirit as gift is to render Him passive in the exchange, and by so naming, the subjectivity of the Spirit is occluded. Such linguistic curbing allows for what Sarah Coakley calls ‘noetic slippage’.[359] When meaning is allowed to slip a discourse led approach would argue that this has practical ramifications.

Further, this rendering then arguably serves to reinforce a hidden and underlying assumption that the Spirit is at the behest of the Church; given to the church, described by the church, and for use by the church. A full account of the Spirit as One actively

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[358] Ibid., 32.
[359] Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self,* 23.

‘leading’ or ‘directing’ that church is lost. In this way the activity of Spirit though present, is backgrounded. For example, in relation to ‘spirituality’ on page 77, the opening phrase is ‘[o]ur spirituality is our way of praying but more ... It describes the way we see God … the way in which we relate to him and communicate with him’. Here the approach is ‘from me, we, our – to God’. There is thus a diminution, subtle but present, to the role of the person of the Spirit as active *first*. It allows for an ego-centric model – a human-led approach – rather than one where relationship is with the Subject who is already prima facie at work in my life and to whom there is an imperative to respond.

Another example where there is a backgrounding of pneumatological perspective is in the section on ‘listening for the church’ (p.78). Croft mentions the apostles waiting for the ‘promise of the Father’ in Acts 1.4, a reference to the coming of the Spirit in fulfilment of the Joel 2 prophecy, but Croft does not mention the Spirit. The whole description around Pentecost, and how the church was led post-Pentecost, is in purely Christological terms. The discussion on discerning, waiting on God, and being guided, does not name the Spirit until p. 80-81.

In fact, within this dense book of 210 pages excluding Appendices, the Holy Spirit or Spirit is named only 42 times. Many of these are just mentions embedded already in a scripture verse, a liturgical text, or for example, within a broader reference to the Trinity. For a book of more than two hundred pages with innumerable references to God and Christ, the theological view is predominantly binatarian. The comparative numbers reveal a disparity. The totals for four sample chapters show that Spirit is named only 14 times compared to 90 and 81 times for Father and Son.

As mentioned above in relation to Cottrell, a distinction needs to be drawn. When considering the work of Cottrell and Croft, senior Bishops in the Church of England, the critique is complex. It is not as simple as arguing that there is no pneumatology but rather, that though there is some evidence of a pneumatological view, it is limited, passive, or

arguably implicitly present. References to the Spirit omit his activity, the constituting role of Spirit with the Son in the formation of the church, or the empowering work of the Spirit in the church corporately, and avoid referencing any leading and perfecting work of the Spirit in the Kingdom of God more widely. References are primarily in relation to the Spirit as 'gift', the work of prayer, being creatively inspired, or to the fruit of the Spirit in character, and regarding personal vision. I would argue that this amounts to a leaning away from a fully expressed pneumatology and fails to give account of Spirit as a Subject in leadership discourse.

The third Bishop to be considered is Andrew Watson, Bishop of Guildford, who has written '**The Fourfold Leadership of Jesus**'.[360] This is a book that focuses more closely on the 'Jesus model' of leadership in practice. This text uses the model of Jesus to re-orientate thinking about the task of leadership. Watson, like Croft, is writing in reaction to the inculcation of leadership strategies from the marketplace. His premise is that Jesus never mentions his own leadership or teaches leadership, or creates formal leadership structures, because leadership is based on discipleship. Watson then argues that discipleship is about obedience to four commands: come, follow, wait, and go.[361] Watson argues that these commands likewise determine and shape ecclesial leadership.

Basing a book around the model of discipleship chimes with Synodical reports of this time and brings to the fore the importance of praxis. But it raises the question, 'how' can we hope to lead like Jesus? It would seem that the imperative for a practical integrating pneumatological perspective is raised from the outset, therefore. However, Watson frames his work instead around charisma, competence, and character, moving quickly to the statement that 'the greatest of these is character'.[362] Then the chapters focus on the

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[360] Andrew Watson, *The Fourfold Leadership of Jesus* (Abingdon: The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2008).
[361] Watson, *The Fourfold Leadership,* 19.
[362] Ibid., 17.

characteristics that are ‘like Christ’. It is notable that in this unpicking of the Jesus model and Jesus’ character, the Son is spoken of alone, with no indication that the Spirit was present in and through the life of the Son.

This is borne out by the figures. So, in the four chapters chosen as the sample section, Part 3 entitled, ‘Wait for Me’ (referencing the promise of Pentecost in Acts 1.4), the Spirit is mentioned only 6 times. This compares to 71 times to the Father, and 127 times to the Son or Jesus. This section was specifically chosen because it referenced Pentecost and was thought therefore to be more likely to refer to the Spirit. Yet even in this section, the topic of the activity of Spirit or the leading of the Spirit in the Church was avoided almost completely.

There is also a theological critique to be made about the way the Spirit is subordinated within the text when mentioned. For example, the two ideations of ‘word’ and ‘spirit’ are often brought together with the person of the Spirit coming second. By bringing them together in conjunction as a pair there is an expression of equivalence within the sentence, but lexical priority is given to the ‘word’, even when the notation specifically capitalizes the S for spirit, for example, ‘word and Spirit’, or the phrase ‘the word of God and the Spirit of God’. From page 81 and 95, this lexical pair is used eight times. This linguistic construction is found in common parlance but its repetition in this book is arguably indicative of subordination at work more widely within the discourse. In these texts, the Spirit of God is placed on par with the written scriptures, and is named second.

Watson writes, ‘[p]ure dependence on the scriptures is not enough. Pure dependence on the Spirit of God is not enough. For we are fallible creatures and even a wholehearted commitment to be blown by the wind of the Spirit can all too easily drift into a growing

acceptance of the spirit of the age'.[363] This might be a salient point to make but it reveals a nervousness about depending on the Person of Spirit who is God.

This nervousness is also apparent when later Watson talks about his personal experience as leader of an evangelical-charismatic church, pages 94-5 where notably there is a bunching of 8 references to the Spirit. It would seem Watson is comfortable talking about Spirit in a private capacity, but less so as Bishop writing about leadership.

There is then a slightly different theological critique to be made here. I would argue that Watson fails to bring together the Christological model on which he bases leadership and the concomitant pneumatology needed to practice it. Instead, Watson advocates a leadership model which has (at the very most) a weak, practical pneumatological perspective. Any pneumatology is shaped as personal and private. Watson shies away from embracing the ways in which the New Testament writers acknowledged the Spirit in the activity of leadership publicly: the anointing, calling, guiding, enabling, and empowering of Jesus of Nazareth's ministry on earth, and their own. This therefore raises the question as to whether it is meaningful practically to advocate following a Jesus model without foregrounding the Spirit as well.

Leadership Training

This section offers three texts that purport to speak into training and delivery of leadership in practice. Three different kinds of books are brought into view. The first is by an Anglican minister working in a para church organization that offers leadership training. The second is also by an Anglican minister but one who works within an Anglican Theological training college, Wycliffe Hall in Oxford. The third text is the Church of

[363] Ibid., 84.

England Synodical document that outlines new training courses for Deans and Senior Church leaders.

The **Growing Leaders** book and course is developed out of the Arrow Leadership Programme which James Lawrence, an Anglican ordained minister, introduced into the United Kingdom in 1998.[364] This course, presented by the Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS), has reached thousands of people across this country, and can be accessed in seven hundred different churches nationwide according to the CPAS website. CPAS is an evangelical charity that was set up to care for Anglican clergy, and in Synod paper GS 1982, CPAS is described as having 'significant experience of delivering leadership development within the Church'.[365] James Lawrence himself has wide acclaim and speaks into many different church contexts.

In the introduction, Lawrence lays out of the theological truths that underpin his conception of Christian leadership. The first is his sense of calling and rooting in baptism, the second is the atoning work of the cross, and the third is the 'resurrection and the coming of the Spirit'.[366] Lawrence then writes, 'Jesus is present with me through his Spirit, bringing about his transformation of my life'.[367] So while the Spirit is mentioned, the Spirit is referenced after the principles of salvation and sin, after the historical event of resurrection, and within a Christological frame as Jesus' spirit, who is 'transforming me'.

Leadership is positioned primarily as a gift of God, while the language reflects the traditional ideational forms of the Anglican church: leadership is position, function, talent, and a call of God.[368] Lawrence mentions the gifts of the Spirit and describes them as

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[364] James Lawrence, *Growing Leaders* (Oxford: The Reading Bible Fellowship, 2004).
[365] General Synod, GS1982, *Discerning and Nurturing Senior Leaders*, paragraph 18.
[366] Lawrence, *Growing Leaders*, 16.
[367] Ibid., 16.
[368] Ibid., 23-28.

'tangible expression of the active leadership of the Lord Jesus in a congregation'.[369] This kind of sentence exposes underlying theological suppositions that I would argue are problematic for practice, for example, suggesting the gifts of the Spirit are the activity of Jesus, and denying a leading role for the Spirit alongside that of Father and Son.[370]

Further, the Spirit is occluded behind the importance and priority of the Bible. For example, like Watson as already discussed, Lawrence uses the specific phrase 'Bible and the Spirit' three times in one section[371] but unlike Watson, Lawrence capitalizes the word bible. Secondly, there is repetition. The consequent reinforcement in the reader's mind of the phrase 'and the Spirit' renders the Spirit an addition. Thirdly, he then writes that 'faithfulness to the Bible and openness to the Spirit of God are like the two spotlights at a theatre' that bring illumination.[372] This metaphor reveals an equivalence that becomes problematic theologically in that it directly equates the person of the Spirit with the written word on the page. This might just be a superficial semantic point, but it reveals, literally, underlying reductive thinking around the Person of the Spirit and his activity.

Lawrence acknowledges that for some the concept of leadership does not sit easily within the Christian tradition, so he offers some distinctions. The first Christian distinctive is that leadership is 'founded on a relationship with God as Trinity': 'on the grace of Jesus, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit'. In this reference, which is probably derived from the liturgical form known as the Grace,[373] there is a subtle re-structuring from the usual rendering of the Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Son is placed first. There is also interesting use of the term 'God' in place of the more usual 'Father'.[374] Later Lawrence makes the point that Christian leadership is directed by and dependent on the

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[369] Ibid., 27.
[370] It is in Chapter 5, Resource 2, that how we use our gifts is addressed, page 259.
[371] Ibid., 31-32.
[372] Ibid., 31.
[373] As used, for example, in the conclusion to Morning and Evening Prayer.
[374] Lawrence, *Growing Leaders,* 30.

Holy Spirit ‘empowering and equipping’. The Spirit ‘takes our strengths and weaknesses and transforms them’.[375] This gives activity to the Spirit, but not a wider leading role.

On a second reading, the analysis shows that in the sample 6 chapters, including the Introduction (pages 1- 138), the Spirit is named 37 times whereas God is referenced 330 times, and Jesus 241 times. There are two places where the references are bunched: pages 95-96, where there are 8 references to the role and work of Spirit in the early stages of Jesus’ ministry, and page 127, with 3 references to the work of Spirit in character transformation. It is also noted that the discussion on prayer omits naming the Spirit. And while there is mention of the transforming work of the Spirit on page 127, and a mention on page 140 in relation to the convicting work of the Spirit, other than that, the Spirit is omitted. The remainder of the ‘Growing Leaders’ book is about cultivating competence, values, incorporating vision, and leading in teams.

There is then clear difference in the proportion of references. The Spirit is only referenced 10-15% as much as Father and Son, but the issue is more than inequality. There is a more pervasive theological issue about how the Spirit is delineated as active Person of the Trinity in relation to the work of leadership. There are only 2 references that connect the Spirit to leading or leadership: page 31, the Spirit of Jesus within guides and leads, and page 96, the Spirit leads Jesus. Even chapter 10 which deals with discernment of vision and leading people into God’s purposes has 1 reference to the Spirit, on page 213.

Thus, though the Spirit is apparent on the face of the text in places, as gift, in the life of Jesus, and for personal transformation. Overall, the Holy Spirit is represented in a limited, and arguably, a subordinate way. Some content seeks to give an account of wider spiritual impact, offering for example a chapter on the spiritual disciplines, but failing to reference the Spirit in this chapter means a full account of the Person of the Spirit, and

[375] Ibid., 30.

His activity, is again not given. Spirituality remains privatized, reserved for sanctification, and inner transformation.

The last sentence in the book serves to sum up the emphasis that is apparent throughout: 'May we be those who are led more by Jesus, lead more like Jesus, and lead more *to* Jesus'.[376] This sounds grammatically pleasing, and seems 'theologically' sound being Christologically focussed. It communicates a sense of grounded truth because the construction of the sentence as a triple subconsciously resonates with the pattern of Trinity. Yet, in fact the sentence reveals a deep theological weakness around the question left unanswered through the book: how might one be led by or like or to Jesus, if one does not emphasize the person, presence, and purposes of the Spirit? This is a similar critique to that raised in connection to Andrew Watson above.

Justyn Terry, the Vice-Principal and Academic Dean of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, has written **The Five Phases of Leadership: An Overview for Christian Leaders**, 2021. Working as Terry does, embedded within a college training ordinands, means that he is particularly influential within the discourse and in shaping future leaders for the church. The leadership ideas assimilated while training at Wycliffe Hall will stay with those to be ordained and be a springboard for their approach to work. This therefore is a significant text representing input at formation.

Notably in the content analysis for this thesis, this is the first time I have found a chapter in a book where the numbers of references to Spirit exceed references to Jesus Christ.[377] In phase 1 there are 52 references to Father and God, 17 to Jesus Christ and 32 to the Spirit. Thereafter however, the numbers fall back into the pattern we have seen emerging throughout this content analysis: in phase 2 the numbers are 15, 11, and then 7. In phase

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[376] Ibid., 249.
[377] Justin Terry, *The Five Phases of Leadership: An Overview for Christian Leaders* (Carlisle: Langham Global Library, 2021), 7-27.

3, the numbers are 32, 12, and 2. In the conclusion, the numbers are 11 to God and Father, 1 to Jesus Christ, and 3 to the Holy Spirit.

What is noticeable in phase 1, where the Spirit was named 32 times is that the subject matter is about the fruit of the Spirit. This chapter is all about building trust and character formation, and the necessity to grow the fruit of the character of Spirit. Thus, although the figures reveal a Trinitarian perspective on the face of the texts here, and therefore the Spirit present as subject, still the field for those references is internal, and personalized. This is the Spirit at work in me, rather than the Spirit leading the church, or leading leaders into a secular space. The engagement with a practical pneumatological perspective is therefore still limited in scope.

The rest of the book falls back into the pattern of other works considered here. The Spirit is present but not given equal and active presence in the text. The five phases could easily be applied in secular contexts with titles such as ‘establish trust’, ‘cultivate leaders’, ‘discern vision’, ‘implement plans’, and ‘transition out’.

So far therefore, it is fair to say that the distribution of naming the persons of the Godhead remains uneven, and there seems to be evidence that those in authority who are writing about leadership are not offering a leadership paradigm that is overtly or explicitly pneumatologically resourced.

The **mini-MBA** programme emanated from the Talent Management Report undertaken by the Lord Green Steering committee in 2014. The first course was run in March 2015. The mini-MBA forms a business administration training programme for Deans, which reveals a disjunct between the criteria used to select for ordination, and the ‘jobs’’ that those selected can end up doing.

In the later Synodical report GS 2026, the mini-MBA is reviewed, and first feedback aired. It is positive and the report writes that any early reservations and tensions seem to have

been allayed. In GS 2026, Attachment 2, there is an overview given. In this the assumption is that those running the cathedrals of the land need the same essential skills as those who run small to medium corporate enterprises. There is acknowledgment that the Deans of the cathedral are not specialists but need to be able to hold the 'front line operators' to account. The contents of the course comprise of, and contain subject areas, such as:

> Strategic planning - development and implementation of vision;
> Accounting and finance – diagnosing weaknesses relating to solvency, liquidity and cost-effectiveness;
> Stakeholder management;
> Project management – 'a framework and practical tools to enable deans to exercise better oversight and management of projects in its own context';
> 'Working with and through others' – consideration of high performance teams and their formation;
> Managing a heritage site in practice which involves marketing and engaging with others in the cathedral's mission – 'fine-tuning the offerings of cathedrals in order to create, deliver and communicate value to the people it aims to serve'.

Leadership here is spoken of in purely functional, organizational, and managerial terms. The discourse reflects the new public management ideals Marcus Moberg identified in his work, see chapter 2. There is no reference to the spiritual life, nor any reference to the potential marriage and integration between good business and a spiritual perspective.

There is no critique here as regards the course itself, which is no doubt a necessity for people being asked to operate outside their training and talents and run large financial operations. Avoiding mismanagement is a worthy endeavour. The critique is that alongside, there is no accompanying course or attention given to learning spiritual gifts, spiritual discernment, or learning to be led by or respond to Spirit. Nor is there any

accompanying discourse about the spiritual dynamics and practical theological truths underpinning a Biblical approach to finance, business management, or work ethic. The education around leadership is therefore operationally humanistic. The mini-MBA is based on and driven by a secular organizational ethic that reflects a secular business model, and mind set. One that would seem to ignore spiritual intelligence in the workplace, the interest around the impact of spirituality at work, and preclude integration with a practical pneumatological perspective.

Another training programme that is derived from the Talent Management Report is the **Leadership Development programme for Bishops** (pages 10-13 Green report). This is also reviewed in GS 2026. In this, it is noted that in the formal and operational delivery of learning to lead, the Spirit and the spiritual are absent from the main thrust of the curriculum on paper. Instead, there are sentences such as in Module 3 about leadership in the public square, where one of the topics is 'operationalizing our offering to society in practical strategies in dioceses, including measures of impact'.

The removal from the main frame of the spiritual is particularly apparent in the graphics that represent the curriculum pictorially found in the Green Report, §35. For example, 'prayer and reflective learning' is placed outside of the teaching targets and aims for each module as outlined in the report. The 'prayer' is placed in a 'bubble' in between the written columns for learning outcomes for each module. In this way, from a design perspective on the page, prayer is present, there is a visual reference to it, but it is not part of the intellectual learning journey itself. This means that the 'learning journey' is itself formally comprehensive, and yet the 'spiritual bit' in fact remains 'in between' and separated. This is the closest the course comes to naming any spiritual dynamic. It is outside the main module material, and graphically so.

The only reference to 'spiritual' is the last sentence in §37, page 13 of the summary of the cohort programme for Diocesan Bishops. After module 3 it says, 'at this point a spiritual

retreat will be recommended as part of the overall leadership development process'. This speaks volumes – the retreat is at the end, the retreat is a retreat, the retreat is voluntary, and the retreat is named – suddenly – to be 'spiritual'. This is evidence that that which is perceived to be 'spiritual' takes place away from the main body of teaching content, and at the end. This aspect of the leader's life remains separate and private, as an afterword.

The third programme that arose from the Talent Management Report written by the Green Steering group is the **Strategic Leadership Development Programme** (SDLP). This is for talented clergy who show potential to take on wider strategic responsibility. There are six learning streams that are delivered over five years to a 'learning community'.

After streams in Organizational Leadership, and Theological Exploration, Learning Stream Three is about 'Personal Formation and Spiritual Development'. This is described as 'developing yourself as a mature disciple of Christ; faithfully, prayerfully, and with emotional intelligence'. There are a couple of references to 'spiritual'. The Spirit is not named.

An example of a learning outcome is 'a reinvigorated reimagined prayer life and an increased ability to resource spiritual rootedness and growth'. This language is vague, allowing for ambiguity and alternative applications. Speaking of an 'increased ability to resource spiritual rootedness and growth' reflects an appreciation of the importance of spirituality but an unwillingness to define what 'resourcing spiritual rootedness' might be in practice. It scripts spirituality around a notion of choice, and steers away from real practical and concrete ways to embed a leadership role in relation with the Spirit. The curriculum fails to integrate practical learning, for example, how to pray for someone in prayer ministry, using spiritual gifts, delivering spiritual direction, or offering discernment. There is no language to articulate what being led in Spirit is, in the practice of leading.

In Stream 6, there is the aim to see churches 'grow in both spiritual maturity and numerically'. A now familiar and repeated phrase, but since spirituality remains a vague

concept within the report (as in previous reports), one is left wondering what growing 'mature' spirituality might look like? There is a lack of expression about practice. This is compounded when one considers the references to different church traditions in Attachment 3 of the Appendix. References such as 'conservative' or 'charismatic', point to an underlying assumption within discourse that spirituality is a matter of churchmanship, choice, tradition, or style.

Lastly, this leadership training is undertaken by the Judge Business School in Cambridge. The named lecturers are qualified in management practice, organization, accounting, and operations management. The descriptions do not suggest that anyone is able to teach the spiritual development necessary to fulfil the SLDP's own learning aims, and therefore a taught practical pneumatological approach to leadership is absent.

Leadership in Liturgy

In this section, focus turns to consider the authorized sets of services for the Church of England, which direct how such services are led. This constitutes another 'voice' in leadership discourse. Leadership is asserted by and through the liturgical vehicle, the set pieces that comprise the weekly, even daily, public forms of common worship. The texts themselves operate to lead, disciple, even shape the congregation's behaviour, and their worship experience. And, because leading liturgical services is deemed so important, it has come to be viewed as a central task for the priest.

I would also want to argue that our understanding of leadership itself, how it should operate and function, is shaped by the construction of these texts (the lexical field of the liturgy for example), and by the many 'stage instructions' that accompany the reading and performance of the texts. The texts determine literally how one leads the public performance of worship in practice, in marriages, funerals, baptisms, and in week-by-week worship, and by so doing affect and influence the notion of leading, structuring

expectations, and the way it is experienced. The liturgical services and order of discourse thus bleed influence into the wider task of ecclesial leadership.

It has already been noted in chapter 2 that C.F.D. Moule has observed that the naming of the Holy Spirit in the Common Book of Prayer looks like an afterthought. For example, in the Gloria, there is an absence of the Holy Spirit who only comes in a parenthesis in a relative clause of the section addressed to Christ.[378] The same is true for the Te Deum where in the address to Christ it simply adds 'also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter'.[379]

An initial observation therefore when approaching the set of liturgical services is that generally, and predominantly, the Holy Spirit is referenced in a few set, regularly repeated formulas which are tacked onto the end of a section, psalm, or a set of prayers. For example, 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit'. In this form, the phrase can be treated as a signalling device for the end of a section. This said motif is repeated 5 times in the short services set for Morning Prayer. In the Collects, the phrase 'in the unity of the Holy Spirit' is frequently used to finish the prayer. Arguably, this use operates as 'stage direction' in the text. The words become perfunctory and lose any significance in theological 'naming' regarding content. Nonetheless, such phrases and motifs do reveal a conscious structural framing of God as Trinity, even when the Spirit is rendered passively.

In both Order One and Two of the Eucharist, it is notable the way the persons of the Godhead are described, in particular the Father and the Son. For example, it is common for the writing to layer the descriptive names, such as, 'your Son our Lord Jesus Christ', or 'Almighty God our heavenly Father', or 'Jesus Christ, King of Glory', or 'Our God and Father'. This overlaying of terms creates a relational aspect for the worshipper, builds

[378] Moule, *The Holy Spirit*, 44.
[379] Ibid., 44.

description and ‘thickens’ the theological meaning allowing for complexity and theological resonance to be woven through the texts. This layering cannot, however, be reflected in the content analysis as each mention counts as one reference.

In contrast, the references to Spirit are not layered, remaining a single ‘and the Holy Spirit’, or ‘with the Holy Ghost’. Thus, there is a discursive contrast to be noted at the outset between ‘the Holy Spirit’, and for example, ‘Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ’. The latter is relational and personal, describes his role, and references both the Son’s humanity and divinity. In the former, the use of the definitive pronoun distances us from the unrelated Third. There is little to augment the Holy Spirit as a Person in the worshipper’s mind.

Taking a structuralist view of discourse means that the potential impact of this naming language must, by its logic, influence readers and worshippers in practice. The lack of characterization invites no more than a reserved personal response. At most, in some collects, the words unity, fellowship, and power are used in connection with the Spirit, but other activity is omitted. On top of which, any such naming comes as addition. So, after conjunctions ‘and’, or ‘with’, or ‘from’. Rarely is the Spirit named before a conjunction. This leads to a lack of descriptive presence in the weekly proclamation of God in the operation of the discourse.

When one turns to quantify the usage, the numerical differentiation in references bears out the difference in characterization. In the book of Daily Prayer, and the Forms of Penitence of which four forms are given, there are 28 uses of the name Father, or God, 12 uses of the name Jesus, Son, Christ, or Lord, and there are just 3 uses of the name Spirit.[380] Or in the weekdays in Morning Prayer each day, there are 5 references to the

[380] Common Worship: Daily Prayer, (London: Church House Publishing, 2005), 91- 97.

Spirit which arise through the repetition of the Gloria, compared to 8-14 to Jesus, and between 21-27 to the Father God.

In Common Worship, in the Morning Prayer set for a Sunday, there are 24 references to Father God, or Lord, 21 to the Son, or Jesus Christ, and 8 that name the Spirit.[381] In the Eucharist liturgy Order One (page 167), the counting shows that the Father, God, is named 49 times; the Son, Jesus Christ is named 49 times, and the Spirit is named 9 times.

In the Eucharistic prayers A-H there is some variation between the texts, but overall, the Father, God is named 42 times, the Son, Jesus Christ is named 44 times, and the Spirit is named 19 times.

In the Eucharist liturgy, Order Two,[382] which is the Book of Common Prayer version, there are again only 9 references to the Holy Spirit in the whole service; 8 if you exclude the one reference to a 'spirit of truth unity and concord'. That contrasts with 55 references to God, Father Almighty, and 45 uses of Jesus Christ, Lord, or Son, and that does not include the Kyrie, or the Agnus Dei where the phrase Lamb of God, Christ, and Lord are all repeated. The Trinity is named in the Grace and Blessing, but these are fleeting moments as against the whole offering.

In the Collects an interesting pattern emerges. In all the Collects for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, the number of mentions of the Holy Spirit is 21. When we look at the mentions for the Second Person of the Trinity there are 49 when phrases are grouped as one mention such as Lord Jesus Christ, or Your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. The number would be more than double if I pulled these name groups apart. I left out the

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[381] Common Worship*: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000), 30-37.
[382] Ibid., 228.

collects for Lent and Easter to avoid any obvious skewing of the numbers towards the Son.

When it comes to looking at the collects from Pentecost to Advent, the number of mentions for the Father is 64, the Son is referred to 74 times, and references to the Holy Spirit total 44. This seems a better proportion on the face of it, but 30 of these references occur as the set phrase ending the prayer, '…who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit one God now and forever'. This means only 14 are substantive references to the Spirit. So, the characterization of the Spirit to the congregation is predominantly around him being the unifying bond between Father and Son. This indicates there is a real theological difference in how the Spirit is understood as Subject, which affects how we then relate to him in practice. Of the 14 substantive references, 4 relate to the sending of the Spirit to the church, and 2 relate to the church being directed and governed.

It is noteworthy that in the collect for Pentecost, there are 3 references to Spirit: in connection with the light of the Spirit and having a right judgement. This is a strange reference to Spirit when one thinks about Pentecost. The post communion collect does mention the sending of Spirit and there is a prayer that our lips would be opened. The collect remembering the baptism of Christ (page 383) also has 3 references to Spirit. It refers to the anointing of Spirit and being born of water and Spirit. However, most of the collects have just the end reference to Spirit which forms the common ending to most of the prayers: 'through Jesus Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit one God now and forever, Amen'.

In the Baptism Service, the Introduction offers a different linguistic field to what has been considered hitherto. It offers a theological grounding for the new believer in the work and activity of the Spirit in the context of the Trinity that is rare across the broader view of liturgy. In brief, it refers to 'the Lord Jesus Christ … born of water and the Spirit … washed

by the Holy Spirit … clothed with Christ … as children of God … God calls us to fullness'.[383] This little paragraph does give activity and two verbs to the Spirit – born and washed.

In the collect, the Spirit is given a few more descriptions. There is reference to the power of the Holy Spirit, the prayer is that we are guided and strengthened by that same Spirit, and we are to grow to be like the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Again, just a few words, some verbs, and adjectives, and suddenly the Presence of the Holy Spirit as active partner within the Trinity, starts to come to the fore.

In the liturgy of the baptism (pages 352-361), the presentation of the candidates is focussed on their confession of faith. This names Jesus Christ frequently. The candidate is baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but there is no accompanying direct prayer or laying on of hands for the person to be filled with the Spirit. Rather the prayer is that the candidate be 'daily renewed by the anointing Spirit' which is more indirect. In the service overall, there are 16 references to the Spirit compared to 47 to Jesus, and 37 to the Father.

The Ordinals 'carry the common mind of the church in the nature and purpose of ordained ministry'.[384] They are therefore in many ways the last word as to what the role of the Spirit is to be in the leadership of the Church. It is for this reason that I close the content analysis with these services, derived from both the 1662 Ordinal and the Alternative Service Book of 1980.

In the Ordinal for priests there are repeats of some well-known phrases, for example in the collect, 'in the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father…',

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[383] Service of Baptism, *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000), 349.
[384] Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions*, 218.

and the closing Trinitarian phrase, ‘in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit’, but uniquely in this service there is also the specific moment of commissioning which invites the Holy Spirit to come and anoint the person being priested. This is recognition of the need for empowering and enabling by the Spirit in the exercise of the leadership gift.

In the Declarations for deacons, the numbers are 12 references to the Father, 9 to Jesus Christ, and 2 to the Spirit – ‘the strength of Spirit’ and ‘gift of Spirit’. In the Declaration of Assent for priests, the numbers are 14 references to the Father God, 17 to Jesus Christ, and 4 to the Spirit. These four refer to the name of the ‘Father, Son, and Holy Spirit’, ‘the strength of Spirit’, ‘the gift of Spirit’, and there is one mention of the Holy Spirit in relation to leading the development of the role of the Church: ‘Led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness…’.

In the Bishop’s address, after a long paragraph as to the nature of the priestly role, at the very end there is reference to the priests being ‘guided by the Spirit’. Prior to this there is emphasis on the proclamation of the word, didactic engagement with the people, emphasis on the sacramental role, and leading worship. So within the services that commission leaders, there is only one reference to the Church being led by the Spirit, and one reference to the Spirit’s guiding.

The ordinands are then asked a series of questions, for example ‘do you accept the Holy Scriptures as revealing all things necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?’ The last question of nine, pertains to stirring up the gift that is within ‘in the strength of the Holy Spirit’.

At the end of the address, the bishop says, ‘pray earnestly for the gift of the Holy Spirit’. This is significant as the prayer does not assume the presence of the Spirit. Later again, at the point of commissioning, the prayer refrain is ‘Lord, send your Spirit’, and then during the laying on of hands by the bishop, and accompanying priests, the prayer is

‘Send down the Holy Spirit on your servant …’. Following the ordination, the bishop prays, that ‘through your Spirit, heavenly Father, give these servants grace and power…’.

These references are significant as they indicate again that there is perceived need for a ‘sending’ of the Spirit. The presence of the Spirit is recognized and ‘sought’ through the laying on of hands by the bishop, and there is a focus on ‘stirring up the gift’ at the end of the address to the ordinands.

The service then moves into the celebration of the Eucharist where there is a reference to the Holy Spirit through whom is given ‘a rich diversity of gifts’. The dismissal offers one stanza, ‘[m]ay the Holy Spirit, the comforter, equip you and strengthen you in your ministry’. The work of the Spirit is identified as comforting, equipping, and strengthening.

Despite the characterization of Spirit as described above, the numbers still show a lack of equivalence. In the ordination of deacons, God is named 42 times, Jesus 59 times, and the Spirit, 17 times. In the ordination of priests, God is referenced 48 times, Jesus 74 times, and Spirit 21 times. In the ordination of bishops, God is named 49 times, Jesus 55 times, and Spirit 27 times. Overall, there are 139 references to God, 188 to Jesus, and 65 to the Spirit.

Conclusion

From the analysis in this chapter, this thesis can show unambiguous quantitative evidence that the Third Person of the Trinity fails to be equally referenced and named within the texts considered in comparison to the persons of Father and Son. Nor is the role and work of the Spirit equally acknowledged, mentioned, referenced, or relied upon.

The bishops espouse different versions of leadership, and leadership spirituality but essentially, they are Christologically focussed. Not one of the three bishops brings the Spirit to the fore in their accounts of ecclesial leadership as Person, rather the Spirit is most often hidden as spirit of Jesus, or as gift to the church. The Holy Spirit is consistently

backgrounded within the texts. This would seem to suggest that the leadership modelling espoused publicly by these bishops is not one that is rounded out in full by a pneumatological perspective even if, for example Watson, is comfortable with the Spirit on a personal level.

In relation to the leadership training material, this too reveals an absence of Spirit as Third Hypostasis, as personal leader, and as the One who is leading the church. How the Spirit leads is only obliquely referenced.

When it comes to the liturgy, and the means through which the church has been led in worship for centuries, there is clear quantifiable evidence to show that the words on the page, that are read out, prayed, and sung week by week, do not give equal weight and presence to the Spirit. The numbers show there is a quantifiable difference in the way worship is oriented towards the Persons of Father, and Son.

Further, in the liturgies there is a qualitative difference in the ways the Persons of God are referenced and contextualized. There is a concentration on soteriological themes, which is reflected across the linguistic field, for example, references around subjects of atonement, confession, sin, and the cross are frequent. The three notable places where the Spirit is mentioned and foregrounded in the text are at the epiclesis in the Eucharist, at baptism, and in the anointing of those ordained.

However, arguably these three stand out because wider pneumatological themes and language are not more widely embedded into the liturgy. Thus there is an observable lack in frequency of themes that would relate to the wider work of Spirit, such as guide, healer, leader, as the one who resurrects or restores, or to the gifts of Spirit such as prophecy and wisdom, words of knowledge and miracles, or to the corresponding lexicon orientated around themes such as transformation, new life, change, regeneration, and flourishing.

Where the Spirit is mentioned, the themes cluster around the unity and fellowship of the Spirit, sanctification, and holiness. The naming itself is spare, and there is little characterization or verbal activity given to the Spirit. Or, the referencing becomes superficial, as for example in the Gloria where names are repeated no less than 5 times in the text of morning prayer.

Further it would seem that even though some texts such as the ordinal do actively seek the Spirit through the practical act of the laying on of hands, there does not seem to be a worked-out link between what is prayed for at ordination, and how leadership in spirit is then to be worked out in practice. There is a dissonance at work between the two. One can be ordained through the laying on of hands but then make only minimal mention of the activity of Spirit in liturgical services thereafter.

Any active seeking of the presence of the Spirit is rarely vocalized in the worship services. Any 'silence' is left to the leader's own inclination, or the odd time when it states, 'silence may be kept'. There are no stage directions in the liturgy as to how to approach practices of spiritual awareness, or prayers that openly seek the presence of Spirit, or the exercise of gifts. This is particularly noticeable in the baptism service where there is no subsequent 'seeking' of the accompanying filling or anointing of the Holy Spirit which would pattern the experience of Jesus' own baptismal experience. Thus the fact that the Spirit is present to a degree in the baptism and ordination services does not mean that there is an active and present pneumatology operational elsewhere. And the fact of the former does not omit the need for the latter.

Three other significant points that pertain to leadership arise from the texts considered above. The first is that the leadership discourse seems to avoid engagement with the supra natural. The gifts of the Spirit are not considered in detail at all, and this despite easy and regular referencing to leadership being a gift of the Spirit. Nowhere within this discourse have I been able to find any wrestling with what 'shape' a pneumatically gifted

leadership model might look like within an Anglican paradigm. There is no articulation of how corporate or personal edification, or personal equipping for ministry, takes place and is experienced.

Secondly, there is little or no articulation as to what 'being led' by the Spirit is, or feels like, or how leadership in the Church of England accesses such leading of Spirit. This means that thirdly, there is no developed pneumatological perspective of leadership in the Body of Christ. A practical pneumatology of leadership is absent. Understanding around shared ministry, vocation, role, or participation in leadership struggles to track alongside the historically dominant Christological view of leadership which presses towards a priestly understanding. Lastly, since the form or model of ordination (which is based on priestly sacramental function) is consistently conflated with leadership and leading, there is implicit acceptance that a masculine imaginary is retained within the leadership discourse.

From my readings, and from the figures obtained above therefore, I can argue that it is reasonable to assert that pneumatology is weakly, and reductively, expressed in leadership discourse. This conclusion allows me to deduce that there is a theological deficit in leadership discourse. And, since I am relying on discourse as being constructing and constituting – as discussed in chapter 1 – such a deficit in pneumatology would point to there being an under-resourcing pneumatologically of the work of leadership in practice.

Assessment of Search Phase

Chapters 1-5 comprise the search phase of this thesis. In this phase, I undertook an interrogation of the leadership discourse of the Church of England. Relying on the linguistic turn and the significance of discourse for practice offers justification for looking at leadership through the lens of discourse, especially given the Church of England is in a process of reform.

Researching the problem of leadership led me to undertake a content analysis of leadership texts. The numbers derived from the content analysis offer a simple conclusion: there is unequal representation of the persons of the Trinity in leadership discourse. The Holy Spirit is not equally represented at a basic linguistic and semantic level in the texts. The data reveals a relational differentiation therefore which amounts to a consistent leaning away from pneumatology, and the person of Spirit. Very often the work of the Spirit is rendered passively or subsumed into the role of the Son. Themes of the Spirit's presence, activity, and role in the Body of Christ fail to be articulated. There is a leaning towards, and preference for, God as Father and Son.

If I rely on the linguistic turn, as explained in chapter 1, this means that the Spirit fails to 'come-to' as subject in the texts to the same degree as the Father or Son. The Spirit's subjectivity in discourse is weakly articulated, and therefore it is reasonable to conclude that a full account of the person and activity of the Spirit is not made. From this, I also deduce that there is a theological deficit at work in the discourse. The Person of Spirit remains backgrounded, poorly delineated, or only indirectly referenced. Notions of spirituality that are brought into discussion tend to be through alternative words such as mindfulness, wholeness, prayerfulness, or through euphemistic language around fruitfulness, abundance, and 'going deeper'.

It is noticeable that in the two FAOC reports there is a call for a return to spiritual practices and there is also the invitation to engage in 'fruitful improvisation', and to being open to new forms of leadership. Yet within the wider discourse it is hard to see where and how these recommendations are implemented. There is therefore room for discussion and invention.

Accordingly, to sum up this search phase, using content analysis I have found both a quantitative and qualitative difference in the way the Spirit is named and referenced in the leadership texts interrogated. This disparity, and the failure to give a full account of the

Third Person of the Trinity, allows me to deduce a theological deficit is present in ecclesial leadership discourse. And because of the structuring effect discourse has on practice, this theological deficit in discourse is problematic as it will have constituting and determining effect on leadership practices and on how leaders lead.

This concludes the Search phase of this project.

The Encounter Phase

Chapter 6

A Conversation begins with Systematic Theology

Introduction

Having concluded the search phase, I now turn to the encounter phase of this investigation. This takes the form of a threefold constructive conversation with three inter-disciplinary partners. First, in this chapter, I turn to systematic theology to ask whether there is doctrinal ground for a re-directed reading of the Spirit in the discourse of leadership, and I look to Wolfhart Pannenberg for a modern systematic theological view of the wider work and activity of the Spirit.[385]

Then I will have a conversation about how the church has historically engaged with the Spirit through the form of spiritual practices in chapter 7, and thirdly, I engage with secular leadership as-practice theory in chapter 8. This linked conversation will lead to a substantive proposal in chapter 9 in the transformation phase.

Pannenberg is a Lutheran, coming out of the German academic tradition but he is not a Lutheran theologian. He operates more widely than this, and accordingly he has been well received and read across church tradition. So for example, according to the Finnish scholar Veli-Matti Karkkainen who writes as a charismatic theologian, 'The most characteristic feature of Pannenberg's theology and pneumatology is its holistic, comprehensive approach',[386] and according to Karkkainen, 'no other theologian since

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[385] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology Volumes 1, 2, 3* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991, 1994, and 1997 respectively). All footnotes hereinafter referring to Pannenberg's work are by Volume and page number.

[386] Veli-Matti Karkkainen, 'The Working of the Spirit of God in Creation and in the People of God: The Pneumatology of Wolfhart Pannenberg,' in *Pneuma, The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, 26. no.1 (2004): 26. https://doi.org/10.1163/157007404776111135.

Barth has produced such a massive, full scale systematic theology as Pannenberg'.[387] Paul Avis argues that Pannenberg stands on the shoulders of Schleiermacher and Barth, 'if Schleiermacher offered the thesis, and Barth the anti-thesis, then Pannenberg offers the synthesis'.[388]

There are criticisms, of course, that land around the fact that Pannenberg is seen as coming out of, and not quite letting go of, the 20th century German theological tradition, and particularly that he is a foundationalist and thereby anchored to an Enlightenment view of reason. However, F. Leron Shults argues that this is to misunderstand Pannenberg because there is a false dichotomy between foundationalist and nonfoundationalist approaches.[389] Shults proposes that Pannenberg's methodology offers a middle – postfoundationalist – route. One that chimes with what is called in this thesis, a critical realist approach. Pannenberg allows for a new relationship between historical research and systematic theology whereby history becomes a source of confidence rather than doubt.[390]

Lewis Ayres, in his chapter titled, 'In Spite of Hegel, Fire, and Sword', criticizes Pannenberg for imbibing a Hegelian view of the Spirit. [391] Ayres also writes that Pannenberg builds arguments around brief but large-scale historical surveys; 'The frequent result is that those arguments are dependent on older secondary sources whose concerns and contexts are never examined.'[392] Ayres objects to these historical meta narratives on which many theological assertions are then built. His main objection is that 'narratives of the theological past – whether it is assumed to be surpassed or to present

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[387] Karkkainen, 'The Working of the Spirit of God', 26.
[388] Avis, *The Methods of Modern Theology,* 70.
[389] F. Leron Shults, *The Postfoundational task of Theology: Wolfhart Pannenberg and the New Theological Rationality* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1999), 11.
[390] Allan D. Galloway, *Wolfhart Pannenberg* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1973), Introduction.
[391] Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 406.
[392] Ibid., 385, note 4.

an inestimable content needing new translation – gradually became intrinsic to the self-understanding of systematic theology as such'.[393] For Ayres as historian, and seeking to rewrite the narrative of the fourth century, primary sources are paramount. However, for my purposes, the handling and appropriation of historical materials, though important, does not undermine the overall systematic pneumatological view that Pannenberg offers.

Other criticisms gather around Pannenberg's attempt to speak across theology into science. There has been much written on this, but arguably, the sheer fact Pannenberg was in mind to engage in, and with, scientific advance shows he stood apart from his own tradition, and that his systematic theology is ambitious. Karkkainen argues contra those who would criticize Pannenberg's forays into science and philosophy, that the very advantage of Pannenberg is this integrative approach.

Pannenberg connects the Spirit with each main loci of theology and therefore the Spirit is being treated, not as a gap-filler, but as the necessary and integrating part of the theological whole – 'he has not produced a separate pneumatology. Rather, his doctrine of the Spirit is integrated with his ambitious theological program'.[394] So arguably, it is one like Pannenberg who can offer to leadership discourse a pneumatological perspective from within a fully comprehensive theological approach, and thus offer an accumulated and 'wide-angled' view.

Pannenberg has been described as a theologian who wants Christianity to be at the table of public intellectual discussion and wants to be taken seriously for its suggestions.[395] This makes him a significant theologian for church leaders in an established church that seeks a voice in the public square. It means that those interested in interdisciplinary work can look to Pannenberg as conversation partner: 'Pannenberg has established his name

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[393] Ibid., 395.
[394] Karkkainen, *'The Working of the Spirit of God',* 26.
[395] Timothy Bradshaw, *Pannenberg: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark Intl., 2009), 6.

among the small number of giants of systematic theologians … for daring to build a system that attempts to relate faith in the Christian God to all that exists in reality'.[396]

In this way Pannenberg lays out an approach that is often lacking in other theological approaches where the ecclesiology is coloured by the church tradition, as for example with Lesslie Newbigin, John Zizioulous, Jurgen Moltman, and Miroslav Volf. These writers have offered important insights to the role of the Spirit and the church, but none of them have offered a systematic approach that seeks to, or is able to, transcend ecclesiastical fault lines.

Allan Galloway writing in connection to Pannenberg's work 'Jesus God and Man', writes that Pannenberg's doctrine of the Trinity offers the possibility of a new philosophy not only of history but also of society. Pannenberg's work is relevant to the search for a deeper understanding of the relation between individuation and participation which is a pervasive and urgent problem in the 21st century.[397] Galloway argues Pannenberg has opened a door to 'theological developments of great potential', and his doctrine of Trinity has more 'ethical power' since it invites us to participate in the life of God by participating fully in the history of our own time'.[398]

Furthermore, Pannenberg's systematic approach challenges the traditional approach to systematics as he places a consideration of the foundation of the church before soteriology. This is significant as it means consideration of the larger creational and eschatological move of the Spirit comes prior to an examination of the personal interior work of sanctification, as is traditionally the case. This links to the broader and more active conception of Spirit that Pannenberg adopts.

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[396] Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Trinity and Religious Pluralism: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Christian Theology of Religions* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2004), 81.
[397] Galloway, *Wolfhart Pannenberg*, 115.
[398] Ibid.

In relation to ecclesiology, Pannenberg offers a unifying hermeneutic of differentiating conceptualizations of the church. This leads to one of the most persuasive reasons for choosing Pannenberg, for according to Karkkainen, it is Pannenberg who works out the critical theological grounding necessary for a Christological-pneumatological ecclesiology, and develops the relation between Christ, Spirit, and the Church.[399] But what is most significant for this thesis (and what Karkkainen helpfully points out[400]) is that Pannenberg's program for ecclesiology lacks application. He writes, 'what is lacking in this program are the implications to the rest of ecclesiological topics such as ministry structures of the church, spiritual gifts and endowments in the service of the church, and Christian unity',[401] and thus in relation to this thesis – ecclesial leadership.

So, if Pannenberg's pneumatology is under-developed in the ministerial and ecclesial context as Karkkainen suggests – failing to 'unleash the pneumatological potential his ecclesiology allows'[402] – then there is, fortuitously, opportunity for me to exploit that potential and work out an application of Pannenberg's theological grounding of the church in relation to leadership.

A Pneumatological View in Four Parts:

Given Pannenberg's comprehensive theological project it is not possible to offer a full overview of Pannenberg's pneumatology. There are however, four key themes that I can draw out from Pannenberg's pneumatological programme that direct an understanding of the Spirit in relation to a practical theological outworking of ecclesial leadership.

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[399] In contrast to Rahner, for example, who gives the impression that the 'church is Christologically constructed and then pneumatologically decorated'. Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Toward a Pneumatological Theology: Pentecostal and Ecumenical Perspectives on Ecclesiology, Soteriology and Theology of Mission* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2002), 92, 94.
[400] Karkkainen, *Toward a Pneumatological Theology,* 90.
[401] Ibid., 90.
[402] Ibid., 90.

1) Distinction: self-distinction between the three Persons of the Trinity allows for a delineation of the work and activity of the Spirit, that is not Father or Son.
2) The move of Spirit: the creational initiation of Spirit to the eschatological perfecting of Spirit directs an understanding of the Spirit's leading activity.
3) Constitution: there is a Christological and pneumatological founding of the church. The church is sustained in relation with both Son and Spirit.
4) Participation: believers participate individually and corporately in the Spirit-relation.

1) Distinction

i) To engineer a notion of distinction within the Trinity around the notion of procession has long been found to be problematic, and Western theology has struggled to find a way to describe the Three Persons, equally and distinctly, as a result. A focus on Oneness means Three-ness has struggled to be delineated meaningfully – often falling into forms of modalism. As a result, it is hard not to see 'God' as substantive and prior to the Three.

However, for Pannenberg, the doctrine of the Trinity starts from events in history. He starts with Three. So, even though the nature, or essence of Being may be common to the Three, their common essence or existence is situated only in the mutual communication of their relations, and in their relative activity as something like a Father, and his Son Jesus, and their Spirit.

If one grants the reality of the resurrection event of the man called Jesus of Nazareth, then there is no alternative but to admit to an identity of essence between that risen man, and God. The eternal essence of God the Father is revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. So Pannenberg argues that the characteristic differentiation that exists between historical Jesus and God must be a characteristic that is taken up into the eternal essence of God himself. The personal differentiation of Jesus is maintained. The distinction can exist in their unity.

Likewise, with the Spirit who is revealed in the life of the Son. It is by the Spirit that Jesus is conceived, empowered, and then raised to eternal life. In the incarnation of Jesus, the uniting Third is revealed. Thus, it is in the historical reality of a life lived in flesh and blood that we start to trace the God as Three.

To find distinction in an impersonal principle of origin of procession makes 'difference' within God only a matter of geometry, triplicate 'endpoints' from a procession, or 'subjects' that sit in opposition only by virtue of procession. The persons lose any differentiating activity, and so distinction within the Trinity is blurred, and becomes problematic. This has been fatal for an understanding of the Spirit.[403]

Pannenberg offers a way to delineate distinction within the Trinity in terms of unique perichoretic Move or Activity. (This key idea resonates back to the Cappadocians.) Here the Trinity is better conceived as Three realizations of perfectly unified and mutual Activity, and that Activity is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 'If the trinitarian relations among Father, Son, and Spirit have the form of mutual self-distinction, they must be understood not merely as different modes of being of the one divine subject but as living realizations of separate centers of action'.[404]

Pannenberg writes that the mistaken formulation of Augustine which plagues the East and West is namely that of seeing the relations among Father, Son, and Spirit exclusively as relations of origin.[405] Pannenberg goes onto say, relations among the three persona cannot be reduced to relations of origin in the traditional sense – there is more activity to be ascribed than begetting, being begotten, and being breathed – 'The Spirit is not just breathed. He also fills the Son and glorifies him in his obedience to the Father, thereby

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[403] Weinandy, *The Father's Spirit of Sonship*, 8. Just one of many authors who identifies the lack of subjective depth of the Spirit 'because he has no defining activity as a person'.
[404] Volume 1, 319.
[405] Volume 1, 319.

glorifying the Father himself. In doing so he leads into all truth (John 16.13) and searches out the deep things of Godhead (1 Cor. 2:10-11)'.[406]

ii) So, because the relations of the Three cannot be reduced to relations of origin, Pannenberg ascribes distinctive or differentiating activity to the relations – which includes Spirit. He argues that '[w]hen scripture bears witness to the active relations of the Son and the Spirit to the Father, it is not good enough to treat these as not constitutive for their identity and in this respect to look only at the relations of begetting and proceeding … None of the other relations is merely incidental to the Son and Spirit' but they '…constitute the different distinctions of the persons'.[407]

Thus, Pannenberg states that the *activity* of the relation is constitutive for their identity and deity – not just begetting and proceeding – '[t]he persons simply are what they are in their relations to one another, which both distinguish them from one another and brings them into communion with one another'.[408]

Pannenberg also identifies that self-distinction is different for each person – each person is differentiated differently. 'The self-distinction of each of the persons from the others relates also to the deity and/or its attributes',[409] so that self-distinction does not mean the same thing for each of the three persons. But to ensure that subordinationism does not creep into the scheme, Pannenberg makes the point that the monarchy of the Father is also mediated by the Trinitarian relations and has its reality precisely in the life of the Son and Spirit. The monarchy of the Father is not the *pre*-supposition of the Trinity, but is likewise, 'the result of the common operation of the three persons.'[410] Through 'the work of the Son the kingdom or monarchy of the Father is established in creation, and through

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[406] Volume 1, 320.
[407] Volume 1, 320.
[408] Volume 1, 320.
[409] Volume 1, 321.
[410] Volume 1, 325.

the work of the Spirit, who glorifies the Son as the plenipotentiary of the Father, and in so doing glorifies the Father himself, the kingdom or monarchy of the Father in creation is consummated'.[411] The Father does not have the kingdom without the Son and Spirit, but only through them.

This focus on differentiating self-distinction allows Pannenberg to make clear that the Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son and achieves self-distinction from both. The Spirit differentiates himself from the Son, by glorifying Jesus as the Son of the Father. And the Son achieves self-distinction from the Spirit by receiving and returning the Spirit to the Father: 'in the trinitarian life of God the giving and giving back of the Spirit are means by which his personal independence emerges in relation to the Father and the Son'.[412]

Thus, the Spirit is not the divine life that is 'in common' between Father and Son, but He stands over and against as his own realization of active relation. This is most easily and obviously seen in the economic relation between Father and Son: 'The fellowship of Jesus as Son with God as Father can obviously be stated only if there is reference to a third as well, the Holy Spirit. For the Spirit of God is the mode of God's presence in Jesus'.[413] There is special grounding for the Spirit in and through the life of the risen Son, but his distinction is retained, as for example, in and through the work of resurrection.

Accordingly, in relation to the Spirit, there can be no self-distinction from Father and Son – no unique move as argued for above – if He is merely the 'we' of *their* communion. Nor does one 'exhaustively describe the Spirit of God by saying that through him the risen Christ still works on earth, even if invisibly'.[414] Thus the Spirit is distinct Person, and His

[411] Volume 1, 324.
[412] Volume 3, 12.
[413] Volume 1, 267.
[414] Volume 3. 5.

personhood cannot be reduced to being 'power', or the power by which Jesus bears witness to himself. This is necessary to state so as to avoid collapsing the Spirit into the Son as only emanation, or prolongation, of the life of Jesus – something seen repeatedly emerge in the discourse material considered in the previous chapters.

iii) Further, not only is the Spirit himself distinct, but he offers believers through faith both knowledge of, and self-distinction from, the Son – rather than their humanity being overwhelmed by and extinguished in divinity. Even though joined into the filial relation of Christ to the Father, believers maintain and are aware of their own creatureliness: 'participation in the filial relation of Jesus to the Father frees believers for immediacy in relation to God as their Father. This immediacy to God is to be lived out in the particularity of their own life-fulfilment'.[415] By the Spirit creatures are 'made capable of independence in their relation to God and at the same time integrated into the unity of God's kingdom'.[416]

Similarly, the Spirit stands over and against the church. He is not reduced to the 'we' of our fellowship, or some principle of communion, nor is He a dimension of church life. He is not the common spirit of our fellowship as though he were some 'esprit de corps'. He is in His person differentiated and stands over and against the Church. Pannenberg makes clear, '[i]t is a mistake, then, to call the Spirit the principle of the church's fellowship, or to describe the Spirit as the common spirit of the church',[417] there is a transcendence that needs to be acknowledged.

This notion of distinction is important as it allows the person Spirit as 'centre of activity' to come to the fore in the life in the 'ecclesia'. The Spirit can be outlined as against the Son. This view corrects the fault found in the leadership discourse considered above in

[415] Volume 2, 453.
[416] Volume 3, 12.
[417] Volume 3. 132.

domesticating the Spirit, treating Him as at the church's behest or as optional. Often in the documents, spirituality was something to opt into or not.

iv) Further, viewing the Trinitarian Persons as unique Move or as realizations of activity – rather than as a substantive 'end point', one that quickly hardens into a solid-subject view – allows for a perichoretic dynamic to *redirect* our reading of the Trinity. This in turn allows for an energetic understanding of God as relation (both *intra* and *ad extra*), or more simply as *relating*. Thus, our knowing of God or experience of God is God already-relating-to-us as Father, as Messiah, and in Spirit. We enter three God-Movements who are in everlasting ongoing 'relating' a 'nexus of relations'.[418]

This notion of 'Being' as movement-in-relation accommodates appropriately the essential truth that God is spirit, an uncircumscribed being. If there are three distinct but perfectly mutual moves of God (who is described as spirit), then the Person of the Holy Spirit – who is also spirit – is not to recede or become occluded within that spirit nature of God, and behind the solid conceptual subjects of the Father and the Son, what Pannenberg calls, a particularized concretion of God. God is spirit, but still the person of the Holy Spirit is one of the personal realizations or concretions of the essence of God in distinction to the Father and the Son.[419] Pannenberg makes clear that the Person of the Spirit is to be understood 'as a unique manifestation (singularity) of the field of the divine essentiality'.[420]

v) When we adopt Pannenberg's approach to differentiating the persons of the Trinity, it is possible to avoid the pitfalls associated with a social doctrine of the Trinity, and what might be called a 'solid subject view' of God. Theological participatory language is nonsensical if God as Trinity is understood to denote three substantial end points, or if the relations are allowed to harden off into a particular construction around family. Rather,

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[418] Volume 1. 320.
[419] Volume 2. 83.
[420] Volume 2. 83.

Pannenberg usefully articulates a 'dynamic relation of relating' into which we join, a flow of life into which we can be drawn or led.

Paul Fiddes has specifically engaged with Pannenberg on this point. He argues that it is because Pannenberg wants to bring distinction to the Persons, that 'he is compelled to 'cling to the idea of subject[s]' in God' which he describes as 'centres' of action.[421] Fiddes affirming Pannenberg prefers though to describe the Three as 'three living realizations of *movements* or *directions* of action (my italics)'.[422] The point is we are not observing personal agents on the 'ends' of relationships, but we share in the flow of the relations themselves.

It is because Pannenberg is so concerned to distinguish the Persons of the Trinity in some way *other than* procession, (to avoid the Western classical view that meant a reductive understanding of Spirit) that he never quite loses hold of the notion of subject, and so uses the word that is translated 'centre'. So, for example, Pannenberg argues, with respect to Robert Jenson's naming the Persons of Trinity as '*dramatis dei personae'* or 'identities' is to miss the importance of 'mutual self-distinction which forces us to cling to the idea of subject'.[423]

Significantly, for the purposes of this project, it is by bringing distinction to the personal relations as Pannenberg deliberately seeks to do, that legitimates my attempt to draw out the distinguishing work of the Spirit in the praxis of leadership.

vi) Despite the reservations of Paul Fiddes around the word 'centre', I would want to argue that Pannenberg's 'centres of action' can still be interpreted as depicting liveliness and activity within or *as* the distinguishing action or move. Pannenberg's description

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[421] Paul S. Fiddes, *Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 2000), 84.
[422] Ibid., 85.
[423] Volume 1, 319, note 183.

speaks of ‘living realizations’ which arguably suggests an outward motion or flow of realizing action, and expressive movement. The notion of a centre might suggest a ‘node’ or subject point it is true, but it need not be a ‘hard end’. It could equally denote a concentration of activity, a hub, or a nexus of connections, and consequentially currents or movements. Either way, Pannenberg still points the way for me to adopt a lively perichoretic vision of the Trinity in which the Three are distinct Moves, distinguishable in perfectly mutual Tri-uniting flow.

vii) So, there is then a hypostatic move that is Spirit, that is not the Son, nor merely an emanation of the Son. He is characterized by the movement and dynamic which comes from the Biblical depiction of the Spirit as breath and wind. The hypostatic move of God that we call Spirit is ‘God-in-another’, or the Spirit is ‘the indwelling of God outgoing’ – the Spirit is the One through whom the communication of God is completed – the teleiosis of their Tri-unity.

But, if one only sees the Holy Spirit as the ‘going-out-from’ the Godhead whereby love, grace, as well as for example fellowship, and attributes of sonship are hypostatized by the Spirit in another, then his personhood is again severely reduced. The Spirit has a distinct and unique overarching Move that is often lost to the church when the Spirit is only giver of gifts and graces, or the Gift. Widening the view finder beyond a soteriological focus allows for other leading activity of Spirit to pattern ecclesial leadership.

viii) The Spirit is the life-giving principle of God who offers to all creatureliness life, movement, and activity in distinction from another, and from God himself. And this activity is not just the Spirit playing a part in creation, the Spirit’s work is found in the ‘let there be’ of the creation ordinances – the ‘letting’ of God is Spirit’s work – but this is continuing and always. (This point is picked up in section 2.)

The Spirit is the one who creatively ‘opens-up-space-for-the-other’. He is the one who makes room ‘to be’. Thus, I can join in the already ongoing ‘Move’ of God as Spirit without

my being lost or disappearing: 'the creatures in their plurality, which is an expression of their finitude, can participate, each in its own place, in the movement of the divine action that permeates all creation, in the taking shape of the Word and the moving of the Spirit'.[424] And this view of Spirit is not reserved to doctrine. For example, John Polkinghorne argues that a science based only on a view of constituent parts ignores unpredictabilities in science that speak of Spirit being 'causal space'.[425]

ix) The significance of distinction within the Trinity is that it allows for a legitimate 'outlining' of the Spirit within the life of the church. The fact of distinction is important so the fellowship of believers can 'see' and appropriately assign activity to the Spirit in discourse, and thence in practice. The fact that the Spirit is not just the power of the Father, or an emanation of the Son means that the church is required to pay attention to what the Third Person is doing. Accordingly, I can argue that an account of Spirit in leadership discourse needs to be given. He cannot be hidden behind God as Father or as Son, nor is He to be lost in between them as some form of glue or bond. Intra-Trinitarian distinction requires a full account to be apparent.

2) Creational and Eschatological Move of Spirit

i) The second aspect of Pannenberg's pneumatology that will redirect an understanding of human leadership is in regard to the overarching move of Spirit in and through all space-time. This is the comprehensive context for anything that is then derivatively to be said. Pannenberg writes that, '[w]e rightly define the Spirit's significance for the church's life and proclamation only if we pay constant heed to the relation to creation on the one side and to eschatology on the other.'[426] He writes that 'only' in this way 'can we avoid a

[424] Volume 2, 35.
[425] John Polkinghorne, 'The Hidden Spirit and the Cosmos,' in *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism,* ed. Michael Welker (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 2006), 178.
[426] Volume 3, 19.

defective constricting of pneumatology from a Christological angle that finds the Spirit's work only in the fellowship of believers'.[427] For despite different confessional understandings of the work of the Spirit, generally historically the focus in understanding the work of the Spirit has been 'the appropriation of salvation'.[428]

Pannenberg states that in order to give an accurate depiction of the ecclesiological function of the Spirit, 'the rule is that pneumatology must bring together the doctrine of creation and eschatology in the light of the anticipatory presence of the eschatological future in the life of the church'.[429] So critically, the context for thinking about the Spirit's activity is creation and generation of life, ***and*** the perfecting and consummation of that life in the Kingdom. The Spirit is active in both initiating, pioneering, generating as creative source of life, and in moving creation towards completion, perfecting, and healing that life in the Presence of the eschaton – that which is already future in the life of the fellowship of believers.[430]

This avoids the common view that the Spirit is no more than a 'stop gap' for Jesus until he returns and opens up horizon and scope of the Spirit's activity and role.

ii) By properly linking the creative activity of the Spirit to (or with) the Spirit's eschatological function, '*a new pneumatological realism'* is possible, one that avoids treating and speaking of the Spirit docetically,[431] (a view which Pannenberg traces back to the view of Spirit as gift, and to the related lack of prominence given to the personality of the Spirit).[432]

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[427] Volume 3, 19.
[428] Volume 3, 3.
[429] Volume 3, 133.
[430] Volume 3, 2-4.
[431] Volume 3, 3.
[432] Volume 3, 2.

Such delineation configures the distinct energetic move of Spirit as being originating cause **and** perfecting end. The Spirit is the 'perfecting cause' of creation.[433] This phrase is coined by Colin Gunton yet he took issue with Pannenberg's description of Spirit, 'the inadequacy is to see the Spirit as the means of participation in God rather than the agent according to whose work the created order is, through the Son, directed to its destiny.'[434] However, I would want to side with Pannenberg for to make Spirit only 'agentic' in perfecting is to allow a Christological bias to weigh in. The Spirit is also our means, God being spirit, as Jesus himself makes clear 'that which having born of spirit is spirit'. 'Unless one is born of water and spirit he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God' (John 3.5,6).

Pannenberg describes the Spirit as 'eschatological gift' and his working in the community as 'eschatological event',[435] but he is careful not to separate the Spirit from the Son, 'the Logos and Spirit work together in creation in such a way that the Word of creation is the fashioning principle, while the Spirit is the source of the movement and life of creatures'.[436]

iii) The consequence of this for the doctrine of the church is that its relation to the kingdom has to form the context for the fellowship of believers now – thus from the first, doctrine must 'relate the concept of the church to the horizon of the future of the kingdom of God as the provisional representation of which it has its existence'.[437] The church is to function as an eschatological community and as an anticipatory sign of God's in-breaking rule.

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[433] Colin E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 223. Also, St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 53, 71. (De Spir. 16.38).
[434] Colin E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator*, 222.
[435] Volume 3, 7.
[436] Volume 3, 4.
[437] Volume 3, 20.

This means the 'ecclesia', its life, vision, operations, mission, and leadership, finds its ground in the eschatological future of God's kingdom as revealed already in Jesus by the Holy Spirit. 'The Spirit's specific work in the church always relates to Jesus and to the eschatological future of God's kingdom that has dawned already in him.'[438] The specific pneumatological ground of the church is one that relates the church to the horizon of its own future in God. The church is not defined by what it is but by the End to which it is being led by the Spirit.

iv) The significance for this thesis is that it is precisely *because* there is a creational-eschatological perfecting move or pull of Spirit that Scripture can speak of the Spirit 'leading into all truth' or instructs us to 'keep in step' with the Spirit. It is this which crucially offers the theological ground for identifying the Spirit as leading – in causing, creating, pioneering, and initiating *as well as* driving transformation towards the end. The Spirit leads what is, to what it is called to be.

Thus, because the Spirit is present at (what we might humanly call) 'beginning' and 'end', He can draw us from one to the other. This is why it is said that in Spirit we shall 'know' the end from the beginning. That is not only that the ends are necessarily distinct or that there is a difference, but that in the Holy Spirit, the end is *already* present, i.e., present from the beginning. From the start then, the end is secured. By conferring the Spirit as a lasting possession of believers, participation in the eternal life of God is possible in the present, and their resurrection from the dead is guaranteed since not even death can separate the believer from the creative pulling-into-life power of the Holy Spirit.

v) Therefore, and significantly for this project, I can argue, allowing Pannenberg to open up this aspect of the Spirit's activity, *that ecclesial leadership and the practice of leading*

[438] Volume 3, 20.

itself finds its own theological ground – its reason to be – *in the creational-eschatological move of Spirit*. Ecclesial leadership maps onto this Move.

This is quite different to the commonly held view that ecclesial leadership is rooted in a Christological paradigm *alone*. Pannenberg provides the theological warrant for the activity of leading to be shaped by a pneumatological program.

Further, if I am arguing that the notion of leading and leadership coheres with the teleological thrust of the Spirit's activity in the Body of Christ, and if it is the Spirit who leads into and to Truth because it is the Spirit who is already present to us as Future, then without Spirit, any notion of human ecclesial leadership *per se* is incongruent.

By being directed by this thrust-into-life of Spirit, the creativity-to-consummation move that Pannenberg draws out, I propose that ecclesial leadership discourse can gain the pneumatological assist that is currently lacking and find its unique Spirit-led shape within the Body of Christ.

vi) To make as has been traditionally true of the Christian West, the Spirit source only of grace or faith, as the one who imparts knowledge of salvation in the Son, and who brings about a sanctifying work in believers, is to minimize the scope of the soteriological nature of the Spirit's activity, and lose the wider leading edge of the Spirit's Move as perfecting cause, as just discussed.

vii) In addition, if I map the practice of leading onto the move of Spirit then a principle of 'movement' will be inherent within a pneumatological approach to leadership. Leadership that is Spirit-led will reflect the Spirit who as 'Spirit of God is the life-giving principle, to which all creatures owe life, movement and activity'.[439] As the Spirit breathes and imparts life, so also by implication there will be change, energy, and motion, the distinct

[439] Volume 2, 76.

particularizing move of the Spirit will be 'ahead' of us, causing shifts. Sarah Coakley too follows in this line of thought when she writes that the Spirit is 'the constant overflow of the life of God into creation'.[440]

Movement is inherent within God and therefore in the overflow of that divine life to us. The basic form of the Spirit's 'work is creative activity in the bringing forth of life and movement'.[441] He is the 'creative principle of movement as well as life'.[442] Only the dead or inert are perfectly still.

viii) Summing up, ecclesial leading finds its ground in the Move of Spirit, as well as its pattern in Christ. The role and purpose of ecclesial leadership *maps onto the energetic creational-eschatological move* of Spirit. However, because the leadership discourse has omitted the Spirit from the articulation of its *own* ecclesial function, the leadership discourse has failed to properly address the nature of its creational-eschatological or teleological purposes in the kingdom. The situated view that arises when leadership is placed within the broad arc of the Spirit's Move has been lost, which means leadership has come very often to mean and represent something different.

Since Pannenberg identifies the dynamic of Spirit as creational and eschatological and states that the Spirit is the 'power of the future',[443] I suggest that leaders at a very practical mundane level must have this perspective before them for those they lead. If the Spirit is the power of the future, then it is incumbent on the leader to know, and seek, and be led by *that* future.

Leadership that maps onto the move of Spirit in its practice, will be leadership that reflects and characterizes the activity of Spirit as life giving dynamic. Consequently, it will 'make

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[440] Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self,* 24.
[441] Volume 3, 7.
[442] Volume 2, 79.
[443] Volume 2. 101.

room' for the other, creating, and generating, and it will be leadership that drives for transformation, maturity, and completion. A strengthened pneumatology asks for a submission and humility to be returned to ecclesial practice, and maybe most important of all, that the Spirit is himself acknowledged as Leader.

3) Christological and Pneumatological Foundation

i) Having staked out the broad creational-eschatological Move of Spirit I now focus on the life of the Church. Pannenberg insists that the church is founded by both Spirit and Son and that in the Church's life, 'there must always be recollection of this foundation of the church'.[444] Pannenberg writes,

> [i]f Jesus Christ dwells in believers by the Spirit (cf. Rom.8.9f.), then he is precisely thereby the one Lord who in the unity of his body binds together his own into the church's fellowship. Only by the work of the Spirit, then, is Jesus Christ the church's foundation, for the work of the Spirit is simply to glorify the Son by teaching us to know the Father in the Son through whom we have access to him. The Christological constitution and the pneumatological constitution of the church do not exclude one another but belong together because the Spirit and the Son mutually indwell one another as trinitarian persons.[445]

So, 'we may not on this account overlook the special function and significance of the Spirit in the life of the church'.[446] Pannenberg states that '[t]he church is thus the creation of both the Spirit and the Son. It is the creation of the Spirit even as it is that of the risen Christ by the Word of the gospel'.[447] Had the gospel message remained external to its listeners and had not led to personal knowledge, or spontaneous involvement then the 'church would never have arisen and it could never have any ongoing life in institutional scaffolding'.[448] A one-sided Christological founding of the church is thus a distortion, one that misses its full reality.[449]

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[444] Volume 3, 19.
[445] Volume 3, 16.
[446] Volume 3, 17.
[447] Volume 3, 18.
[448] Volume 3, 18.
[449] Volume 3, 18.

Since Pannenberg argues that the Christological constitution and the pneumatological constitution of the church do not exclude one another because the Spirit and the Son mutually indwell one another, there must be 'an intrinsically unified view of the constituting of the church by Jesus Christ and the work of the Spirit, and consequently an *interpretation of the relation between church and Spirit* that cannot be treated as identical with any one NT concept because of a compulsion to erase the differences' (my italics).[450]

So, whereas others may also assert a Trinitarian perspective – Pannenberg does not allow that to then obscure and occlude (as so often happens) the unique and significant activity of the Spirit in the church. This is a significant reorienting perspective for the purposes of this thesis.

ii) The fact of a joint constitution means that there *is a relation* with the Spirit, as with the Son, and the fact of this specific founding relation with, in and by the Third Person of the Trinity calls for acknowledgement, and practical response in the Body of Christ. I am calling this relation, the Spirit-relation, and argue it needs to be acknowledged theologically, theoretically, and practically in ecclesial leadership discourse, such that any occlusion within discourse and in practice is remedied.

It is because the Church is pneumatically as well as Christologically constituted, there is promise of, and possibility for, participation in relation in Spirit. The Spirit-relation can be credited to the life of the body of believers. There is a material realization of fellowship in and by Spirit, such that when, for example, the liturgy mentions the 'fellowship of the Holy Spirit', this is not to be an empty idea.

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[450] Volume 3, 15.

Developments in the ecclesiology of the West call for criticism, 'particularly with reference to an overemphasis on official church structures derived directly from Jesus Christ'.[451]

iii) Pannenberg writes that the story of Pentecost in Acts 2.1 demonstrates that the Spirit is given 'to all the disciples in common and that therewith the Church had its beginning'.[452] He argues that the Lukan account of Pentecost is a theological statement of the '*relation* between the church and the Spirit', and that the accent is on the fact that in the experience of Spirit, a new and additional element had been added to the disciples' fellowship; namely that there was unleashed for the first time 'the dynamic of Christian missionary proclamation and therewith also the life of the church'.[453]

The Apostle Paul pointed to this communal aspect in his epistles for example, 1 Corinthians 6.11, 'but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God' where the 'you' is second person plural. Also in Titus 3.4-6, '[w]hen the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared he saved us … according to his mercy through the water of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour'.

iv) The Church can only be a fellowship of believers through participation of each individual in the one Spirit. So, by the Spirit each believer is lifted above particularity in order 'in Christ' to form with all other believers the fellowship of the church. He constitutes the church as he is present to believers, personally and communally, enabling and forging lasting communion. There is fellowship with Spirit, and in Spirit.

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[451] Volume 3, 18-19.
[452] Volume 3, 13.
[453] Volume 3, 15.

It is, therefore, I would suggest, a category error to 'name' the church outside of a Spirit-relation. To talk in terms that are outside this relation, or to operate as though the Spirit is an option, or internal denominational choice – something we opt for – does not reflect the constitution of the church.

Pannenberg argues that a right founding of the church – in Son and Spirit – allows for the doctrine of the church to be rightly related to other areas of doctrine, as for example the Kingdom of God as we have already seen, or for example to missiology where '[o]nly a reference to the eschatological future of the reign of God necessarily brings the missionary dimension into the concept of the church'.[454]

Since gifts and charisms of the church find their source in the constituting work of Son and Spirit, the derivative gift or charism of leadership is likewise sourced both Christologically *and* pneumatologically. Indeed, all ecclesial practice is built on this joint foundation and ought therefore to be likewise pneumatologically and Christologically resourced and shaped.

v) Lastly, Pannenberg's emphasis on a joint ecclesial constitution offers the theological credence necessary to question legitimately the ecclesial structures and assumed institutional patterns that are only Christological, or are biased towards a Christological focus or pattern, leadership being one of them. The pneumatological constitution of the church means there is a key Spirit-relation that the church ought to acknowledge in its functions. Yet from the leadership texts considered in the content analysis above, a pneumatic founding of the church fails to be properly acknowledged.

[454] Volume 3, 46.

4) Participation

i) Having established above that there is a founding relation between ecclesia and Spirit, a notion of participation can now be logically considered. Jesus introduces the Spirit to his disciples as being one with whom to relate – 'I will send him to you' (John 16.7). This relation, is mediated through the request of the Son in which Jesus makes known the Trinity and intimate connection – 'I will ask the Father and another encourager he will give you … with you he remains and in you he will be', (John 14:15-17).[455] It is the Messiah who, as Spirit-bearer himself, introduces and then mediates what this thesis is calling the 'Spirit-relation' – the enlivening capacity to participate in the Divine who is spirit, in and by the Holy Spirit.

The relationship with the Spirit demarcates those who are adopted as children of God and reminds that the Move of Spirit is prior: for as many as by the Spirit of God *are* led these *are* sons of God (Romans 8.14-16). Being led by Spirit is an indicator of being in current relation.

ii) The model of 'inspirited matter' is in fact the model for all of creation, extended and perfected in the case of the Son of Man to reveal the fullness of in-spiration in the creaturely life, one that is to be available to all. To follow Jesus and be led by Spirit is to do as Jesus did. There is a recapitulation of the Spirit-relation enjoyed by Jesus in the life of every believer, and as the Spirit unifies them in fellowship as the Body of Christ.

Pannenberg writes, '[t]o participate in sonship is the destiny of believers and the source of their freedom'.[456] The freedom of believers is an expression of the fact that the Spirit of God is given for where the Spirit is, there is freedom, a 'freedom' that offers the believer's

[455] The New Greek English Interlinear New Testament (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1990), 381.
[456] Volume 2, 454.

'potential' – the source of life, activity, and participation in the eternal kingdom of the Christ. It is the Spirit who lifts us above our finitude.

iii) The soteriological work of the Spirit, undertaken in the life of every believer, is an implementation of the paradigmatic life of Christ; for example, by baptism believers are inserted into the death of Jesus and this takes place through the Spirit, 'for by one and the same Spirit we are all baptized into one body' (I Cor. 12:13). 'By the power of the Spirit … Christians are incorporated into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 6:17), which itself, by the resurrection, is a pneumatic reality.'[457]

iv) Further, the mediating of the gift of Spirit by the Son, and its 'eschatological content'[458] as participation in the death-defeating life of God, are linked. 'The distinctive nature of the eschatological gift of the Spirit consists, then, of the fact that by the conferring of the Spirit as a lasting possession of believers, participation in the eternal life of God is made possible.'[459] The Spirit is our means into this participation, he is both foretaste, and guarantee of the infinite life to come.

By grounding the participation in, and the partaking of, God in the model and form of Jesus of Nazareth (who lived, died, was buried, and who rose again), rather than promising participation *after* death, or allowing partaking of God only in a disembodied mystical way, means that there is in time, in the flesh within our lived humanity, a *pneumatic reality* to be engaged with and experienced – in the manner of Jesus of Nazareth to whom the Spirit was 'inseparably present'.[460]

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[457] Volume 2, 451.
[458] Volume 3, 12.
[459] Volume 3, 12 and 622-626.
[460] St Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 73.

v) The notion of participation is used a great deal by Pannenberg, and throughout the text there is an underlying presumption towards participation.

From early on, the notion of participation was present in relation to the Spirit; for example, Didymus wrote 'that the substance of the Holy Spirit can be participated in (*capabilis*), and because of this, that he is uncreated'.[461] Jerome adds an explanatory note in his Latin translation, that Didymus calls a substance capable of being participated in when it is participated in and bestows on them a share in itself: the Holy Spirit 'indwells the soul and the mind as the producer of speech, wisdom, and knowledge',[462] 'and can be participated in by mind and soul'.[463] The argument is that when the Spirit bestows a share of Himself, he is capable of being participated in by humanity who then share in, while not becoming, that same Spirit. The lines of relation move but the lines of being, do not.

If we speak of participation in the Spirit, (even if the word divinization is used), that conforming to the Son by the Spirit in relationship with the Father is not capable of making the human being divine, or even 'a bit' divine, since divinity cannot be understood as being capable of instantiation by degrees. Participation draws us into the life of God, but the line between Creator and created is not rubbed out.

vi) Given the above, I would argue that it is incumbent upon ecclesial leaders to lead into participation in and towards a pneumatic reality, to coin Pannenberg's phrase. The Spirit-relation operates in the physical realm. This relation is not mythical, nor mystical. Rather it is based on the historical model of the Son who introduced an incarnational pattern in actual time. For example, when it is proclaimed 'the Spirit is upon me to preach the good news,' in Isaiah 61 this is fulfilled in Luke 4.21. Similarly, in Isaiah 11:1-2, where the

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[461] Didymus, *Spiritus*, paragraph 54 in *Works on the Spirit: Athanasius the Great and Didymus the Blind* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 160.
[462] Didymus, *Spiritus,* para. 10, 146.
[463] Ibid., para. 61, 161.

Messiah is the one on whom the Spirit rests. The Holy Spirit fully co-inhered in the life of the Son on earth, conceiving, enabling, inspiring, empowering, and raising the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

This relationality between the Son and Spirit – a Christological-pneumatological reality – has arguably been critically overlooked and hidden within the dominant Logos-Christological perspective that has driven Western ecclesial leadership.

vii) How then do we participate in the divine Spirit-relation? 'To be spiritual is to be in relationship with God who is spirit'.[464] God is the One who relates to us in Spirit – and this relies simply on the already present cognitive capacities for relatedness within the person. Spirituality is thus contingent upon social being as prior to the foundation of religious instincts and experiences.[465] It is the cognitive capacity for personal relatedness of the human that embodies spirituality. The cognitive capacity to relate is played out in relation to God who chooses to reveal Himself to his creatures.[466]

Accordingly, a trichotomist (or dualist) view of man is unhelpful. The three commonly used terms – body, soul, and spirit – are used as a shorthand way in this project to denote aspects of being as opposed to substantive alternative functioning parts of the human. The entirety of the person, including the physical sensation of the body as well as the cognitive and emotional functions, the memory, the subconscious, conscious, and the conscience, are a unified whole. This anthropological theological view is termed a physicalist understanding of the person. It seeks to disrupt and replace the dualist or trichotomist views that have unhelpfully invaded so much theological thinking.

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[464] Warren S. Brown, 'Reconciling Scientific and Biblical Portraits of Human Nature', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 226.
[465] Ray S. Anderson, 'On Being Human: The Spiritual Saga of a Creaturely Soul', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature,* 181.
[466] Brown, 'Reconciling Scientific', 221.

The aspect of being we refer to as soul or spirit is that part of being that arises only in 'relatedness' to another, or to God who is spirit. We come to know our self and become self-aware only in relation to that other. Soul-ness (thinking, feeling, knowing) arises out of our higher order dynamic cognitive capacities to relate. It is not a free-floating bit of the self somewhere on the inside, lodged in either the head or the heart. And so, the primal evolutionary abilities needed to relate to a birth mother are the same abilities that will be developed to relate to the boss or teacher, and the same cognitive equipment is developed to relate to God.

Furthermore, the cognitive awareness and higher order capacities that open the potential for response to God in spirit are working through the whole of being, in and through the whole personality, which includes the body since the brain is part of the body. The ability to relate to God therefore, or a recognition of the Divine takes place within the body – not some part of the 'mind' or 'heart' that is separate, removed, or unfeeling. This sounds ridiculously simple, and yet it is hard to come to as a Western Christian believer. But this view reinvests the experience of body with value. The spiritual life is a physical life.[467]

This is a necessary assertion to make to sidestep criticisms around forms of 'spirituality', separatism, and the tendency towards Gnosticism. This has led to flawed thinking, namely that, cognitive, rational processing, and emotional response, pure physical sensation, and the spiritual, are all representative of differentiated functionality within the person. Now neuroscience and technological advances are showing that such a separatist view has to be reconsidered.

Accordingly, we have to find a much more integrated anthropological understanding that sees body, mind, soul, and spirit as integrally and contingently linked. In fact, the preferred theological-anthropological view, which is in line with modern scientific thinking,

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[467] 1 Corinthians 6.19.

is that the person is in fact a unified whole, or as Pannenberg describes it prophetically towards the end of the 20th century, 'a psychosomatic unity'.[468] Body and soul, will and emotions are a unit, a unified integrated whole. The being of a human is a unity, and a particularized unity is a person. Thus, the specific 'who' we are as a person finds expression in the body such that the corporeal is essential to the self or personality. To seek to separate out, or to try and prize open the nature of being, is a false move and not one Christian doctrine should uphold.

Having said that, it is acknowledged that in the Christian scriptures, there are a variety of terms that are used to describe the different aspects of this person. In the New Testament, the terms soul and spirit are used separately, or interchangeably. For example, in the Magnificat there seems to be a parallelism of term being employed (Luke1.47), whereas Paul uses both terms soul and spirit as being separate aspects of the person.[469] In the gospels, Jesus teaches not to be afraid of those who can kill the body but not the soul, the '*psuche*'.[470] It is this soul, the *psuche*, that Platonism places on the upper side of the metaphysical scale between spirit and matter. But it is this soul, this upper-side of being, that became 'ambiguously fateful for Christian thinking'.[471]

A solution adopted here is to treat the word soul as denoting 'the person' as a whole. The soul is simply the person in all his or her liveliness, in his or her relatedness and communal uniqueness, and taken to the logical end that will include the body. The body is that which makes that soul present to others, the body is the part of the personality that connects the person to the world.

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[468] Volume 2, 182.
[469] For example, 1 Corinthians 2.11; Romans 8.16.
[470] Matthew 10.28.
[471] Jenson, *Systematic Theology, Volume 2*, 109.

So then, if it is in the whole person, including the body, in which the Spirit-relation is exercised, the way we talk about, and of, the Spirit experience has to change. The discourse has to acknowledge that if the Spirit-relation is operating within the whole – if there is 'inspirited matter' – then that 'whole' interacts with Spirit. Spirit 'talk' is not about the ethereal, the abstract, or theoretical, but is rooted in the actuality of the body in practice – its feelings, sensations, emotions, and senses.

This view is not without precedent, for example returning to Didymus once again, we find reference to the affects of the Holy Spirit's activity. This is just one example where Didymus is clearly referring to an affectual response.

> Spiritual and intellectual wisdom … gives its own presence to those who receive it through the activity of the Holy Spirit. God, the bestower of goods, in the power of the Spirit grants the hope he promised to those who have the Spirit. With joy and peace he fills those who possess undisturbed, peaceful thoughts, and have minds joyful and calmed from every storm of the passions.[472]

Arguably therefore, it is a theological mis-step to exclude the emotions, and materiality of the body from the realm and influence of Spirit. There is a legitimate experiential realm, which is why believers can talk of physical healing, a 'gut' burden, or 'feeling' of peace, or 'sense' of presence, without being dismissed as irrational, or mystical. Didymus would argue that these graces or gifts variously consist of the 'goods' of the Spirit, describing Him as the 'substance of the goods of God', and the 'bestower of divine knowledge and all goods'.[473] Believers are able to legitimately ground their faith in the actual experience of the Spirit-relation in this bodily life, and in so doing they imitate and recapitulate the move of the Spirit in the life of the Son.

viii) Lastly, the notion of 'participation' found in the Scriptures is logical in practice – or practically realizable – when the Trinity is conceived as 'three realizations of mutual action'. It is logically possible to participate in an another's activity, in what another is

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[472] Didymus, *Spiritus*, paragraph 54, 157.
[473] Didymus, *Spiritus*, paragraph 54, 146, 147, 154.

doing, as opposed to trying to conceive participating in another person, or in the substance of a person. Another iteration of this is to conceive the Trinity as 'conversation'. Participation is joining in the ongoing discourse already taking place in the Godhead. As Jenson puts it, '[t]here is speaking and hearing in God, and the knowledge of God is participation in this discourse'.[474]

Further, such participatory activity is ongoing, becoming a process. And it is the fact of *process* that in turn informs as to the importance of practice and practising in Spirit. This is the way the body learns – there is a fact of practising inherent and intrinsic to the concept of becoming. Being transformed into the likeness of the Son is the outcome of a process of being increasingly incorporated into the life of the Son by the Spirit – and this takes time.

So, we do not wait for the Spirit to work in us – we willingly participate in what He is already doing; that is, one *practices participating in the Spirit-relation.* Which means then, (if one adopts the 'conversation' idea), learning to listen and engage in conversation with the Spirit, learning to be listen and be led. This is not perceived immediately; it must be learned. So the writer to the Hebrews writes, 'solid food is for the mature who through practice have their faculties of perception trained to distinguish good and evil.'[475]

Conclusion

In this chapter I have listened to Wolfhart Pannenberg. I would like to suggest that the aspects of pneumatology I have encountered here need to be reflected in leadership discourse if leadership discourse is to offer a full account of the Spirit.

[474] Jenson, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 229.
[475] Hebrews 5.14.

I have drawn out four themes from Pannenberg which can direct a renewed understanding of the pneumatological foundation of ecclesial leadership and allow for a clearer delineation of the Spirit as Leader in the church in practice. The notion of distinction allows the Spirit as Person to be outlined as against Father and Son. It is the fact of distinction that demands identity and activity be attributed to the Spirit in leadership discourse.

The creational-eschatological move of the Spirit speaks of the Spirit's leading. Ecclesial leadership maps onto His ongoing teleological pull. Importantly, the articulation by Pannenberg, allows me to argue that it is in this move of Spirit that ecclesial leadership finds its own pneumatological ground.

The fact of the joint Son-Spirit constitution of the Church founds the operation and mission of the church in the persons of the Son *and* Spirit which means the Spirit is in relation with, and to, the church, and that relation demands a response. Accordingly, since leadership is both Christologically and pneumatically related, I want to suggest that the Spirit-relation needs to be foregrounded, acknowledged, and developed in the exercise of ecclesial leadership as gifted by Spirit to the Body of Christ.

It is only with this strengthened pneumatological perspective that the promise of participation in God can become a practical reality – it points us to actual experience, and to a renovating process in and with Spirit. Transformation comes through time and repeated action. Participation in the flow of Spirit's life requires practise.

There are good reasons then, to argue that ecclesial leadership will be rightly located theologically when it is mapped onto the Activity and prevenient Move of Spirit in and through the church – that which is constituted by both Son and Spirit in the will of the Father. The pneumatological perspective that Pannenberg offers suggests that these aspects of pneumatology need to find an imprint in ecclesial leadership discourse so that what Sarah Coakley calls the problematic 'third' in God' can become 'the 'first' in human

encounter. ‘This is not the Spirit jostling with the Son, nor of the Spirit usurping the Father, but rather allowing the source to become the goal as much as ecstatic origin, it is this ‘end’ that has been known from the beginning. And, if, finally, we make this mind-shift, then everything changes.[476]

[476] Coakley, *God Sexuality and the Self*, 334.

Chapter 7

A Conversation with Practical Theology

Introduction

In chapter 6, I started an inter-disciplinary conversation by engaging with Pannenberg and I found theological warrant for ecclesial leadership to be mapped on to the move of Spirit as the One who is leading into our perfected future. This conversation can now go in any number of directions, so one might ask, why in this next chapter do I turn to practice?

The reason is because, as both Simeon Zahl and Eugene Rogers have indicated, the abstraction and even silence found in discourse around the person of the Spirit is linked to a disassociation of the Spirit from sensibility. So, if I want to find a way to give an account of the Spirit as Leader in leadership discourse, as the One who is able to lead us in practically recognizable ways, then the link between Spirit and the Spirit's work in bodies needs to be strengthened.

So in this chapter, I first consider the work of Rogers and Zahl. I then turn to the concept of spiritual practice which has been an ideational formation through which believers have historically engaged with the Spirit.

Presence and Experience

First, I want to consider the related ideas of presence and experience as I explore why there is necessarily a turn to practice and materiality when we speak of the Spirit.

Theologian Eugene Rogers who observes a failure of 'Spirit-talk' in Christian thought and practice as mentioned in chapter 2, offers a reason why there might be silence around the person of the Spirit. He suggests that in early Greek/Syriac texts the Spirit was always tied to holy bodies, places, and things, whereas in Western theology the Spirit has a lack of substance. The Spirit lost essential connection to materiality, and so it is in the Spirit's

relation to created things that a problem needs to be solved.[477] This is a key idea for this thesis.

Rogers addresses 'the continual lip service and equally continual lack of substance accorded the Holy Spirit in modern Christian thought. Committed to talk of the Spirit by multiple traditions, modern Christian thought has less and less to say about it. Spirit-talk in the last hundred years has been ever more evoked, and ever more substance-free'. The Spirit who was poured out on all flesh 'has floated free of bodies altogether'.[478]

Rogers' argument is that the Spirit is a Person with an affinity for the material who 'characteristically befriends the body'.[479] 'To think about the Spirit it will not do to think 'spiritually': to think about the Spirit you have to think materially.'[480] Therefore, assuming the leading of the Spirit 'behind the scenes' in theory or ethereally (so to speak) or as atmosphere,[481] or to presume guidance or steering come what may, is not enough. The stakes are too high – I need to know materially, bodily, and practically in my work as leader the way that I should go.

He goes on to argue that 'the clue to a recovery of a robust Spirit-talk runs through and not around the social sciences'.[482] He argues that the Spirit led and accompanied the Son in 'paradigms of the physical'. These are plotted as narratives that enact intimacy physically so that the matter of the world became the element of sacrament. Thus, there needs to be a social and anthropological angle that is accommodated rather than ignored – or dismissed – as being overly enthusiastic or just subjective.

Having said that, Rogers identifies the 20th century problem that in the economy of God the undivided work of the Trinity seems to get over-appropriated to the Son at the Spirit's

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[477] Rogers, *After the Spirit,* 69.
[478] Ibid., 1.
[479] Ibid., 60.
[480] Ibid., 56.
[481] David Ford, *The Holy Spirit in the World Today,* ed., Jane Williams (London: Alpha International, 2011), 44-45.
[482] Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 55.

expense. Yet, it is because the Spirit chooses to rest upon the Son, (such that the Son is bearer of the Spirit as Gift from the Father), that any talk about what we do in the body cannot be separated out from a Spirit view. Pneumatology and anthropology are intrinsic in Christ. The pattern is incarnation.

Thus, the Spirit inhabits the body of the believer and thus that believer's life. Therefore, what is done in the body as a believer matters because the body and its behaviours are the architecture for indwelling Spirit. 'The work of the Spirit is to be sought in the practices of the community, not because the Spirit is *reduced* to matter or community, but because the Spirit could not be received by human beings, for whom nothing can be in the mind not first in the senses, except through matter.'[483]

There is therefore, when thinking about the Spirit, a quick turn to thinking about bodies, and what we do in those bodies in practice, precisely because of the in-habitation of Spirit. The 'turn to practice' occurs ecclesiologically, and in ecclesial tradition, *because* of this theological link; the inner link given by and in Spirit. As the Spirit rests upon, anoints, and inhabits a life in the body – *the behaviour of that body is immediately brought into view*. This intellectual move is acknowledged by Rogers when he quotes Aquinas, 'the Holy Spirit inhabiting the mind not only teaches what ought to be done by illuminating the intellect about things to be done, but also inclines the affect toward acting rightly'.[484]

On the other hand, this 'turn to bodies' or 'turn to practice' can allow for an understanding that, irrespective of one's own relationship with the Spirit or one's inner world, the Spirit will effect change, and 'incline the affect towards acting rightly'. So, Simeon Zahl argues that the high value given to 'spiritual practices' in parts of the church is overly optimistic,

[483] Ibid., 216.
[484] Ibid., 220.

‘[m]uch of the power of the appeal to ‘practice’ in theology is its perceived ability to mediate between discourse and affective change’.[485] He thinks this is overstated.

Zahl argues the reformers sided with Luther and derived a view that was suspicious of an unmediated experience of the Spirit, leading to long-standing Protestant anxieties about subjective experience.[486] The Protestant error was to dismiss ‘enthusiastic’ pneumatologies. This then is another reason why there is an absence of Spirit-talk in practice, and why there is abstraction in the language rather than expression of a practically recognizable experience of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians and of Christian communities. Zahl argues that there needs to be a corrective,[487]

> the chief contemporary theological target in this book is a certain kind of *complacency with theological abstraction* that is often apparent in discussion of the Spirit, and indeed in doctrinal and dogmatic statements more generally. That is, my emphasis on the category of ‘practical recognizability’ is intended to help correct or recalibrate a theological tendency to make general, often metaphysical, claims about the work of the Spirit in relation to human beings that stop short of specifying the specific practical implications of those claims and thus seal themselves off from the actual work of the Spirit in bodies and in the world.[488]

Zahl writes that his critique of the language used by theologians is to draw attention to theological speech that sounds theologically correct, but which stops short of meaningful connection to the material.[489] So, for example, in the work of T.F Torrance. Torrance, having written that the activity of the Holy Spirit actualizes our union and communion with God through Christ in the actual structure of our human, personal, and social being, ‘Torrance then stops short of specifying what such changes to the “actual structure of our human, personal and social being” might look like *in practice.* Taken in isolation, language about the “actualising” of changes in the “structure” of our “being” is so vague that it could signify virtually anything…’.[490]

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[485] Zahl, *The Holy Spirit and Christian Experience,* 210.
[486] Ibid., 233.
[487] Ibid., 69-70.
[488] Ibid., 70.
[489] Ibid., 73.
[490] Ibid., 71.

Likewise, in the documents assessed in the content analysis, I have recognized there is a 'stopping short' of words in relation to the activity and experience of the Holy Spirit in leadership discourse: there is failure to express what being led by the Spirit is *in practice* – what it looks or feels like. There is a silence around the leading activity of the Spirit. But according to Zahl's line of argument, unless one describes the leading of the Spirit in the leadership discourse in experiential terms, in practically recognizable ways, assuming or occasionally referencing that it is the Spirit who leads the church is not enough. It is so vague that it can mean virtually anything which actually means nothing. No wonder then that the leadership discourse falls back to a Christological paradigm of 'following Jesus' – which offers a shape and a 'body' to look at.

Zahl's approach means that,

> any divine activity that scriptural witness associates with the Holy Spirit as well as with impact on creatures should be expected to have concrete embodied effects of some kind. … Critically, it means that accounts of the work of the Spirit in … the mission of the church that are unable to give an account of such work at the level of affect and experience are likely to be deficient.[491]

Thus, according to Zahl, the work and activity of the Spirit in leading the Church, and in leading the leaders, should be practically recognizable, and an account of the Lord leading the Church that cannot give an account at the level of affect and experience is likely, according to Zahl, to be deficient. Further, and significantly for this project, Zahl argues that theologians should seek to give a plausible account of these affective and experiential dimensions of the work of the Spirit.[492]

So then, to sum up this section, there is an inner link between Spirit and bodies which has to be acknowledged. I cannot talk about the Spirit without a turn to practice (unless I want to fall into abstraction) because the body is the site of the Spirit's operation. What Rogers and Zahl are saying is that Spirit-talk leads us to body-talk. We should expect to

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[491] Ibid., 233.
[492] Ibid., 234.

recognize the affective work of the Holy Spirit, and be able to talk about physical effect, and thus as leaders be able to engage directly and explicitly with what the logic of the Spirit as Leader looks like when worked out in practice.

Turning to Practice

There is then, theologically, an essential turn to practice when we speak of Spirit. What we think and say about God is inextricably linked to the way we live: belief and faith found a way of life. This pattern originates in the testimony offered in the Scriptures. From Moses instructing the people of Israel to 'keep and do all I have instructed you so that you may go in and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you',[493] to Jesus teaching that 'those who love me will keep my commandments', the story of Scripture testifies that belief and action, faith and practice are inseparable.[494] This two-sided coin of confession-practice is the currency of the practical theologian.

A simple practice is usually denoted as an exercise, physical or mental, or the repetition of action through which there is an accrual of skill. In addition, the notion of practice speaks to an understanding of 'becoming': bodily habitual practice brings improvement and transformation of character in the human life. It is this idea of 'becoming', through the ongoing practising of certain bodily habits and communal rituals, that has been passed down in the Western ecclesial traditions as being the way to engage with the Spirit. Practice as an ecclesial form then became the theoretical site and intellectual repository for the church's pneumatological experience.

A Christian theological perspective is that because of the Spirit's inhabiting of the believer, transformation towards virtue in the life of that believer will come about in and through repetition of certain religious, ecclesial, or ascetic practices. Though as already noted,

[493] Examples: Deuteronomy 6.3, 4; 6.16-18; Chapter 30.16.
[494] John 14.15 and chapter 15. 1John 5.3, 'the love of God is this that we obey his commands'.

Zahl believes that there is over optimism in the efficacy of such practices for bringing about inner transformation and change. Behavioural modification does not necessarily bring deliverance. Something more is needed.

Dorothy Bass defines a 'practice' in general use as a 'dense cluster of ideas and activities that are related to a specific social goal and shared by a social group over time',[495] while she defines specifically Christian practices as 'patterns of cooperative human activity in and through which life together takes shape over time in response to and in the light of God as known in Jesus Christ'.[496] In a previous work, but quoted in her later book, Bass and Dykstra define practices as those 'things Christian people do together over time to address fundamental human needs in response to and in the light of God's active presence for the life of the world'.[497] This latter definition adds to the nature of practice the element of 'response to human need', which is particularly useful when thinking about leadership. The activity of ecclesial leadership sits comfortably within these definitions offered by Bass and Dykstra and so would sit within the broader definition of religious practice.

Unfortunately, though, the discourse around practice has been complicated by more general use of particular words within the lexical field. So for example, the words 'religious practice' are generally understood in terms of the public performance of the sacraments, while the phrase 'ecclesial practice' tends to refer to those activities that are corporate boundary markers such as the way people receive the bread and the wine, the way a church prays, or how it baptizes. The act of engaging in a particular ecclesial practice creates a denominational boundary as well as marking out theological difference.

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[495] Dorothy C. Bass, *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life,* eds. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C Bass (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 2002), 3.
[496] Bass, *Practicing Theology,* 3.
[497] Ibid.*,* 18.

The use of the word ‘discipline’ suggests an aimed, direct rigorous training approach with the intimation of punishment to achieve spiritual freedom from the distractions and temptations of the flesh.

Within the Anglican Communion, the notion of religious or devotional practice is framed around a liturgical event. In Anglicanism, the use of ‘common words’ has come to define not only what Anglicans believe but, importantly for this work, how Anglicans experience what is believed. The liturgical setting which organizes communal worship, the use of building space, and the human interactions has, by default, set limits on the experience of devotional practice. Thus, for example, the practice of liturgy on the whole has been shaped by the need to hear a read script. The script is priest led, word orientated and canonically prescribed. The one who ‘leads’ the service reads that pre-determined script from the pre-scribed text.

Within a particular heavily prescribed liturgical tradition, whether it be an allegiance to the 1662 Rite or Common Worship, alternative expressions of devotion, or other expressions of the so called ‘spirit’ life such as contemplation or meditation, prayer ministry, healing, or even opportunities for testimony and shared story, struggle to find place within the set format. Private or more extemporary, unbounded expressions of the Spirit are factored in elsewhere. The historical shaping and controlling of public Christian practice by the church meant that it was outside of the controlling ecclesial canopy that different characters or expressions of spiritual culture emerged.

Spiritual Practice

The language of ‘spiritual practice’ developed alongside (or outside) the established ecclesial expression of worship, and became associated with notions of the private, the personal, with ideas of retreat, monasticism, and seclusion. Further, spirituality was denoted or identified by the character of the community or place, (for example, the

Northumbrian community or Iona community), or by its originator (for example, Saint Francis of Assisi).

Further, engaging with spiritual practice became associated with the embedded (guilt-ridden) pattern of belief in the Western psyche that successful spiritual pursuit requires a detachment, a transcending of the bodily, and a singular focus on solitude, silence, and prayer.

Thus, those seeking God would escape to the desert, or discipline the body in efforts of self-denial, and wherever possible work to overcome bodily needs and essential wants. In this, early Christian thought was directly affected and influenced by the Greek philosophical inheritance. This is well documented and well outside my remit, but suffice it to say, ecclesial leadership in the 21st century church now carries the weight and the burden of this ecclesial history. A modern Christian perception of faith is still likely to include the notion that seeking God happens outside of the normal routine, house, work, even regular 'church attendance', and inside the retreat, monastery, or sanctuary of the religious elite.

In addition, in relation to the English established church, the exercise of spiritual wisdom or authority, or a manifestation of spiritual gift arising from spiritual connection to God through spiritual practising, was very often treated with suspicion by those in positions of institutional authority. Grace Jantzen in writing about this observes that those exercising this kind of spiritual awareness and authority were often women who were then perceived to be subversive and a threat to the establishment. As a result, these women were marginalized or supressed, cast as mystics, and so treated as 'other' or alternative to the mainstream.[498] Jantzen argues that accordingly within the established church what has

[498] Grace M. Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2 and 11.

been defined as mystical is a social construction reflecting the gendered struggle for power and authority.[499]

Jantzen writes that 'a connection can be traced between the domestication of women and the domestication of religion such that claims to religious experience became permissible for women in direct proportion to the decline of overt public importance of religion'.[500] Spirituality was in essence privatized and feminized. This allowed spirituality to flourish in the private sphere but kept God out of the public discourse. Mysticism was allowed to flourish, but only as a secret inner life that did not threaten. Those who nurtured the inner life could 'be counted on to prop up the status quo'.[501]

A Reconfiguration of Spiritual Practice

This generally unsatisfactory inherited and gendered dichotomy has been acknowledged within practical theology. Bonnie Miller-McLemore has sought to cross the spiritual practical divide and better blend the search for the 'spiritual' in the quotidian of religious and daily life, not only to bridge the theoretical ecclesial-spiritual divide, but also to break down the sacred-secular divide. This requires overcoming the inherited perceptions that separate out spiritual practices from the public experience of church and formal religious life, and that segment a person's body from their soul and spirit.

Bonnie Miller-McLemore is an American female practical theologian. She has edited the Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology, and volumes on practical theology as a discipline.[502] She thus speaks as one who is laying out the field of practical theology from within the Academy. What is interesting in her work 'In the Midst of Chaos', is that she writes from a personal viewpoint, as a mother, and as wife trying to manage her homelife.

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[499] Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, 12.
[500] Ibid., xv.
[501] Ibid., 346.
[502] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice: Discovering a Discipline* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012).

In this she challenges directly the received ecclesial, and historical, characterization of spiritual practice from the perspective of her own frustration.

She seeks to extend the traditional definition of spiritual practice by asking whether one 'can pursue a "spiritual" life in the midst of such regular, nitty-gritty, on-the-alert demands' of children?[503] The traditional religious answer to that question, as already intimated above, would be no. However, Miller-McLemore is keen to challenge that, and make the case for 'sanctifying the ordinary'.[504] 'Limiting spirituality to the "inner" life, and restricting theology to the life of the mind ends up excluding a huge portion of life from both faith and theology.'[505] So she takes on the practical theological task of blending the religious practices of devotion into her daily personal and family life, and specifically in her case, into the tasks of childcare.

Miller-McLemore works against the 'received view' that the spiritual athletes are those with a disciplined life of prayer, involving long retreats, and periods of quiet. The received wisdom is that disengagement and detachment from all matters worldly is what allows for experience of God, and those fathering the church do little to disavow this view, emphasizing solitude, silence, and prayer as the three means to love God.[506]

However, detaching spiritual devotion results in excluding a large part of life as it is lived by most people, and this means for a mother of little children most of life is excluded. But Miller-McLemore asks, why should disengagement from society and the emotional and sensual be our path to spiritual excellence and self-overcoming?

Janet Soskice, also writing about the undoing of traditional imagery within the church, recognizes that the phrase the 'spiritual life' conjures up something 'still and luminous,

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[503] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *In the Midst of Chaos: Caring for Children as Spiritual Practice* (San Francisco, CA.: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 2.
[504] Ibid., 23-34.
[505] Ibid., 7.
[506] Ibid., 8.

turned to the future and far from our daily lives, where, spiritually, 'we just "bump along"'.[507] She asks whether, given the attendant imaginary – 'dark churches and dignified liturgies'[508] – the busy new mother is a Christian 'on idle' while the serious business of attending to God is done elsewhere?[509] Soskice notes that the trivial tasks required in 'attending to a squalling baby are seen as honourable duties, consonant with God's purposes, rather than spiritually edifying in themselves'[510] but she argues, that 'of life's experiences, none is so "unselving" as attending to a baby'.[511]

Experiencing first-hand these tensions, Miller-McLemore offers a solution to the inherited state of affairs, and to this historical view of spirituality. She argues for an approach that redraws the semiotic boundaries placed around certain activities, and in fact re-names various activities of parenting and the care of children as 'spiritual practice'. Thus, for example, the activity of play or reading a book to a child at bedtime is thereby re-expressed to be spiritual practising. In so doing, she is making the case that there needs to be *a substantive re-categorization of the notion of spiritual practice within the discourse,* which she argues will lead to a change in praxis. This takes us onto new semiotic ground linguistically, but it is an approach that accords with the view that engagement at the level of the discourse is the necessary first step for change at other levels of engagement.

Re-defining the category of spiritual practice by breaking open the linguistic boundaries of the concept to many actions not previously defined as spiritual practice, allows for a fresh perspective to be acquired. Both the language category and the acts themselves obtain an ideological reworking – specifically around the notion of the spiritual. Miller-McLemore

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[507] Janet M. Soskice, *The Kindness of God: Metaphor, Gender and Religious Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 12.
[508] Ibid., 12.
[509] Ibid., 14.
[510] Ibid., 22.
[511] Ibid., 25.

sets the previously narrowly construed view aside and advocates that the notion of 'spiritual' connect into all forms of life-and-living-and-practising, which then can include, for the purposes of this thesis, the activity of leadership.

Miller-McLemore names the activities of childcare as spiritual practices and thus challenges the traditional conceptions of spiritual practice and the assumed hierarchy of the 'inner over the outer' life and asks how to live faithfully amid noise and distraction'.[512]. She argues that 'life's busyness is not an utterly secular wasteland. Faith and meaning can emerge *in* the mess'.[513] But then she goes on to ask, what does this look like in application? How does one 'learn' God, or 'stay' with him in the chaos and distraction of the everyday so that the unselving of childcare can become practically recognizable as spiritual practise?

To try and answer this, Miller-McLemore explores the metaphor of 'living on a slack line', that is figuratively balancing on a rope held in tension between two poles, like balancing on a tight-rope.[514] In the analogy Miller-McLemore uses, the two poles or points of tension are solitude and chaos. The idea is that one is meant to balance on the line between these two poles in everyday life, staying with or in both at the same time achieving some sort of balance. However, in practice this is notoriously difficult, with one usually 'falling off'. So, the analogical discussion quickly becomes about managing both end points of solitude and chaos separately, rather than at the same time.

Actually 'living on the slack line' between solitude and chaos and combining the experience of both inner solitude and chaos simultaneously is so tricky, that commonly and in the traditional rendering of spiritual practice, the response is to schedule these two points of tension into the diary separately. It is called a 'balanced' life if they are scheduled in equally. This approach allows people to find a way to manage the

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[512] Miller-McLemore, *In the Midst of Chaos*, 11.
[513] Ibid., 17.
[514] Ibid., 12-13.

differences between inner and outer life, solitude and chaos, quiet and busyness, as one moves from one to the other in the diary. However, Miller-McLemore argues that this does not actually satisfactorily blend the two – true blending of the spiritual into the ordinary has not been achieved.

Other aids or traditional disciplines Miller-McLemore identifies, such as practising God's presence, or the breathing prayer, or tarrying in worship, she argues might be helpful but still they require an 'interior focus of mind'[515] that one rarely finds in home life with children. She writes that these practices still require 'a kind of stepping outside of one's routine, or for bringing something that is outside one's routine – God, spirituality, tranquillity – into it'.[516] What Miller-McLemore wants to do is 'to redeem the waking, walking, buzzing routine itself'.[517]

So, as an alternate, Miller-McLemore instead describes spiritual practice as being 'a wisdom that somehow emerges in the chaos itself'.[518] So she advocates a pattern of practising the presence of God, 'not through a prayer discipline that sustains a peaceful inner life but rather through practices that invoke, evoke, and form faith in our outward lives'.[519] She insists that, 'grace is active not only when we're passive and quiescent or tranquil and mindful but also when we are deeply involved in the activities of childhood and parenthood themselves'.[520] Indeed, the value of spiritual practice is found in the fact that it is, and is meant to be, formative[521] so that faith takes shape, and is shaping, in the concrete events of the quotidian.

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[515] Miller-McLemore, *In the Midst of Chaos*, 19.
[516] Ibid., 19.
[517] Ibid., 20.
[518] Ibid., 19.
[519] Ibid., 20.
[520] Ibid., 20.
[521] Ibid., 34.

Soskice too recognizes the formational aspect inherent within the nature of practice. 'The body, no less than the soul, is the place where God acts.'[522] Our affections and animal responses do not always mislead, and if properly attended to, are not distractions but guides to God. Just as other parts of creation are pointers to God so the vexations, desires, and needs of the body point to God and speak of God. We just need to attend to what they are saying. It is by attending to the needs of the newborn that they are enabled to grow. The baby is born into a world of practices and stories, and symbols by which the baby will grow, and Soskice observes, 'parents, even fairly mediocre parents, help babies to become 'selves''.[523]

By placing the activities of childcare under the umbrella of spiritual practice, and by incorporating them into that previously narrowly construed category of what it is to be spiritual, Miller-McLemore turns the traditional notion of spiritual practice inside out. Any task can now be a spiritual practice. The category has been broken open. She takes the discourse of spiritual practice, and quite literally, brings it home.

Miller-McLemore develops the notion of practice further when she picks up on the importance of 'narrative' in noticing the things she does already, giving the children a bath, or cooking for the family, and then giving these acts a place in God's story. Since the area of interest for Miller-McLemore is the specific range of practices that make up parenting and the care of children, the activities she highlights are things like playing or reading together, being attentive to needs, taking children seriously, and letting go. 'My intent is not to offer a list of the things you should do, but rather to empower you to notice what you are already doing to embody faith in the daily life of your family, so that you may practice it more consciously.'[524]

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[522] Soskice, *The Kindness of God,* 28.
[523] Ibid., 30.
[524] Miller-McLemore, *In the Midst of Chaos,* 37.

Miller-McLemore is well-placed, and qualified, to be inventive with the category of spiritual practice having done much of the groundwork in laying out the field of practical theology itself. In seeking an integration of spirituality and religious practising into everyday life she casts any practice or activity that invokes God, or evokes faith in others to be spiritual practice. This re-appropriation of practice then works laterally to stretch the boundaried perception of spiritual practice in the academic field of practical theology too. It tells that all ways of living have the potential to bear, and voice, theology – a point that is also articulated through the 4-voice typology of Helen Cameron et al.[525]

In passing, the approach outlined above is in sharp contrast to the more populist approach finding currency in faith communities which seeks to make specifically traditional ecclesiastical practices, or the 'retreat approach', more user friendly for the 21st century churchgoer. Two Anglican, and explicitly populist, examples that attempt to make a traditional inner spirituality available through contemplative practices are: 'How to be a mindful Christian: 40 Simple Spiritual Practices' by Sally Welch published by Canterbury Press, 2016; and 'Mindfulness and Christian Spirituality: Making Space for God' by Tim Stead, published by SPCK, also 2016. Both these books reveal the trend to adopt the received 'spiritual practices' approach unchanged but take it out of the ecclesial confined context for a contemporary audience. This is not re-interpreting the notion of spiritual practice itself, but rather re-contextualizing the spiritual practice.

The methodology of Miller-McLemore challenges the inherited ecclesial traditions around spiritual practices, and the prioritization of them as contemplative. She rewrites the categorization and restriction of what is traditionally conceived to be spiritual practice. In this vein, I want to suggest that this 'spiritual practice-by-extension' method can be

[525] Helen Cameron et al, *Talking about God in Practice,* 51.

similarly applied to the acts and arts of leadership, and specifically to the activity of ecclesial leadership.

However, there is an underlying critique of Miller-McLemore to be made. At the end of Miller-McLemore's work there is a distinct sense that though she works very hard at establishing new practices that are integrating spirituality with the life already being lived, there is never quite the 'connection' into the Divine that she is after. The practices themselves as described are deeply moving, but connecting with the Divine, and becoming conscious of God in the process of the practice is less easy to confirm.

In the end, I sense a vacancy apparent. There is an unsatisfactory inconclusiveness about the practices Miller-McLemore describes. Up close the practices seem to hollow out. For in the end, though it is valuable to be aware of 'the way' we say goodbye, or acknowledge the value in grieving loss, or the value of housework, or reading a child a story, a case can be made that in themselves these behaviours and activities do not necessarily connect us to God. In fact, many people do thought-filled consciously good acts of all kinds that are profoundly cruciform without ever knowing or realizing the Presence of God. Indeed, arguably many believers and non-believers do such 'practices' every day in total ignorance of the Divine. Doing these actions in a 'lived-out' consciously faith-oriented way (as advocated by Miller-McLemore) does not necessarily take us 'deeper into God'. It might make us more conscious of seeking God, but the practising of them in themselves does not automatically mean 'connection' or participation into a divine or a Spirit led relation.

Nor, at a rudimentary level, may one assume transformative inner effect from the repetition of 'spiritual practices' whatever they may be if there is no engagement with Spirit. Apart from the Spirit himself, our practices whatever we do, stand as human effort. We may become proficient, but too often they become empty ritual. Of course, it is well understood that many believers seek God very consciously, and earnestly, only to sense, see, and feel nothing. This is one of the mysteries of the spiritual life. Everything is a

grace, a gift, and the apophatic way is graced in its own particularity, but although this spiritual 'via' is real, the dis-connection expressed by those in the apophatic way is a different kind of 'unknowing' to that which I am trying to articulate here.

So, what makes a practice a specifically spiritual one? I would like to argue that spiritual practice *is not defined by the practice alone, but by the Spirit-relation it is seeking*. Thus, this ought not to be about whether one is sitting at the feet of Jesus, or whether one is baking in the kitchen, whether one is negotiating a business deal, or baptizing a baby. Again, the activity itself is not the point. The story of Martha and Mary, a traditional reading of which places the listening Mary in opposition to the busy distracted Martha, is often unhelpfully misdirected. This is not about the occupation. Whereas Miller-McLemore wants to take the spiritual practice into the kitchen to be with Martha, (which is a helpful redress to the view that being spiritual requires quiet or solitude), what I am pressing for is a clearer articulation of what makes the activity or practice *itself* a way into relation or relating with God, and His Spirit.

Arguably, Miller-McLemore strains the story of Martha and Mary in her attempt to redeem Martha. The response of Jesus to Martha's complaint, which is what it is, is not as is claimed by Miller-McLemore an entreaty for the benefit of Mary that she too may be grounded in practical work. The scripture says clearly that Martha is upset for being left alone with the chores. One thing is necessary says Jesus – and the implication is that the one thing is attention, connection, relation. However, this does not, as many would advocate, mean that 'sitting' at Jesus feet is the best, or only way to receive connection, but it does suggest that *whatever* we are doing the 'one thing' is needed.

Nonetheless, it is hard humanly to attain focus and maintain attention on Jesus in the middle of a mess, as Miller-McLemore laments and as the story of Martha illustrates. So there needs to be a way to experience listening closeness and connection to Jesus – the 'one thing' – *in* the activity that one is doing. And I would like to suggest that that is done in and through the relation with the Spirit. That 'one thing' – the intimate connection and

attention – can be restored to those in the kitchen, those bathing the baby, or closing the business deal, in-and-through-and-by the relation in-and-with-and-of the Holy Spirit.

It is noted however, that Sarah Coakley takes an entirely different approach to that of Miller-McLemore. Coakley retains the traditional 'three-stage heuristic schema of the relation of belief to practice',[526] one that observes public acts of devotion and worship on the one hand, and private devotions on the other. Writing about the relation between belief and practice, she seeks to show that as there is a deepening of contemplative practice forms of belief emerge that could not otherwise be accessed.[527]

Coakley argues that at the first stage it is the public given beliefs of the creeds that logically precede and substantially inform the practices of the Christian life, but she writes that 'a devout life cannot stop at such externals'.[528] The next stage becomes a mutual interaction between praxis and belief where there is a 'web of interactive everyday practices, such as Benedict prescribes', and in the final stage she describes a silent responsiveness, 'an empty waiting on God that precedes union in its full sense'.[529] This three stage model broadly matches the traditional distinctions of purgative, illuminative and unitive practice.

In this model, Coakley still views the 'deep end' as different, as separate from the earlier stages of relationship in God. The traditional difference between inner and outer that Miller-McLemore and Soskice are trying to dispense with, is thus implicitly retained by Coakley. Her understanding of what a spiritual practice is runs along the traditional lines requiring stillness and concentrated contemplation. She still allows for the 'hiding away' of spiritual practice and maintains the retreat approach, and arguably therefore does not help the mum on the run, the doctor in surgery, or the teacher in front of a class (though

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[526] Coakley, 'Deepening Practices, 92.
[527] Coakley, Deepening Practices, 78.
[528] Ibid., 92.
[529] Ibid., 93.

this is probably not her intention). Her interest does not lie in the democratization of the field of spiritual practice, but rather in what deepening practise might bring for the believer.

What is useful to draw from Coakley is that in arguing for a deepening of practice, Coakley presses for a more participative experience. So that 'the apparent extrinsicism of earlier forms of *imitatio Christi* gives way to a more explicit and conscious participation in that life'.[530] She writes that at the latter stage the Trinity is no longer seen to be an obscure doctrine 'but rather a life into which we enter, and, in unbreakable union with Christ, breathe the very Spirit of God'. This she notes as being more 'God's practice in humans', which is where the practice 'finally discloses the 'incorporative telos' and meaning of 'beliefs''.[531] This is God's work of grace in every believer, something that is received in and through the Spirit. We can say then that Coakley pushes for a participative view of practice in the final stage of her taxonomy, or at the 'deep end' of religious life. But it is only at this 'deeper end' of practice that Coakley interposes a language of relationship and connection, and acknowledges the Spirit, and the essential work of the Spirit in man.

The lexical field around participation and connection is not used by Miller-McLemore. In the first place, she is seeking to dispel the notion of levels, and the whiff of elitism found in ecclesial circles. Then, thereafter it might be said that she speaks of pattern and resonance – but not participation. However, Miller-McLemore does speak to the ways of imitation – the following of Jesus, the remembering, the patterning of life on Another. She seeks a faithful echo. This is a way for spiritual living that follows 'in via', imprints, and evokes. This is close, but arguably, not actual participation in relation. She acknowledges

[530] Ibid., 79.
[531] Ibid., 93.

the formational aspects of practice, but this is more due to the formative effects of the practice itself, rather than the work of the Holy Spirit within.

It is posited then, having heard from Pannenberg in the previous chapter, that it is an articulation of participation *in the Spirit-relation* that is missing in Miller-McLemore's work. Additionally, Miller-McLemore's interchangeable use of the words religious practice and spiritual practice reveals ambivalence towards the Person of the Holy Spirit. As has already been mentioned, one can follow Jesus, pray to the Father, be a part of the ecclesial body, invoke God in a variety of ways, and still not connect consciously and relationally with the Spirit. Yet, the Spirit is not meant to be, as we have seen from Zahl, an abstract invisible force but is to be experientially present.

Miller-McLemore's language, therefore, is arguably spiritual in the broadest and weakest sense, for in all the talk of 'presence' and 'faith' it is hard to find even one mention of the Holy Spirit. The underlying pneumatology for Miller-McLemore's theory of practice is weak. Miller-McLemore's idea of 'invoking and evoking faith' is meaningful, but it does not actually lead us into relation. This is what Zahl was talking about. The theology sounds right and is ontologically correct, but it is a theoretical roundabout, leading us back to ourselves. As a result, the practical 'spirituality' and the God-connection Miller-McLemore is after drifts back to being about 'my' family, 'my' life, and 'my' world.

The essential critique to the Miller-McLemore approach to spiritual practice is therefore, that there is, as a consequence of omitting the Spirit, a functionalizing of belief. The life in the Spirit becomes subordinated to the practice itself. The presence of the Spirit in the practice is lost and thus the Spirit's transformational power and affect is lost too. Practices that do not open the practitioner to an experience of God and the affectual or conscious presence of God as Spirit in the act of the practise arguably just become duty, empty habit, and hollow out as human effort. The exercising might extend the practice, even enable proficiency, but the self (soul and spirit) is not able consciously to participate in the Spirit-relation and so be led deeper into the Divine.

In fact, one could reasonably argue that Miller-McLemore's use of the word 'spiritual' is more in line with the idea of 'personal'. These are *personal* practices as opposed to spiritual practices. She has merely adopted the phrase spiritual to identify the arena in which they are practised, that is the personal realm, the individual and subjective space. In so doing she has in fact acceded to the traditional lines of definition of spiritual practice, that is, those practices towards God that are inner, private, and personal, as opposed to those that are public, corporate, and institutional. Her work becomes an auto-biographical account of her own search for God.

So, how does one assess the practical theological approach of Miller-McLemore? Is it reasonable to extend the notion of spiritual practice to cover the acts of parenting and childcare? Can these parts of life effectively be spiritual practices? The answer to this is 'yes', but not in the way Miller- McLemore is proposing. There must be a participative pneumatological element.

Another author, Pete Ward, takes up the theme of participation within the exercise of practical theology in his book, Participation and Mediation: A Practical Theology for the Liquid Church. Like Miller-McLemore, Pete Ward is also intentionally engaging in discourse but this time seeking to re-identify the endeavour of practical theology *itself* as spiritual practice. Ward argues that practical theology is a spiritual practice because it participates in the divine life and mediates that divine life to others.[532] In this way, he likewise challenges the traditional approach to spiritual practices.

He admits to being very concerned for the future of the church. He writes, '[c]entral to the idea of ecclesial fluidity is the role that mediation plays in producing and circulating theological expression. Participation in a mediated ecclesial culture extends the Church and animates it to move beyond traditional frameworks … practical theology forms a part

[532] Pete Ward, *Participation and Mediation: A Practical Theology for the Liquid Church* (London: SCM Press, 2008), 99.

of these contemporary changes in the Church'.[533] This turn to culture is significant for practical theology because it requires deeper and attentive reflection which will transform the theological method. So, he writes that the turn to culture is reassuring because it encourages a form of practical theology that both respects and embraces the place of doctrine and theology as it is embodied in communities and lived in as tradition.[534]

He conveys these ideas using the terms participation and mediation.

> Participation refers both to a communion in the divine life and to a sharing in the cultural expression of the church. Mediation relates to the way that expression becomes a place of divine indwelling and presence through the operation of various forms and processes of cultural communication. It is this element of divine indwelling as it is mediated in cultural and theological expression that transforms practical theology from a distanced or uncommitted academic practice into a spiritual discipline.[535]

'When practical theology is situated as an embodied spiritual practice and a discipline of divine encounter it relocates itself … It grows from this inhabited space where the social and the doctrinal coexist and co-inhere. This is an embodied space, which is simultaneously lived in and indwelt. It is a practical theology that is both participation and mediation.'[536]

One can see what Ward is driving at. His language is thick with phrases such as 'indwelling', 'indwelt', and 'embodied'. The issue is that like Miller-McLemore, Ward rarely uses or names the Spirit. So, while there is much talk of indwelling and being indwelt, which sound spiritual, there is no real grounding as to what that actually means. It sounds deeply true – but is it, and why? We have to wait until pages 101 and 102 to find expression of his pneumatology.

Ward then focuses his attention on the notion of the 'freedom of the Spirit' enabling a process of reflection in the practical theological practice so that a deeper and closer

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[533] Ward, *Participation and Mediation,* 17.
[534] Ibid., 95.
[535] Ibid., 95.
[536] Ibid., 100.

unveiling of understanding of Christ is gained. He relies on Gordon Fee's description of the Spirit as transforming power and presence,[537] and most of the descriptions centre around the notion of the freedom the Spirit. There is little here that personalizes or characterizes the Spirit. Instead, he writes, reflection as the freedom of the Spirit locates both, the cultural and social, in divine encounter.[538]

> Reflection in practical theology clearly involves academic practices and the conventions of rational thought and debate. As such it is lived in as a cultural practice but it is also and at the same time the freedom of the Spirit that takes these up and transforms them as a place of indwelling. So practical theology is theology ... because it is reflection in the freedom of the Spirit'.[539]

On page 101, there are 3 references to the Spirit embedded in a quote from 2 Corinthians 3.17-18. On page 102 there are then 8 references to the Spirit, as Ward exegetes the Corinthian passage. The majority of the references are wrapped up in the phrase 'the freedom of Spirit'. There are a further 6 references in the chapter. This makes 17 references in the chapter on Participation. This seems low given the subject is of indwelling, and the habitation of the Spirit in the reflective exercise practical theology is being redefined to be.

I suggest this coyness in mentioning the relation in Spirit I think Ward is alluding to means that his practice of practical theology is still vague as a practical pneumatology. It sounds so rich and deep but what does it mean? Where is the practical theologian who exhibits and articulates a practical experiential – rather than theoretical – pneumatological approach? I wonder whether Ward is successful – he has more connection with Spirit than Miller-McLemore but he too limits or treats the Spirit reductively in the end. The Spirit is more than a power, or presence that sets one free, (though He is both).

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[537] Ibid., 102; quoting Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MT: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 1994), 309.
[538] Ward, *Participation and Mediation,* 102.
[539] Ibid.

This becomes more evident in the later chapters when the spiritual practice Ward uses as his model for an embodied theological practice is the Eucharist. There is not one mention of the Holy Spirit in this chapter, Chapter 7. Instead, there are phrases such as, 'these words become 'lived in', and a way of life. At the same time the performance of the liturgy is also 'indwelt', that is, it becomes a place of divine revelation and encounter. 'To be lived in and indwelt this biblical text needs to be performed. Moreover, to speak of the 'lived-in-ness' of the Eucharist does not preclude talk of the 'indwelt-ness', since in performance these two are interdependent.'[540]

When one places this kind of paragraph under scrutiny, from a perspective that is trying to be honest about and give place to the Person of the Spirit, these words communicate a vague presence, but there is no clear articulation as to the activity and role of the Person of the Spirit in the performance of these practices, or where or how the Spirit is active in any one moment of the religious cultural rite.

Later Ward writes, 'in performance the discursive practices of the Christian community are seen as being a place of divine participation. In performance individuals and communities are 'indwelt'.'[541] But how are communities indwelt? How is that experienced? The person and move of Spirit is implicitly referenced rather than directly asserted.

At the very end of his book Ward leaves us with the challenge.

> The mediation of theological expression in popular culture represents a vital and urgent missional challenge. …What seems clear is that the mediation of the divine life that has allowed the Christian community to extend and make more fluid its ecclesial being, suggests that such an enterprise may indeed be possible. The clue to the way forward lies in the freedom of God to be present both in the Church and beyond it through participation and mediation. So like a light beckoning us forward the Spirit is inviting us to find a way to 'go with the flow' of the liquid Church.[542]

One wonders why the notion of freedom needs to be employed as euphemism for Spirit, and whether being invited into finding a way to go with the flow of liquid church is an

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[540] Ibid., 123.
[541] Ibid., 133.
[542] Ibid., 191.

invitation to go with the flow of the Spirit himself? From the text one is not sure. There is a pneumatology that underpins this writing, but what Ward is meaning in practice is not clear.

However, in relation to the discourse of leadership, Ward does give words to an invitation that I can accept. He seems to be suggesting that there is invitation – in the context of ecclesial leadership – to find a way of leading that would go with the 'flow' of a more fluid style of church that takes seriously the missional challenge in contemporary culture. Ward himself offers some suggestions and pointers in his earlier book Liquid Church.[543] In this Ward describes leadership that is 'enlightened and in the know'. These are the ones worshippers will gravitate towards, those who 'have met with God, been in his presence, and found themselves to be changed by his Spirit … who lead by the example of their holiness, discipline and passion'.[544] He goes on to propose that those who seek God will follow leaders 'along the demanding path of spiritual discipline. The Liquid church will replace norms and routines with clearly expressed ways of living in the presence of God'.[545]

To lead in Spirit then obviously demands something quite different, otherwise the lack of this form of leading would not be a problem and the need for the difference Ward is drawing attention to would not be necessary. (This brief discussion about a spirit-led leadership is described by Ward as a 'Dream'.) For as the content analysis showed, the leadership discourse does not bear out an explicitly Spirit-led leadership even though, I am sure, there are plenty of leaders who presumably believe they are filled in Spirit and have sympathy with a present and active Holy Spirit. The discourse reflects predetermined ways, processes, formats, and role-led organization, and scripted ways of

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[543] Pete Ward, *Liquid Church* (Peabody, MT: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002).
[544] Ibid., 90.
[545] Ibid.

leading, which do not encourage or give freedom to participate experientially in the Spirit or arguably give the Spirit time, room, or space to make His presence known.

The question I am therefore still faced with is: what would be an expression of leadership that is practically recognizably pneumatological? And the answer to that question relies on and is linked to the answer to the next – what makes a spiritual practice Spirit-filled in practice? What is it about the practising that would make a habitual action a spiritual one? This is the nub of it.

Arguably though, in the anxiety not to allow for a doctrine of Holy Spirit that is free-floating from the Person of Jesus Christ, and avoid what is seen as the excesses of Pentecostalism or the charismatic movement, or any hint of spiritual elitism and subjectivism, 'mainstream' Protestant practical theology has found it safer to avoid the Spirit altogether. So, for example the definitions of Christian practice quoted at the beginning of this chapter from the work of Dorothy Bass and Craig Dykstra, talk only of life taking shape 'in the light of God as known in Jesus Christ', or 'in the light of God's active presence in the world'. Yet another definition of practice by Dorothy Bass states, 'Christian beliefs and practices are mutually implicated ways of knowing and responding to God's active presence for the life of the world'.[546] The Spirit is unnamed. Yet if the omission found in the leadership discourse is to be repaired, the practice of leading needs to participate in Spirit, and 'say' so, and then say 'how'.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored some ways the category of spiritual practice has been embraced, shaped, and recast by some theologians.

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[546] Dorothy C. Bass, *Practicing our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010), 5.

Miller-McLemore redraws the category of spiritual practice to draw the notion of spiritual practice into a place of accessibility, a place that blends the life actual with a life spiritual, but she omits a language of being in Spirit, or of a realized Spirit-relation. On the other hand, Coakley argues in terms of a participative approach in S/spirit but maintains the traditional exclusive staged approach to spiritual practice. Ward uses the definition of spiritual practice to recast practical theology as spiritual practice using a vocabulary of participation and mediation, and he frames his pneumatology in language around ideas of freedom and indwelling.

I want to suggest that the ideation of practice can be adopted to redefine or recast leadership in a pneumatological key. The notion of practice offers a cognitive and experiential means for a participatory approach in Spirit, which is to be encouraged having encountered the work of Pannenberg in the previous chapter. Further, the concept of practice in its simplicity and ubiquity is broadly accessible as 'theological form', but it retains an ability to engage with complexity as a multi-valent idea.

So I want to suggest that leading can be exercised as 'spiritual practice'. Christian leading can invoke God and evoke faith in others, fulfilling the definition set by Miller-McLemore. However, if it is to be 'spiritual' that practice will need to participate in the movement of the Spirit-relation and engage with the four themes highlighted in the previous chapter.

However, I am aware that within the traditional and historical confines of the discourse, there is still danger of being forced to accommodate an inferior expression and experience of practice, because the historical ecclesial form of spiritual practice sticks and is understood to be a finite and bounded action in the religious order. A rendition of the notion of practice as it is currently established – even when appropriated in the manner of Miller-McLemore – will inevitably remain a bounded concept that contains a beginning and an end, attributable to a specific activity in time, person, and place.

So, if I am properly to re-formulate leadership in a way that accommodates the pneumatology explicated in chapter 6, such that it is retained, then I need to shape and

challenge the ideation of practice further still. To give a pneumatological perspective equal place and voice in leadership discourse requires a bold move.

Accordingly, the confines of the ideation of spiritual practice as traditionally formulated and understood by the church, though stretched by Miller-McLemore, must be stretched still further if ‘practice’ is to be pressed usefully into employment for a pneumatological account of leadership. I want to reach for a view that can properly reflect the future move and unbounded nature of the Spirit as perfecting cause, in which we participate in the Spirit-relation. To do this, I now need to consider alternative conceptions of the ideation of practice in leadership studies which I will do in the next chapter.

Chapter 8

Conversation with Leadership Studies – 'as-practice' theory

Introduction to Practice Theory

In chapter 7, I encountered the practical theological approaches of contemporary theologians Bonnie Miller-McLemore and Pete Ward, both of whom have appropriated the form of practice. In different ways, they extend and flex the notion of practice in the field of practical theology, yet arguably still fail to engage with a full account of the Spirit. Now I turn to secular leadership studies to explore alternative approaches to reconceiving a notion of practice. Taking an inter-disciplinary 'side-ways look' at this juncture sits well within the encounter phase of a practical theological approach because I seek to contextualize spiritual practice and ground theology within its cultural reality.

The ideation of practice has recently come to the fore in secular leadership and organizational studies in what has been called a 'turn to practice' with theoretical analyses around strategy-as-practice, coordination-as-practice, and leadership-as-practice. This newfound focus around the notion of practice in the social sciences is worth pursuing as I seek to reflect constructively on ecclesial leadership discourse.

There is then already a resonance in play, and a further clue that such an exploration is not illogical, is that contemporary approaches to organization and to leading in the workplace already make room for an account of spirituality and engage with a practised spirituality. The search for spirituality and a deeper sense of well-being in the cultural milieu has seeped into attitudes about the workplace. Accordingly, it is not uncommon nor out of place to approach work and organization of the workplace as part of the search for one's spiritual health. This was discussed in chapter 1.

Not only is there an acceptance that spirituality plays an important contribution in creating a healthy workplace and a sense of well-being, but according to some authors there has

always been a deep connection between leading and a sense of the sacred, even when that leadership is overtly secular or a-religious. So, for example Joseph Raelin in his book 'Creating Leaderful Organizations' asserts that spirituality attaches to leadership and leaders in their 'meaning-making role' as they 'see' emerging realities before they occur and as they connect to purpose and societal good.[547] Raelin writes that in this instance this may not refer to a transcendental experience but is ultimately concerned with meaning-making for the community as it works together. 'So, in addition to an internal exploration of soul, our spiritual quest should also entail an external search for communion.'[548]

The Turn to Practice

According to Davide Nicolini, the work of philosophers Marx, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein in the modern period made a clearing in social theory that allowed for a return of a positive notion of practice such that practice was thereby rescued from its historical demotion. Nicolini argues positively for a pragmatist view because the practice approach is potentially subversive and innovative[549] as it undoes the inherited philosophical view which traditionally demeaned the body and materiality. The inbuilt prejudice stems from a Platonic understanding that cast practice, and therefore materiality and performativity, as less valuable or 'below' the scope of a theory of knowledge and ethics.

Theodore Schatzki identified the reassertion of a pragmatist approach as a return to practice. With the break-down of trust for the social institution, and increasing plurality, over 'the last several years there has been a growing interest in analysis focused through one or another of a bundle of interrelated terms: practice, praxis, action, interaction,

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[547] Joseph A. Raelin, *Creating Leaderful Organizations: how to bring out leadership in everyone* (San Francisco, Calif.: Berrett-Koeler Publishers Inc., 2003), 151-152.
[548] Ibid., 152.
[549] Davide Nicolini, *Practice Theory, Work and Organization: An Introduction* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), 23.

activity, experience, performance'.[550] This is in contrast to a functionalist approach where the focus has been on systems, structures, institutions, and the enactment of the institutional rules. Where the focus is on practice the point of enquiry becomes the relationship between actors, what the people do, say, and share. The focus is on the acts and acting of the actors who are carriers of a system, rather than the system itself.

However, Schatzki acknowledges there is 'no unified practice approach'[551] though most accounts of practice are united in the minimal view that practices are 'arrays of activity'.[552] He then goes onto say that despite the diversity, practice accounts are joined in the belief that such social phenomena such as 'knowledge, meaning, human activity, science, power, language, social institutions, and historical transformation occur within and are aspects or components of the *field of practices*'.[553] The notion of a field or web of practice undergirding or contextualizing other forms of social activity is a key idea for Schatzki. 'The field of practices is the total nexus of interconnected human practices', and this demarcation of a 'field' is the linchpin to a practice approach.[554]

The attraction of this practice view is its capacity to resonate with the contemporary experience of the world as being in flux, complex, and interconnected.[555] This pragmatist approach accommodates the cultural 'read' more ably than more traditional social theories. It is no longer the institutions or social structures and systems that are valued, or even so easily identified, but rather the inter connectivity and social fabric that is made and created between them. So when one walks into an office or hospital, school, or church, the social entity that is in front is not the result of a single organizational blueprint or a structural mechanistic view of organization, but rather a 'fluid scene that unfolds in

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[550] Ibid., 41.
[551] Theodore Schatzki, 'Introduction to Practice Theory', 11.
[552] Ibid.
[553] Ibid.
[554] Ibid.
[555] Nicolini, *Practice Theory,* 2.

front of us in terms of multiple practices carried out at the same time'.[556] It is in this net of activity – or in the field of practice – where meaning is created and shared.

Further, it is the focus on a web or field of inter-activity which means that in social theory, practice approaches can offer a 'distinct social ontology: the social is a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings'.[557] This conception contrasts with accounts where the focus is on individuals, systems, roles, or structures, namely entities. However, Schatzki argues that these social phenomena can only be rightly analyzed as being part of the field of practice. So for example he writes, language is 'a type of activity (discursive) and hence a practice phenomenon, … whereas institutions and structures are effects of them'.[558]

Practice theory for Schatzki therefore coalesces around the notion that it is the field of practices and the social web of practise that is the rightful location for investigation into social phenomena such as agency, power, language, ethics, and science. And in this theory of practice, because of the focus being on the *interactivity* that makes up the web or field of practice, there is the potential to move towards a non-entitative ontological understanding of what we do when we lead. The focus is now on what is taking place *in the space in between* people *in the process* of their practising.

Pierre Bourdieu has also contributed significantly to practice theory, with the introduction of the notion of 'habitus' (as mentioned in chapter 1) by which he seeks to explain the dialectical relation between the objective social structuring of society, and the system of internal dispositions that make possible 'the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks'.[559] This complex idea seeks to explain how through experience aspects of the social order

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[556] Nicolini, *Practice Theory,* 2.
[557] Schatzki, 'Introduction to Practice Theory', 12.
[558] Ibid.
[559] Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* 83.

are structured internally, 'internalized' yet without turning the actors into automatons but rather allowing for the overall context and setting of the 'field' to be perpetrated through practice. Bourdieu describes habitus as being understood 'as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as *a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions'*.[560] Habitus describes a set of mental dispositions and bodily know-how that operate at a pre-conscious level, and when activated, they result in a practice.

There is a close relationship between this understanding of habitus and the idea of tacit knowledge introduced by Michael Polanyi. A tacit understanding describes the indwelling of knowing through action that becomes interiorized. A well-known example is that of riding a bike where once having learned how, there is an instinctual unconscious embodiment of knowing how to balance, so that 'we can know more than we can tell'.[561] 'It brings home to us that it is not by looking at things, but by dwelling in them, that we understand their joint meaning.'[562]

Davide Nicolini describes habitus as 'first and foremost a form of knowing in practice akin to the 'feel for the game' experienced in sport. This feel for, or sense of, the game is not only the spring of practical actions in the field and during the match, it is also what gives practical sense to the rules before and during the game, as in the football 'offside' rule''.[563] He goes on to say that habitus is better conceived as a way of knowing inscribed in bodies acquired from our upbringing, socialization, familiarization, observation, and by experiment.[564] We come to 'know how', acquire habitus, as a by-product of participation in

[560] Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 82.
[561] Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (London: The University of Chicago Press Ltd., 2009), 4.
[562] Ibid., 18.
[563] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 55.
[564] Ibid., 56.

daily activities and repetition in activity. Habitus is the source of moves which are objectively organized as strategies without being the project of any strategic intention.[565]

For the purposes of this thesis then, though it is apparent that there is an array of different theories of practice (as per Schatzki and Nicolini above), there is theoretical potential that opens up for a rethinking about the nature of the acts and activities of leadership when the notion of 'practice' and 'practise' is understood specifically as denoting a field or web of interrelated activity, and thus as being non-entitative.

In addition, I can see that there is useful synergetic relationship between a notion of practice, and leadership in a religious setting, when a process of practice/se is cast as a means by which we come to know and gain inner sense or incorporate practical or spiritual know-how. Practice then becomes about 'sense' making, and about 'making' sense, and in this form, it takes on a non-entitative ontology.

John Shotter takes this non-entitative perspective and argues that if leadership is to be studied as a dialogical community process,[566] then there is need – not for yet more scientific explorations as to what leadership *is* (traits, gifts, qualities and so on) but – for 'more particular, situated, *philosophically* structured inquiries into how, what we call leadership, can emerge in many different ways in *this*, or *that*, or some other *particular* situation'.[567]

So then, relying on Nicolini's idea that there is a theoretical tool kit from which to draw,[568] it is with a bifold articulation of practice/se as field and an accrual of know-how that I begin to explore whether a secular 'leadership-as-practice' (LAP) approach[569] might find

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[565] Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 73.
[566] John Shotter, 'A Dialogical-hermeneutical account,' in *Leadership-as-Practice: Theory and Application,* ed., Joseph A. Raelin (New York: Routledge, 2016), 132.
[567] Ibid., 153.
[568] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 215.
[569] Joseph A. Raelin, 'Introduction to Leadership-as-Practice,' in *Leadership-as-Practice: Theory and Application,* ed., Joseph A. Raelin (New York: Routledge, 2016).

application in an ecclesial setting, and ask whether the form 'as-practice' might offer the means by which a fuller expression of pneumatology can be given in leadership discourse and practice.

Approaches to Leadership

There are a range of interpretations as to what leadership is, but in general contained within any definition there is always an element of 'working with others to give a sense of direction and find a way forward'.[570] Therefore from the outset we can say that whatever the approach to leadership, it will contain an element of forward motion, of going somewhere, of being on a trajectory together in relation to a particular vision, aim, or set goal. The idea of leadership will therefore include a notion of steering, guidance, and pioneering. Leadership has also traditionally clustered around ideas such as power, authority, and decision-making. However more recently other emphases have come to the fore such as relationship, lateral agency, distribution, and connectivity.

Keith Grint offers a typology to encapsulate the different ways of approaching the subject of definition. We can identify leadership as being about the person, as being about the place or position, as being about what gets done – the results, or lastly about the process and how things are done. Simplistically this is the 'where, who, what, how' typology.[571] Grint writes that the many varied theories and approaches to leadership all derive out of one of these four originating foci.

The leadership styles or traits approach is focused on the leader, the 'who' – this is the 'great man theory'. Leadership is the property that resides in the individual as a result of personality styles, traits, and abilities. The behaviour, abilities, and decision-making

[570] Malcolm Grundy, '*What's new in Church Leadership?' Creative Responses to the Changing Pattern of Church Life (Norwich: Canterbury Press,* 2007), 20.
[571] Keith Grint, *Leadership: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

capacity *inter alia* of the one called leader is then crucial to the notion of success or failure. Good leaders will be those who carry virtue and character in such a way that there are superior outcomes in any venture.

It has been a styles approach that has tended to dominate the process of choosing leaders in the church. The language around being selected for ordination and later being granted a curacy, has tended to be around gifting and calling of the person rather than, for example, how well they build and encourage teams or whether the people around them feel engaged. A focus on the importance of *who* leads has led to other descriptions of leadership such as charismatic leadership or the hero leader.

In the modern period, as industries grew and production was scaled up, there was a shift to rationalized systems of management and leadership became embedded in large scale organization. It has therefore become more complex to determine within these situations where leadership lies. Leadership became a multi-faceted concept connected to notions of results, profit, and processes for efficiency, and production. How does one determine what is leading and what is managing, and is there a difference at all?

A way offered by Grint to differentiate the two is by identifying the nature of the problem being solved – is it tame or wicked?[572] This correlates with the difference between certainty and uncertainty. A tame problem may be complicated and multi-layered, but it is resolvable. The right application of the appropriate process will bring resolution. It is managed. A wicked problem is profoundly complex in that it is not easily resolved or processed, and there is a high degree of uncertainty. Wicked problems or situations are characterized by being bigger than any one individual and so require a transfer of authority from one individual to others in order to tap into collective wisdom and action, and because of the high degree of uncertainty in relation to outcomes, this requires skills

[572] Ibid., 15-17.

of leadership to hold the people and the problem together. Grint argues that this is an art – a felt way to discovering solutions rather than a science or managed process.[573]

Other theories of leadership focus on the relations that surround the leader. The nature of the follower-leader dyad, or relational or distributed leading where there is a desire to flatten traditional hierarchical organization. And since the traditional traits/ styles approach to leadership was never fully able to accommodate situational and contextual difficulties, and the myriad of nuances that arise in context, theories of contingency, and situational leadership where the focus is on the place or position, have also developed.

Notably, Grint writes that more recently, within organizational studies it is acknowledged that leadership is not the property of the individual but is held communally. This prompts a shift in the way we talk; a shift from a focus on the leader to the notion of a shared leadership so that leadership becomes a social phenomenon.[574] In practice, leadership is found to be a distributed and socialized practice, or series of practices, turning the wheels of organization through influence and micro-interactions from the ground up.

Yet despite this Grint notes that there remains still a desire for the charismatic leader who will solve all our problems, and that it is usually the individual who is allowed to take credit when in fact, 'we should recognize that organizational achievements are just that – achievements of the entire organization rather than merely the consequence of a single heroic leader'.[575] Even so, Grint maintains that we cannot do without a notion of leader, even if in the 21st century the predominance of wicked problems would indicate that a collective approach is necessary. Throwing out the notion of leader and returning leading

[573] Ibid., 18.
[574] Ibid., 105.
[575] Ibid., 110.

to a collective of followers is just as mistaken as relying only on a single heroic individual.[576]

But why? Grint argues that it is because there is an intrinsic relationship between leadership and a notion of the sacred. So even in a secular book on leadership studies Grint is prepared to write that, 'the sacred is … the space in which leadership works. That is one reason why it is seldom raised – because it forms the framework within which leadership works'.[577]

Grint identifies three spiritual or sacred qualities that leadership carries: separation, sacrifice, and silence. He posits that where there is no difference or separation of power, leadership cannot emerge, that leadership will always carry an element of sacrifice and that leadership is divine in that it silences the fears and anxieties of followers. Grint concludes by arguing that leadership is still necessary because even in forms of distributed or collaborative leadership individuals have to take initiative or assume responsibility for a task or mobilize some social engagement. He closes his book by writing '[l]eadership is not, then, the elephant in the room that many would rather not face up to; it is the room itself – which we cannot do without'.[578] Leadership is inherently sacred because it offers and holds space for the other.

I will come back to this definition of leadership later, but by looking at the approach and commentary of Grint, I find warrant present within the discourse to bring a notion of the spiritual and spiritual practice alongside that of leadership and practice theory.

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[576] Ibid., 112-3.
[577] Ibid., 117.
[578] Ibid., 126.

Relational Leadership

It is worth taking a moment to distinguish relational leadership from a Leadership-as-Practice (LAP) approach because relational leadership can overlap with a LAP perspective. A relational leadership approach has an entitative ontology as it foregrounds the actors or leaders themselves, the roles, positions, and structures, as *they* relate. The difference is a matter of focus. The focus in relational leadership or shared leadership perspectives is still the person relating. Relational leadership, collective, and shared leadership, are focused on how the leaders together lead. The focus is still on the entities.

This must not be muddled with the LAP approach that has a 'relational ontology'. A relational ontology seeks to describe a non-entitative practice or the process that is occurring *in between* actors – the relation and relating itself. LAP based on such relational ontology is to understand leadership as emergent processes in the production of direction, thus foregrounding the momentary, the co-evolving, and the flow. The focus is on what comes out, on what is unfolding, on what is emerging from the relating. LAP focuses on flow.

The main claim of relational leadership is that the self is a relational construction made in relational processes – a social self – in contrast to a traits-based approach where the focus is on a single independent and influential leader-self controlling others. 'Leadership is thus about influential acts of organizing that affect the structuring of relations and interactions, in which definitions of social order are negotiated, constructed, and enacted.'[579] Accordingly, 'a larger number of relationships are legitimized as having to do with leadership'.[580] An example of this is the relational leadership that occurs between a conductor and the orchestra. The conductor's leadership requires verbal and non-verbal

[579] Lucia Crevani and Nada Endrissat, 'Mapping the leadership-as-practice terrain,' in *Leadership-as-Practice: Theory and Application,* ed., Joseph A. Raelin (New York: Routledge, 2016), 27.
[580] Ibid., 27.

cues, sensory perception as well as an attuned musical craft, while the orchestra pushes and pulls on the music so as to lead the conductor in the decisions he takes. In the classical typology, what would have been seen to be an individual heroic traits-based leadership, is reconceived to be relational leadership.

Another well-known example of relational (and therefore entitative) leadership, and which has been strongly influential in the ecclesial context, is that advocated by Robert K. Greenleaf as Servant-Leadership. The term servant-leadership was first coined by Greenleaf in an essay in 1970 entitled 'The Servant as Leader'. [581] Here the ideas of wanting to serve and help – benefiting the whole – were foregrounded. This went on to have huge influence in organizational thinking as being a key to creating positive change.

What is noticeable about Greenleaf's work is that an overlap with the church is expected and anticipated. Greenleaf presumes that his material will automatically find resonance and application within the ecclesial context, while the ecclesial environment found no intellectual or philosophical reason for not embracing Greenleaf's model. This is doubtless because the lexicon around servant and servanthood was overlaid onto the Scriptural testimony of Jesus coming to serve rather than be served. In similar vein to Lynch however (see chapter 2), I would want to question such an easy transference of ideas. Jesus came to serve, but as Lord. It was his Lordship that made his serving so sacrificial and momentous.

The key preoccupation in relational leadership is to de-centralize leadership from an individual to other subjects, (subject to subject) rather than de-centralizing even further, as in a LAP approach, to the activity of doing the work itself.[582] In relational leadership the unit of analysis is the actors' relationship, while in a LAP approach the unit of analysis

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[581] Robert K. Greenleaf, *The Power of Servant Leadership: Essays by Robert K. Greenleaf*, ed., L.C. Spears (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1998).
[582] Crevani and Endrissat, 'Mapping the leadership-as-practice terrain', 27.

would be the unfolding expression or relational process itself. However, it is easily conceded that there is and will be overlap in practice depending on where the focus is at any given moment.

Introduction to Leadership-as-Practice:

The approach that Joseph Raelin first proposed in 2003 was arguably a relational leadership approach driven by the belief that 'no one affected by a decision should be left out of that decision, be it in its design or implementation'.[583] In his work he adopts ideas that have Christian resonance around the priorities of service, empowering others and the organization as a whole, and the notion of an organization experiencing joy.

He introduces four concepts that characterize what he terms 'leaderful' practice. His argument is that if leadership is concurrent, collective, collaborative, and compassionate such that it distributes the work of responsibility across the organization this creates value and more holistic outcomes.[584] If leadership is collective then it can be continuous, and if leadership runs concurrently then there can be suitable recognition given to the complexity of the organization and individual's specializations so that leadership vacuums do not threaten the well-being of the whole.

In this work Raelin was trying to find a way towards a leader-full culture in an attempt to solve the problems of individualistic leadership where leadership is serial, and often heroic creating long term dissonance where there is either too much power or a power vacuum. It is apparent that Raelin is already at this point trying to say something different about leadership. For example, from the use of the word 'leaderful', he is pulling on

[583] Raelin, *Creating Leaderful Organizations*, 289.
[584] Ibid., 14.

meaning and seeking to press into thinking around leadership that is wrought in, and then worked out, through a collective.

In 2008, on the other side of the world, 'Leadership as Practice: Challenging the competency paradigm' was co-authored by New Zealand author Brigid Carroll and others and published in Leadership.[585] This was the first publication to introduce a practice approach into the field of leadership studies. The authors argued that 'the time is ripe for a leadership-as-practice body of work that, for virtually identical reasons as strategy, aims at the demystification, deepening and appreciation … of routine and practice.'[586] They wanted to pay attention to dimensions of leadership thought and practice that have been neglected and even invalidated by the competency paradigm. They argue that 'a practice orientation has the capacity to put something of the lived experience … into words'.[587]

Then in 2011, Raelin seeks to develop the framing of leadership-as-practice (LAP) in connection with his own idea of leaderful practice.[588] He makes the point that 'hierarchy has not by any means universally broken down' and with this may come conformity to the dominant rationalities of the organization and so he frames the democratic impulse behind LAP as an 'invitation for participants to a practice to co-create their socio-political consciousness'.[589]

He publishes 'Imagine there are no Leaders: Reframing Leadership as Collaborative Agency' in 2014. Here the focus is becoming the process, where the agency in and through activities, arises. Then in 2015, Raelin wrote in the MIT Sloan Management

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[585] Brigid Carroll, Levy, L., & David Richmond. 'Leadership as Practice: Challenging the Competency Paradigm', *Leadership*, 4, no.4, (2008): 363–379. https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715008095186
[586] Carroll, Levy, and Richmond, 'Leadership as Practice: Challenging the Competency Paradigm', 364.
[587] Ibid.
[588] Joseph A Raelin, 'From leadership-as-practice to leaderful practice', *Leadership*, 7, no.2, (2011): 195-211. https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715010394808
[589] Ibid., 206.

Review that 'leadership is really not about leaders themselves' but it's 'about a collective practice among people who work together'.[590]

Raelin writes that the kind of leadership that produces an agency that is collaborative involves practices such as 'scanning the environment, mobilizing resources and inviting participation, weaving interactions across existing and new networks and offering feedback and facilitating reflection'.[591] He writes that this requires a collective, self-correcting model of leadership in which participants learn to engage with one another and reflect on their own actions to improve their ongoing practices.

A year later, Raelin proposes a practice-led approach that is shaped around mutual endeavour. He critiques a traits-based individual approach to leadership which he argues engenders a learned dependency or helplessness, so he writes that those of us working together are not reliant on the direction of a single person, but '[w]e are – if committed to our mutual endeavour – already in motion. Our leadership occurs collectively amongst us in the moment and over time as we engage in unfolding activities that change how we approach our ongoing challenges.'[592].

Then in 2016, Raelin as editor of the collection 'Leadership-as-Practice: Theory and Application', introduces the concept of leading as a holistic approach using the ideation of practice: a collective non-entitative, processual approach, working out leadership as practice, and through practices.

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[590] Joseph A. Raelin, 'Rethinking Leadership,' in *MIT Sloan Management Review,* Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA., 56. no.4 (July 2015):95.
[591] Ibid.
[592] Joseph A Raelin, 'It's not about the Leaders: It's about the practice of leadership,' in *Organizational Dynamics* 45, no.2, (2016):128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2016.02.006.

More recently Raelin has written a methodology for studying Leadership-as-practice,[593] and 'What are you so afraid of: Collective leadership and its learning implications'.[594] In 2022, an interview with Raelin was published in 'Leadership', the same journal in which the original 2008 article by Carroll et al appeared. In this interview, Raelin goes through some of the developments and issues thrown up by the as-practice perspective. I will look at these later in this chapter.

In May 2023, Raelin published a work tracing and collecting the developments of Leadership-as-Practice to date. He concludes by saying that the 'field of leadership is at a time in history when it is ripe for new models and approaches. Leadership as an individual model hasn't solved the problem of a community's reliance at times on autocratic leaders' and therefore there 'is an opportunity for models such as L-A-P in which subjects do not necessarily precede the practice'.[595]

Leadership-as-Practice

Leadership-as-practice 'depicts immanent collective action emerging from mutual, discursive, sometimes recurring and sometimes evolving patterns in the moment and over time among those engaged in the practice'.[596]

Leadership-as-practice is leadership that emerges and flows from, and in between, relational connections in the performance of everyday tasks, or within the routine practice of an organization. What makes LAP unique is the commitment to release the ideation of leadership from a role driven, entitative influenced based relationship. Leadership-as-

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[593] Joseph A. Raelin, 'Toward a Methodology for Studying Leadership-as-Practice,' *Leadership*, Sage Publications, 16, no.4 (2020): 480-508. https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715019882831
[594] Joseph A. Raelin, 'What are you afraid of: Collective leadership and its learning implications,' *Management Learning*, Sage Publications 49, no.1 (2018): 59-66. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507617729974.
[595] Joseph A. Raelin, 'Leadership-as-Practice: Its Past History, Present Emergence, and Future Potential,' *Academy of Management Journal* 2, no. 2 (2023): 19-30. https://doi.org/10.5465/amc.2021.0005.
[596] Raelin, 'Introduction to Leadership-as-Practice,' 3.

practice therefore, 'has a markedly collective orientation because it is less about what one person thinks or does and more about what people may accomplish together'.[597]

At root of the LAP approach is the desire to detach leadership from the individual and find it in collective process. The leaders are wrapped up in the flow of the process themselves as opposed to standing outside and 'delivering leadership' to another. It is this embeddedness of the leader and the focus on the processual flow that makes this a potentially productive perspective for the church.

In LAP, leadership is de-centred to the work being carried out. So the unit of analysis is not a single thing or someone, but the process or 'bundles of related actions'[598] for example, within a conversation or the interactions that unfold between people in a meeting, or patterns of action, or activity from which leadership emerges.

Notably, leadership is experienced and identified as it emerges and unfolds. So LAP is described as an emerging movement seeking to find leadership not in people but within the practices from which it springs.[599] Crevani and Endrissat state that leadership-as-practice is about producing direction for organizing processes, re-reorientation of the flow of practice, and emergent co-construction through collaborative agency.[600]

The LAP approach at this stage incorporates both practices, and practice – which is using the US spelling. Within the United Kingdom, further definition would be possible by using the letter s to denote the verb 'practise'. So LAP would include language around 'the practice of' (for example, the practice of law, or a practice of generosity), and 'practices' as noun, and practise (UK) as verb. Since the American academy does not use the 's'

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[597] Raelin, 'Toward a Methodology for studying Leadership-as-Practice,' 481.
[598] Crevani and Endrissat, 'Mapping the leadership-as-practice terrain,' 31.
[599] Joseph A. Raelin, 'Leadership-as-Practice: Theory and Application – An editor's reflection', in *Leadership,* Sage Publications, 13, no. 2 (2017): 215-221. https://doi/org/10.1177/1742715017702273.
[600] Crevani and Endrissat, 'Mapping the leadership-as-practice terrain', 23.

notation, one way from the American viewpoint to unpick the many strands of thought, is to consider the ontology prioritized by any one perspective. Crevani and Endrissat offer two axes of analysis – an entitative ontology or relational ontology. In the former, as mentioned above in connection to relational leadership (not to be confused with relational ontology), there is ontological priority given to the entities. Leadership is found in a set of practices, actors, or social states that pre-exist, that is, the entities pre-exist relations and process.

In the latter, relational ontology, ontological priority is given to the unfolding process, and processing itself – the unfolding relation, or the unfolding emergent dynamic that occurs in-between the actors. Leadership is found to emerge in the flow of practice (US) – or in the UK in the flow of practise, and practising. This distinction also maps onto the difference between a weak and strong process view: an entitative ontology can be categorized as a 'weak' process view, while a relational ontology offers a 'strong' process view.

Thus, the styles/gifts/traits leadership approaches, as well as the situational or contingency approaches, are all strongly entitative since they give ontological priority to entities and social position/states/actors that pre-exist the act or outcome of leadership. This is because it remains the fact that the *leader as subject* exerts influence on the environment or those around involved – as objects.

Thus, within the entitative view the focus can either be on the actors or on the practices of those actors. So a further division now can be made: to distinguish an approach with an entitative ontology that foregrounds the actors and positions, and one that is one step removed foregrounding the practices themselves, Crevani and Endrissat use the term 'entitative-soft' to denote the latter foregrounding of the practices.

In an entitative-soft ontology the unit of analysis is the noun, *the practices*, that is the 'bundles of related actions', or the routinized workings or activities that take place

(practices). LAP with an entitative-soft ontology is not looking at the behaviour of one person (the entity) but on more distributed 'patterns of action',[601] or the practices that are routinized and regularized that then create leadership. The focus is not on what leader style or trait produces leadership but on the practices that enable agency. In the repetition of practices there is an accrual of knowledge and increased social know-how. One might say that there is accumulative ability to discern the right approach or direction.

In distinction, where there is a relational ontology, the unit of analysis is the verb, the *practising*. Focus is on the practise of leading as it unfolds. Leadership emerges in the 'flow', that is, the focus is leadership as it arises and emerges *in and as a result of practising*. A relational ontology gives ontological priority to the way of the unfolding itself. So the unit of analysis is the interactional dynamic that unfolds – or comes to. The view is that people, and the world that is context, are in a constant state of 'be-coming'. Where the focus is on that 'becoming', on *that* emergent formation or activity that arises out of a set of behaviours then this speaks of a relational ontological view.

The different axes arising from ontology might be summarized as the study of leaders, styles, and competencies (entitative), practices (entitative-soft ontology), compared with the study of leadership as ongoing and emergent practising or practise (a relational ontology). Leadership-as-practice (LAP) as a new field of academic study includes both entitative-soft and relational ontological views.

I would posit that, as alluded to above, this ontological distinction is only necessarily made by American authors so as to draw out the difference that is already denoted to some degree by the use of the alternative spelling in the UK, where the 's' in 'practise' denotes a verb and is a 'doing word'. Accordingly, where and when it helps, leadership that is

[601] Ibid., 31.

emergent and ongoing (that which aligns with a verbal understanding) will be denoted in this thesis by the Anglicized spelling.

However, I acknowledge that much of the study of the ‘as-practice’ form is in the American grammatical format. Therefore, for the reader’s sake, the secular model of leadership, ‘leadership-as-practice’, remains denoted ‘as-practice’ with the ‘c’. This broad term encompasses both ontologies. It is accepted however, that in the nascent attempts to develop the theories it has not always been easy to interpret what is being said. But by continually identifying what ontology is being foregrounded, one can chart a way through. As mentioned above, in this thesis where I want to emphasize the verb, or want to focus on the process, the ‘s’ spelling will be used. This allows for there to be some disruption in the text which can itself then become constructive.

As has been said, LAP is a unique construction to other models of leadership, such as distributive, collective, or relational leadership, because there is this commitment to release leadership from a role-driven, entitative, influence-based structured relationship. These latter forms of leadership still require influence between entities, namely leaders and followers. However, this relationship of influence is often found to be problematic, exploitative, an abuse of power, and anything but gender neutral.

In contrast, exponents of the LAP approach notice leadership emerging and unfolding whenever and wherever it appears. It notices the whole process rather than attributing a result to the one at the end of a line. It is therefore an egalitarian approach with inbuilt holistic perspective. LAP seeks to depict immanent collective action that emerges mutually in discourse, and in recurring patterns of behaviour moment by moment.

Responses to a Leadership-as-Practice View

It is acknowledged that the practice view has of course not gone uncontested. Margaret Collinson in the 'Leading Questions' article in Leadership 2018[602] questioned whether the 'as-practice' movement is that new at all, arguing that it merely represents another perspective of the post-heroic view. Collinson reminds of the explicit feedback Raelin received at a conference in March 2015 at Bradford University which warned him against making 'excessive claims for LAP'.[603]

Collinson argues that the essential weakness of the LAP view is the neglect or denial of existing asymmetry between leaders and followers. She writes, given the way organized hierarchies institutionalize the leader-follower dyad, 'it is fanciful, misguided and just empirically mistaken' to ignore 'the continued impact of hierarchies on the organizational behaviour of leaders, managers, and workers' which 'cannot simply be airbrushed from analysis by a combination of wishful thinking and the language of collectivism'.[604]

Also writing in the Leadership Journal 2018,[605] are five academics who then respond to Collinson's criticisms. They think the LAP orientation towards practice aligns with the debates in leadership that problematize a 'leader-follower' ontological assumption. Kempster argues contra Collinson, that LAP does not reside in the virtues, traits, and behaviours of the actor, but rather LAP is agency, and leadership emanates from emergent collections of practices.[606]

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[602] Margaret Collinson, 'What's new about leadership-as-practice?' in *Leadership*, Sage Publications, Issue 14, no. 3, (June 2018): 363-370. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1742715017726879
[603] Ibid., 365.
[604] Ibid., 366.
[605] Joseph A Raelin, et al., 'Practicing Leadership-as-Practice in Content and Manner' in *Leadership,* Sage Publications, 14, no. 3, (June 2018): 371-383. https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1177/1742715017752422
[606] Kempster, 'Practicing leadership-as-practice in Content and Manner', 372.

Further, Kempster acknowledges that the study of LAP is arguably in what he calls stage 1 of the evolution of a stable construct, namely the introduction of the concept and the early stage of definitions and methods. Stage 2 is evaluation and augmentation while stage 3 is consolidation and an accommodation of the concept in various applications. He suggests that the LAP approach will go through these stages and that the evaluation of stage 2 is to be welcomed.[607]

Brad Jackson likewise responding to Collinson, writes that the aspirations of the LAP approach 'align especially well with the boards on which I have served', and he notes 'how many social entrepreneurs are driven not just by the desire to foster social change but also to find an alternative more collective and non-hierarchical way of working together'.[608] There is a 'renewed sense of agency' gained by engaging with a practice approach.

In response to Collinson, I would want to say that an LAP approach does not need, in the first instance, to seek to undo structural established hierarchies. LAP has the potential to create and produce change at any level, and within the existing settings. Learning to see leadership emerge in my own team, changing how we do the work of working together in my own office arrangements, encouraging agency to unfold through small changes I make – matters for the whole. Such that structural change will itself come. Further, if one can begin to show better outcomes and a material enhancement in the sense of well-being and meaning-making within a group, or team of three, or a division, then productivity and capacity to deal with wicked problems goes up, which will materially benefit the whole. There will be an effect.

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[607] Ibid., 373.
[608] Jackson, 'Practicing Leadership-as-Practice in Content and Manner', 379.

In the same article, Brigid Carroll in response to Collinson's critique about the way the LAP approach grapples with power asks, where does power reside? She notes that on the whole power moves and 'exists in a ceaseless series of mostly conversational choices and openings that present fleeting possibilities to shape, move or confirm a trajectory'.[609] She argues that a LAP approach is better able to engage in this 'soft' power: 'LAP likes to get intimate with ambiguous spaces containing 'soft' power', and she concedes that 'there is no analytical space for practice outside power relations but there are more layers and categories of power relations than Margaret allows'.[610]

On the other hand, Simpson in the 2016 book acknowledges that some criticize the LAP approach for naivety in failing to address issues of power. Simpson argues however, that criticism around power 'is founded on an entitative understanding of power as some "thing" to be acquired, possessed, and exercised over others by self-actors or inter-actors'.[611] She argues that in a processual non-entitative view, power and influence are embedded in the trans-actions, 'but in a way that shapes movement rather than as a property of discrete entities'.[612] So the power resides in process as 'power-with' rather than 'power-over'. She inserts a quote taken from the writings of M. P. Follett arguing that 'genuine power can only be grown, it will slip away from every arbitrary hand that grasps it … Coercive power is the curse of the universe; coactive power, the enrichment and advancement of every human soul'.[613]

In relation to agency, 'if organizational practice is understood as the unceasing flow of actions by means of which work is accomplished, then leadership surely resides in those emergent turning points, or leadership moments that re-orient the flow of practice towards

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[609] Carroll, 'Practicing Leadership-as-Practice in Content and Manner', 378.
[610] Ibid., 378.
[611] Barbara Simpson, 'Where's the Agency in Leadership-as-Practice' in *Leadership-as-Practice: Theory and Application,* ed., Joseph A. Raelin (New York: Routledge, 2016), 169.
[612] Ibid.
[613] Ibid.

new, or at least different, directions'.[614] This offers fruitful study, but Simpson observes that studies in this form of leadership are 'few and far between' because 'although decentering leadership is an intellectually appealing idea, it is still difficult to operationalize in practice'.[615]

Simpson offers a tabulation to show the comparisons between three practice approaches in relation to agency and power: the entitative approach where focus is the leader practitioner, the entitative-soft approach where the focus is on a set of practices approach, and the non-entitative, relational ontology where the focus of leadership is flow.

In the first, agency is found in self-action. This is typical of classical leadership perspectives, and it is this self-orientation and the personal exercise of power that has prompted calls for new approaches to leading. The heroic leader is an example of one who contains within himself the power to act. In the second, agency lies in inter-action, and in the ability to influence another. Power is exercised over and against another within dyadic and networked social frameworks. This inter-actional approach underpins the leadership perspectives where the leadership is shared, pooled, or spread.[616]

The third category is the non-entitative, relational ontological form of leadership where leadership emerges as a flow of practise (and practising). Here agency lies in the fact of the leadership as becoming and emerging in and by what people are doing together, rather than in any one subject. The leadership moments occur as re-directions and re-orientations in the flow of practise.

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[614] Ibid., 170.
[615] Ibid., 170.
[616] Ibid., 173.

Agency lies in the fact of the process. Agency is found in the continuing unfolding movements of the social transactions. Power in this approach lies with the people who can work with others, and work with the process as it unfolds.

An Update from Raelin in 2022

In June 2022, an interview with Joseph Raelin was published in 'Leadership'[617] in which he discusses some of the issues and critiques thrown up by the LAP approach through a number of clarifying questions. In relation to practice theory, he says that there is an emerging substantive theory about practice. He defines practice as a 'core unit of social analysis being not a mere description of what people do but a set of activities that have meaning-making, identity-forming, and order-producing characteristics'.[618]

So, Raelin notes that leadership is a collective performance tied to a range of activities and social arrangements. Leadership is not imputed by the name leader, nor is it tied to position in a hierarchy which then relies on succession. Instead, leadership is said to occur when social processes change the trajectory or turning points in a flow of practice. He considers leadership as a change in direction or trajectory which occurs when the entity changes course.

Raelin argues that by focusing on what makes a practice effective and productive, and on what changes a practice, we can delve more deeply in discourses, events, activities, feelings, i.e., those sayings and doings that create and shape leadership. He says that LAP refers to the 'in-the-moment entwinements',[619] and he argues that it is by studying these micro and meso moments that create meaning and create turning points that then

[617] Joseph A. Raelin, 'Update of 'Leadership-as-Practice "Practice Theory": Featuring Joe Raelin' Interviewed by Jenny Robinson in *Leadership,* Sage Publications, Volume 18, no. 5, (October 2022): 695-706. https://doi.org/10.1177/17427150221100594.
[618] Ibid., 697.
[619] Ibid., 698.

improve outcomes and organization, that one can learn where leadership occurs. So, he poses questions that might arise such as, why do we sometimes hum along as a team, and other times disagree so that communication is cut off, or why does a power point advance leadership in one setting but not in another?'[620]

An issue with LAP for an ecclesial perspective comes clear when Raelin confirms that there is no driving morality or ethic behind a LAP approach. Raelin describes it as post-humanist or neo-humanist though he insists it is not anti-humanist. However, this need not be a bar to application in an ecclesial context as what is being emphasized here is that LAP emerges from material-discursive flows of practice rather than from any one individual with a particular agenda or moral ethic informing their actions.

Raelin argues that a post-humanist standpoint and the lack of any moral ethical standpoint means it is better able to ward off blind reliance on autocratic leaders and demagoguery.[621] He says it offers the mechanism by which a system can check its practices. The participants in social critique have a better chance to resist oppression or other forms of inequity than attempting to resist on their own. LAP relies on principled pragmatism, rather than a set of universal principles to direct people in their ethical decision-making.

In relation to power abuse, Raelin acknowledges that LAP operates in conditions of soft power – in which internal debates proceed as a contest to decide who has the right to orchestrate or author. Leadership then occurs less from a vertical transmission of instructions and more from collective horizontal reflection – in-practice among those connected to each other doing the work.[622] But it can intervene in conditions of hard

[620] Ibid., 697.
[621] Ibid., 701.
[622] Ibid., 702-703.

power. He argues that a LAP response can be emancipatory to the extent that it promotes critical dialogue.

Also, in the interview Raelin comments on the nature of the discourse and the use of new language. He deliberately uses quotation marks around ‘practice theory’ in order to suggest its different connotations and meaning. Employing grammatical devices is intentional allowing the commentators to engage in the discourse without being reduced to pre-existing meanings, or being controlled by only what the discourse is already saying or can say. The use of a new grammar and the invention of new words is a notable feature of leadership-as-practice, and practice theory more widely.

He also mentions the use of hyphens, which both he and Brigid Carroll utilized to indicate the unity of leadership with practice. However, he admits that in the early days there was disagreement about this. But he argues that the ‘terms are interconnected because it is a dynamic within practice that may materialize in leadership’.[623] Raelin is keen to distinguish this as, ‘if we were to just talk about leadership practices, any activity of a person named a leader could qualify’.[624] So it is the use of the hyphen that makes it clear he is not interested in practices in which the focus is on what a designated person does. The interest is in what it is within all the associated elements constituting a practice – its artifacts, its setting, its time, its people, its voices, its dialogue, its gestures – that produce leadership.[625]

Raelin sees no conflict with LAP and democracy arguing that the very nature of a LAP approach is democratic. The participatory ethos leads to collective – and therefore

[623] Ibid., 697.
[624] Ibid., 697.
[625] Ibid., 697.

democratic – action. In relation to application, recent studies of LAP have focused on education and health care management. There is no mention of a religious context.

Language of Leadership-as-Practice

One of the notable characteristics of Raelin's work, and the body of work around LAP, is the way the writers are seeking to 'seize' discourse, reaching for new ideations in the discourse of leadership. Raelin plays with the English in the use of phrases such as 'leaderful practice', and then later 'leadership-as-practice' making use of hyphens – as mentioned above. Raelin emphasizes through the use of the hyphen that he is studying leadership AS a practice, which can be both a noun and verb, and he is interested in 'changes occurring in the flow of such practice'.[626]

By interpolating into the lexicon these new linguistic devices that are on the face of it wrong or awkward grammatically, it forces one to re-think and test what is being said. The new linguistic forms allow for the creation and then articulation of something new.

So the writers seeking to describe the ideation of leadership-as-practice as continuous social flow, or leadership emerging in a flow of patterned actions, utilize words and ideas such as practising, moving, unfolding, emergence, inter-actions, co-actors, collaborative, co-constructing, collective, patterns, engagement, performance, creating, processual, shaping, sharing, diverging, inter-subjectivity, meaning-making, identity-forming, order-producing, turning points. Leadership is experienced in the change moments that occur in the flow of co-acting, and leadership emerges from within social flow.

Accordingly, if one adopts a LAP perspective then the discourse itself takes on additional significance. As I have already argued, discourse is more than a means for reporting and communicating what has been decided upon – a carrier of a person's decision – the

[626] Raelin, 'Update of 'Leadership-as-Practice "Practice Theory"', 697.

discourse is understood, because of the linguistic turn, to be an agent of change itself having meaning-making effect for social practice. But now, in the LAP model, there is additional significance. For if in a LAP approach leadership emerges in social flow, then to extend the metaphor, the discourse is now the 'water'. Or to change the metaphor, the discourse is now the mechanism by which the leadership is itself made, or the fire in which leadership is forged. The discourse is now the medium in which leading takes place.

Accordingly, adopting a strong processual approach or relational ontology for leadership invites a radically different way of thinking and talking about leading. Simpson writes, this 'new language must contest the dualistic assumptions that carve our worlds up into discrete and opposing entities, turning attention instead towards movement, flux, flow, emergence, passage, continuity, confluence, diffluence, turbulence, and smoothness'.[627] She then quotes the need for stingy use of nouns, generous use of verbs, and extravagant use of gerunds. This is clearly a call for leadership to be staked out on completely fresh lexical turf.[628]

The LAP approach does just this. The non-entitative and entitative-soft practice approaches lay hold of the language of leadership in new and innovative ways. This is because the lexicon of leadership as we know it struggles to communicate what the LAP view is trying to promote and achieve because it is derived from a way of thinking and speaking that is strongly entitative based. That is, when we think about something – we go to the thing first. Our language of English structures experience around the noun first, and what it is doing secondly – the cat sat on the mat, the cow jumped over the moon. Not, sat the cat on the mat, or jumped the cow. It can be said like that, and to great oratorical or poetic effect, but I would argue that this order does not form part of the

[627] Simpson, 'Where's the Agency in Leadership-as-Practice?', 165.
[628] Ibid.

regular and natural way of speaking English. So, if the performative and processual nature of leadership as emerging social flow in practice/se is to be foregrounded, new linguistic formations must be devised and introduced so that the aspect of doing, sitting, or jumping can be foregrounded ahead of the subject doing it.

In fact, scholars are finding ways of creating new ideations and linguistic formations to express the ongoing performative aspect of the processes and practices in and out of which leadership emerges. The obvious example of this, as already mentioned, is in the use of hyphens. These are inserted into words to create emphasis, speak of a specific unity, and to distinguish from more conventional tropes. Other examples of this are the words ‘trans-action’, ‘trans-actors’, and ‘inter-action’, which intend to denote activity and movement across rather than the ‘transaction’ as a thing in itself. Or, for example in the use of the word ‘entitative-soft’, where the hyphen allows the concept of entity to be qualified.

Here then, in contemporary leadership theory, is a clear attempt to lay hold of the language of leadership – the established discourse with all its restrictions and presuppositions – and describe, identify, and co-create something different. Raelin, and the other contributors to his book, are deliberating engaging with the constructing power of the discourse to say something new about leadership. And not only do they say something about leadership that has not been said before, identifying it as outflow and process rather than person, or gift, but they seek to operationalize the constituting and determining effect of the discourse itself. By interpolating into the discourse a new ideational formation, the on-going constructing capability of discourse can have meaning-making effect for the practice of leading.

This specific engagement with discourse and the operation of the LAP model employing a new vocabulary is especially important for this thesis since I am concerned with the nature of ecclesial leadership discourse. Here is a good example in secular leadership

studies where there is intentional interpolation into discourse of a new device to say something that is not being said. Or, to say something brand new. It shows that engagement with the discourse in this way is possible, and it proves Fairclough's point that a new ideation can have effective ability in generating new ways of thinking about what leadership is, and where leadership is to be found.

Conclusion of Encounter Phase

As I now draw to the end of this chapter, I want to ascertain where the inter disciplinary conversations with practical spirituality in chapter 7, and leadership practice theory in chapter 8, have led me.

From Ward's work, it is apparent that a participative form of leadership is needed if the church is to find the fluidity necessary for adaption to a 21st century reality, and to that end Bonnie Miller-McLemore's redefining of spiritual practice, and a consideration of developments in secular as-practice theory have been productive. The work of Miller-McLemore offers a widened and more egalitarian definition of spiritual practice and a practical approach to what 'living out faith' means. Miller-McLemore has done much to close the theoretical gap between 'everyday life' spirituality and ecclesial spirituality or the spirituality of religious retreat.

I would suggest that it is reasonable to take the widened definition of 'spiritual practice' that Miller-McLemore proposes and include within it leadership with all its myriad of daily tasks. Leading, just like reading, writing, eating, or bathing the baby, can be a spiritual practice.

Then if I turn to practice theory and an 'as-practice' approach to leadership encountered in this chapter, I find a processual model of leading that finds leadership emerging in the flow of practise, or in practices, and as a part of an unfolding dynamic between people.

However, Crevani and Endrissat write that empirical research into a LAP approach that is based on a relational ontological view is still scarce. There is a need to define more clearly what is meant by 'leadership' when taking a practice approach.[629]

> Although both foci (practices and practice) are possible within an 'as-practice' perspective, empirical research in the latter instance is still scarce. So far, most studies follow an entitative-soft understanding and focus on the practices of leaders as they do leadership and, hence, do not fully explore the possibilities opened up by a practice perspective that actually foregrounds action and emergence rather than individuals.[630]

So therefore, since there is still relatively little study in leadership that foregrounds the action and the outgoing flow or emergence of the lead-ering activity, there is opportunity for me to see if that 'as-practice' form can be put to work within an ecclesial setting. And given that the setting of the English church is one in which more fluid forms of ecclesia are needed according to Ward, engaging an as-practice perspective which foregrounds action and emergence would seem to invite synergetic outcomes.

In addition, the new lexicon that comes with the thinking around practice from the likes of Schatzki, Bourdieu and Polanyi, as well as the practice approach of LAP, offers ecclesial discourse a raft of new thought forms and ideations that can begin to pull apart religious pre-set views of leadership and *offer a new non-entitative* understanding of what leading might be. Leadership-as-practice speaks a language that has creative potential to break down the reliance on existing dualisms, entitative approaches, and reliance on structures, and to build an environment in which flow is prioritized. The vocabulary offers new metaphors and a different way of seeing, it offers a new leadership horizon to aim for, what could be called a 'new imaginary' in the field of leadership.

When one moves leadership away from an entitative view – leadership, and leading itself, become processual and a negotiated dialogical exercise. Hence the importance of the

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[629] Crevani and Endrissat, 'Mapping the leadership-as-practice terrain', 45.
[630] Ibid., 32.

discourse which becomes both the site for, and means of, leading. Leadership 'comes to' in consensus, collaboration, participation, and the connections made in careful communication, speech, language, and dialogue. Thus, in LAP the discourse takes on additional significance because when leadership is conceived to be a *negotiated* concept within a shared interactive process, then that process becomes critically important as the mechanism or the medium in which leadership emerges.

LAP does not rely on a structural model or form of organization, although it can operate within them. It is not reliant on a chain of command, or decision-making being reserved at the top. LAP can take place anywhere and at any time and across organization. It is not going to be contained to the board room or the parish office – it can take place in the corridors and by the kettle. It could take place in the pews. Thus, LAP looks to hold great potential for an ecclesial context because LAP is automatically characterized by participation of people; it is concerned with what people do together. Participation is thus at the core of LAP which means there is a resonance in play with a participative member-centric approach to the Body of Christ.

In conclusion then to the Encounter phase of this project, I posit that systematic theology does require there is a distinct and delineated view of the Spirit as differentiated, perfecting cause, and as constituting relation of the church. Secondly, I would like to suggest that the activities of leading can be reconceived as spiritual practice just as Miller-McLemore reconceived childcare. Thirdly, leadership-as-practice, and in particular LAP with relational ontology that describes leadership as emergent can offer an innovation to the classical models of leadership usually relied upon in ecclesiology.

The potency of the LAP approach is that it brings a radically different lexical field and ideational formation of leadership to leadership discourse. A LAP model based on a

relational ontology where leadership is 'unfolding emergent dynamic'[631]sees leadership as emerging from social flow and from a shared participative understanding of what we do together. It would seem therefore to offer a new ideational formation by, or through, or in which the ecclesial leadership discourse could engage with pneumatology and so repair the deficit I have found in leadership discourse.

At the end of this inter-disciplinary conversation, I am now able to progress to the last phase of this thesis better equipped to make a proposal in which the ideations of spiritual practice and leadership-as-practice are brought together. In so doing, I come back to the ecclesial leadership discourse with a new vocabulary that can have constructing and innovating effect. The language of LAP offers a new imaginary to ecclesial leadership discourse, one of emergence and flow.

[631] Crevani and Endrissat, 'Mapping the leadership-as-practice terrain', 23.

Transformation Phase

Chapter 9

A Proposal for Leadership-as-Spiritual Practice

Introduction

I now seek to bring the integrative nature of practical theology and pneumatology to bear as I draw the threads of conversation together and make my proposal for repairing the deficit in leadership discourse. This is the last phase of the practical theological approach as laid out in chapter 3. By way of introduction, I lay out the 'runway' on which my proposal lands.

The starting point is the fact of a reforming agenda underway in the Church of England. The reforms pertain to various aspects of ecclesial leadership. Leadership is critiqued as managerial, and mechanistic, and other issues noted inter alia are, clericalism, the elision between ordination and leadership, the need to encourage lay participation, and processual matters around decision-making. Martyn Percy's phrase, the church is 'over managed and theologically under led' seems to encapsulate his diagnosis.[632]

Further, the cultural shift towards subjectivity and experiential spirituality does not seem to be reflected in wider ecclesial leadership discourse. And though there is evidence of a desire for an experiential spirituality in religious life, as noted by Heelas and Woodhead, and there is an embracing of spirituality in the secular workplace, these trends do not seem to be reflected likewise in the reforms, nor in leadership discourse.

In looking to respond to these matters however, rather than jumping straight to thinking about practices – and suggesting even more change – I take an original step for a piece

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[632] Percy, *Future Shapes of Anglicanism,* 29.

located in practical theology. I start by considering discourse first. Following Fairclough, I rely on the fact that discourse is constructive and constitutive of practice, and I acknowledge that where there is no use or presence of a subject/object in a text, that one will struggle to attain subjectivity as there is no revealing of being. (Recalling Wittgenstein, without use the 'sign' cannot 'live'.[633]) So, if there is discontent with leadership practice, it is reasonable and logical to look at the discourse that is shaping it. There is a warrant to investigate the discourse further.

The content analysis reveals a disparity in how the Persons of God are named, addressed, and therefore related to in leadership discourse. It offers empirical evidence to show that an equal account of the Spirit is not made. There is a clear lack of explicit engagement. Instead, I find a bias at work towards a Patrological-Christological view of God. This assessment, both quantitative and qualitative, allows me to deduce that there is a theological – and specifically a pneumatological – deficit in leadership discourse.

This deficit in discourse is problematic because it means a full account of God as Trinity is not expressed, and because of the causal relationship with praxis, it indicates that leadership practices are also likely to be under-resourced pneumatologically. Accordingly, I am arguing that a full account of the Spirit needs to be given in leadership discourse in order to repair the theological deficit found.

In chapter 6, in conversation with Pannenberg and his systematic theological perspective, I find that a testimony to the Spirit is reasonably required since the Spirit as perfecting Cause is leading the church (and creation) into future truth. Furthermore, since the church is constituted by both Son and Spirit, there is a relation to and in and with Spirit to be experienced. A mistake is not seeing participation in the life of the Son as being through the Spirit-relation experienced in the present. Participating in the life of the Son means

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[633] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 135.

taking on a life of obedience to the leading of the Spirit bearing the concerns and will of the Father.

So, having learnt from Pannenberg that there is a theological rationale for the Spirit to be made known and experienced as present in discourse, the question is 'how?' Is it possible to find a way to repair the theological gap or adjust the bias in such a way that an account of the Spirit can be given in ecclesial leadership discourse – one that will have constructing affect for practice?

To begin to answer that question, I first have to re-assert the link between the activity of the Spirit and materiality. The Holy Spirit indwells the Body of Christ and the bodies of believers. This means there is necessarily a turn to thinking about what we do, and how we experience God in the body – a turn to 'practice'. In chapter 7, I considered the work of Rogers and Zahl, and then the notion of 'spiritual practice' which has become the theoretical site and intellectual repository for the church's pneumatological experience.

However, in conversation with Bonnie Miller-McLemore, I learn the experience of spiritual practising is complex as Miller-McLemore wrestles with a paradigm of outward facing religion and inward spiritual retreat. To address the binary divide, Miller-McLemore seeks to redefine what 'spiritual' practice is by extending the ideation of spiritual practice to include any activities 'that invoke, evoke, and form faith in our outward lives'[634] even the everyday and mundane tasks of childcare. If I adopt Miller-McLemore's approach, ecclesial leadership can be described as spiritual practice.

I then look to secular leadership studies, and find that here too, there has been a turn to practice. In chapter 8, I consider the leadership-as-practice theory which offers a non-entitative approach to leadership. This depicts leadership as 'immanent collective action

[634] Miller-McLemore, *In the Midst of Chaos,* 20.

emerging from mutual, discursive, sometimes recurring and sometimes evolving patterns in the moment and over time among those engaged in the practice'.[635] This identifies leadership as detached from entities and identifies instead leadership emerging in social flow. Leadership is described as the outcome of relational inter-acting.

Such a practice approach is of interest because, arguably, it can undo the inbuilt 'Platonic' prejudice in discourse towards a materialized affective pneumatology that has been embedded within the church's historical approach to pneumatology.

So, through these conversations a creative synthesis has begun to appear on the horizon – a synthesis between the doctrinal imperative to bring the Spirit to the fore, a non-entitative leadership-as-practice perspective, and the notion of spiritual practising as construed by Bonnie Miller-McLemore. I would like to suggest that approaching ecclesial leadership through a lens of practice – adopting an as-practice led approach – offers a creative pathway to a new understanding of leadership that is both resolving, and logical.

To sum up this introductory section therefore, through encounter with the work of Pannenberg I have found there is theological justification to seek a strengthened pneumatology in practice in the church which is jointly constituted by Son and Spirit. Further, it is because of Pannenberg's re-directed pneumatological program that there is warrant to seek a renewed understanding of the Holy Spirit as One who leads. And therefore, as One who is to be present and made known in ecclesial leadership discourse.

The question as to how that is to be accomplished is the task of this chapter.

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[635] Raelin, 'Introduction to Leadership-as-Practice', 3.

Leadership-as-Spiritual Practice (LASP)

In this section I want to make an original application of the as-practice leadership theory to the ecclesial context, and I will do this by re-framing the 'as-practice' form in a pneumatological key: 'leadership-as-*spiritual* practice' (LASP).

To do this I propose a synthesis with the ideas around spiritual practice that Bonnie Miller-McLemore offers. That is, I want to approach leadership, not according to previous leadership theories in terms of gifts, role, calling, function, or management, but as non-entitative. This allows me to reconceive leading to be a process in which the spirit life is sought in its broadest sense, as a means to flourishing but also as a process in which the relation the Spirit has with the church is practised, such that there might be an attainment of new knowledge, spiritual know-how, and discernment.

What I am doing in this synthesis is to re-cast the conceptualization of an as-practice approach through the critical theme of spirituality. I am suggesting that re-casting ecclesial leadership 'as-*spiritual* practice' offers a means by which an account of the Spirit can be given in leadership discourse. This is because the as-practice ideation with a relational ontology (that is, non-entitative) opens up both theoretical 'room', and room in practice, for a participatory approach in and with Spirit.

To be clear, the proponents of the leadership-as-practice paradigm are not offering a model that is itself driven by an overriding moral ethic – in LAP 'parties rely upon diverse, changing, and even conflicting perspectives and co-construct and negotiate ethical meaning as they work together.'[636]

[636] Update of leadership-as-practice 'practice theory': Featuring Joe Raelin Interviewed by Jenny Robinson, Leadership, (Sage Journals, Volume 18, Issue, 5, 2022, 695-706), 701.

What I am suggesting is that there is a resonance to be observed between the language and lexicon used in LAP discourse and the overriding ethic of LAP towards flourishing through connection, and the broader cultural drive towards spirituality and collective meaning. For example, the LAP language around process, flow, emergence, the use of a relational ontology where leadership is 'unfolding emergent dynamic'[637], and perceiving value as emerging through shared participatory understanding of what we do together in connection. So although, Raelin himself insists that there is no overriding moral tone, I would want to suggest that the LAP discourse sits well in, and aligns with, its cultural 'spiritual' setting. Leadership-as-practice is a material form through which value, kindness, well-being, and positive management outcomes can be achieved.

Furthermore, I want to suggest that this register of vocabulary around process, flow, and emergence chimes with a Christian understanding of the move, creativity, and activity of Spirit as explicated by Pannenberg. And what I am proposing is that, if this language of LAP which is already resonant with what some would call 'spiritual' in that it seeks holistic outcomes, connection, and participation, is refracted through a Christian lens which specifically seeks to bring the Spirit to the fore, then the as-practice approach can be experienced as a specifically Spirit-engaged, and Spirit-led, process.

There are four initial theoretical moves I need to explain to give clear geometry to this proposal. The first intellectual move is to establish the ontology of this leadership form as having 'relational ontology' following Crevani and Endrissat's approach[638], or 'processual' if I adopt Vivienne Sergi's approach.[639] The ideation of leadership is understood to be specifically non-entitative. The notion of leadership is detached from an entitative concept

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[637] Crevani and Endrissat, 'Mapping the leadership-as-practice terrain', 23.
[638] Crevani and Endrissat, 'Mapping the leadership-as-Practice Terrain', 23.
[639] Viviane Sergi, 'Who's Leading the Way? Investigating the contributions of materiality to leadership-as-practice' in *Leadership-as-Practice: Theory and Application,* ed., Joseph A. Raelin (New York: Routledge, 2016), 114.

of leadership (a person, role, job, status, pay grade), and from the practices (entitative-soft) to non-entitative practice or practise.

By adopting a relational/processual ontology I ground 'leadership-as-spiritual practic/se' in ongoing interaction: *leadership-as-spiritual practice/se as a form of social flow*. This means that leadership emerges in and from the social flow of collective unfolding inter-actions, connectivity, and communication.

Let me clarify the distinction. This is not leadership 'filled up with' or made up of certain qualifying practices, or even specifically spiritual ones. (This would be an entitative-soft view). Many in the charismatic or Pentecostal ecclesial streams as well as the established churches acknowledge the need for spiritual practices to ground ecclesial leadership. This proposal is *not* that. I am not taking the role of leadership and 'filling it up' with lots of spiritual practices and then naming it as such – no more than one can fill up a jar with whole plums and then call it plum jam. Rather, this is about reconceiving the whole, taking the ingredients – the task/works/people/setting – and treating them differently so that something new is created. This is instead an approach that seeks to recognize leadership itself as emanating *from* a flow of social interactions and collective practising.

The second intellectual move which is original to this project, is to build into that process participation in Spirit. There is to be synthesis with pneumatology. Thus leadership-as-*spiritual* practising specifically identifies leadership as emanating or emerging from a process that is integrally interactive with the Holy Spirit. In leadership-as-spiritual practise the social flow is not only inter-action with one another but is also one that specifically interacts in the Spirit-relation. In Shotter's essay he speaks of LAP as being essentially dialogue[640] – in this case then – LASP is a trialogue. The 'conversation' that occurs with

[640] Shotter, 'Turning Leadership Inside-Out and Back-to-Front', 133.

one another opens out to be a 'conversation' with the Spirit as well. This is a key idea to which I will return.

The aspect of 'spiritual' denotes a material turning to the ways of Spirit – ways of recollecting, reading of Scripture, prayer, waiting, listening, and seeking together the 'mind of Christ', of seeking a collective 'embodied' and affective knowing, of spiritual sense-making, of learning awareness of His presence, of practising the gifts of Spirit, and of revelation. This includes active sensing and intuiting at 'gut' level the wisdom of any moment. It includes collective wrestling with questions such as, 'where is the Spirit leading us?' 'How do we know what is right?' 'What are we hearing?' Such a turn allows for the creation of uniquely new ends, unforeseen previously, and for new means to those ends.

The third move intellectually, is to characterize the nature of the process, the practices, and actions. If the ontology is relational/processual and leadership emerges in the collective flow of unfolding social inter-actions, then leadership is identified by and found in the series of social interactions and practices that have *organizing effect.* Thus, not every practice or experience of social interaction, conversation or shared moment will be identified as 'leading' – but only those, as Sergi writes – that in some way propel the action forward. If I adopt Sergi's delineation, the actions that characterize leadership practice will have directing, shaping, or ordering effect.[641] Sergi argues in relation to LAP that LAP is made up of many small actions, 'a mundane bricolage'[642] that bring directing, shaping, or ordering effect.

The last specific intellectual move I make is linked to the previous one. It is to name leadership-as-spiritual practice as *effect*. Thus, in relation to the overlapping concepts of

[641] Sergi, 'Who's Leading the Way?', 118.
[642] Ibid., 123.

agency and materiality, if LASP is a verbal idea and grounded in process, then there is an intellectual move to recognize that leadership is found in and observed as the *effect of* that collective practising of participation, and not the cause.[643]

A way of picturing this might help at this stage: imagine an old bobbin used for 'French knitting'. In this exercise, wool is repeatedly wound around a series of pins at the head of the bobbin. As the wool is wound together in this way a long-woven cord starts to emerge from the bottom of the bobbin. Here is a picture of LASP. The practices are the pins on the head of the bobbin, and the winding of the wool is the flow of social interaction in Spirit around these practices. As these blend and mix, leadership is knit together and comes forth.

Therefore, in relation to the notion of materiality (not a reference to substantive subjects and objects), I am arguing that leadership materializes in the social flow – in the social interactions, conversations, and collective practices of the moment by those involved. Leadership happens in situ, in the moments, as the agreements are made or as differences clash, in the discussion, responses, the turns and changes of mood, sense, direction, and social flow. These micro-moments that direct, shape, or order, collect creatively as leadership. Leadership is therefore *de-centred* to the place where the relational work is carried out. Agency thus belongs to the whole group involved at any moment.

This means that ecclesial leadership arises as the outcome of the participatory process – as the result of participatory practising in Spirit and with one another. Our leadership becomes in spirit, and the outcome and the effect is directly related to our 'keeping in step' with the Holy Spirit. As a result, it can be stronger than decisions or plans made unilaterally. The woven cord – leadership – is stronger as it has included many points of

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[643] Ibid., 113 and 122.

contact and social interaction. The fact of the process itself therefore works towards an underlying legitimacy and veracity, and arguably divine enablement, of the outcome.

Since it is a triadic process, agency has to be ascribed to the Spirit of God. When a group or a team prays and seeks God at any point, then I believe there is an empowering and enabling that comes to bear. The Spirit of God brings agency. Agency in LASP is therefore found both in the group dynamic but also in its unique pneumatological participation.

Moreover, because it is overtly and publicly a process that is practising the relation with Spirit (who is leading us as perfecting cause), the outcome is theoretically one that will be edifying for the whole Body of Christ. LASP is theoretically better able to offer outcomes that are, for example, emancipatory, holistic, creative, or loving because they will be Spirit led. So, not only is the process itself inclusive and democratic, gaining legitimacy by virtue of its inter-activity, the outcomes that materialize will be holistic, ethical, equitable, merciful, and so on.

Having made these four intellectual moves, a more precise delineation of leadership-as-spiritual practice is now possible:

'Leadership emerges in and from the flow of unfolding social and spiritual inter-actions that make room for the Spirit'.

I will for shorthand sometimes refer to the 'flow of unfolding social and spiritual inter-actions' in this definition, as 'participative practise'. By adopting a specifically non-entitative approach based on a relational ontology, that is, leadership emerges-as-we-are-practising together, I am saying that participative practising in the Spirit relation by the Body of Christ (in constituent parts) can become directive for that Body as a whole.

The Philosophical Ground

From these first four theoretical moves it is now apparent that leadership-as-spiritual practice requires different philosophical grounding from other ecclesial leadership approaches. It is grounded in a practical pneumatology, and it locates its sociality in a pragmatist or practice view. I will now consider these in turn.

I am proposing that leadership-as-spiritual practice is rooted in practical pneumatology, which requires that one understands believers to be both wholly physical and spiritual. This crosses any gnostic divide, as the Spirit life materializes in the mundane. Further, the Church has not been immune to the quest of modernity for certainty and scientific explanation, and it has been hard to resist the idea that what is physical and scientifically proven is more real than the faith-based claims of Scripture. Arguably entitative forms of leadership lean into this 'modern' need for objectivity, certainty, and the preference for a scientific organizing method from which managerialism developed.

Re-grounding the form of leadership into Trinitarian theology allows for a blending of physical and spiritual that has the advantage of being true to the identity of the church as the Body of Christ breathed in or enlivened by Spirit. This also of course reflects the nature of the incarnation itself and the person of Jesus Christ: 'only begotten, acknowledged to be unconfusedly, unalterably, undividedly, inseparable in two natures, since the difference of the natures is not destroyed because of the union, but on the contrary, the character of each nature is preserved and comes together in one person and one hypostasis'.[644]

Shotter acknowledges the need for a shift in ways of thinking in his chapter in Leadership-as-Practice. He argues for a different, more fluid ontology to the 'atomistic,' Cartesian

[644] Part of the definition from the Council of Chalcedon.

ontology basic to current, rationalistic forms of thought. This of course accords with new forms of thinking in physics but also with a Christian view. Once

> we switch from thinking and talking of 'things', and of human activities – from within that Cartesian-Newtonian, mechanistic world, in which everything exists in separation from everything else, to thinking of them from within an *organic* or *living* world of growing and developing 'things' in which every 'thing' is dynamically related to every 'thing' else – then everything changes.[645]

So, we need to see leadership 'not as something *within* particular people, but as something particular people are *always within*, and which is always open to being fashioned among them in *this, that*, or *some other* particular fashion'.[646]

When we seek to read the relations first, and acknowledge our 'intra' connectivity, our enquiry around solving a problem for example, can find alternative solutions. The way we read the problem itself alters. Instead of my problem requiring my solution, the issue is seen as belonging to the whole, relations are explored as being part of the holistic solution. Through participation in relation, the outcome – or leadership solution – emerges collectively. Shotter argues that one has to go 'upstream' before the fact to begin enquiries around leadership, and 'begin *from within the midst of the complicated and diffuse flow of the many intra-twined activities occurring out in the local circumstances within which we are embedded'*.[647] This requires networked organic thinking.

Mechanistic and compartmentalized forms of institutional leadership also refer us back to the problems that evolve from a Patriarchal-Christological bias in discourse. When the Spirit is not an equally present member of the Trinity our ecclesiology accommodates forms that are grounded in an understanding of God as male, monarchical, and hierarchical. This understanding favours male, priest led roles, a word-based functionalism, and patriarchal structures. Different accounts of leadership can arise when

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[645] Shotter, 'Turning Leadership Inside-Out and Back-to-Front', 135.
[646] Ibid., 134.
[647] Ibid., 135.

the Spirit is afforded equal differentiation as Person in the Trinity, and where both Son and Spirit constitute the church. The distinct movement of Spirit brings to the fore a qualitative difference to our thinking about what leading is, and where, and how leading should be expressed.

Leading that is Spirit-led and true to the Body of Christ will look and feel very different. It is embodied by the whole, collectively, and individually. This is not therefore about a personal experience of Spirit that allows for a private pneumatology to operate hiddenly within a functional, stratified institutional setup. Rather, there is to be a collective participation in, and working out of, the Spirit-relation through the whole body.

Most noticeably perhaps is that the language will depict embodiment. Leadership-as-spiritual practice leans into affective language to reflect what the Spirit-relation is doing in the Body and bodies. We need to be honest about the need to 'feel' the way towards an agreed end, rather than 'know' that end. Using the language of sense allows us to enact the embodiment of the Spirit. Leadership-as-spiritual practice will be seeking sensibility in any given situation as to what the Spirit is saying, and doing, and talking about it.

Secondly, locating leadership in the field or ground of practice is appropriate theologically. It is a spiritual practice approach – a social approach that foregrounds process and networked relations and practise of the Spirit-relation – that has the potential to untie the prejudices against a material practical pneumatology that has lain at the heart of the church's engagement with pneumatology for so long. Both in relation to the way in which power and authority are shared and experienced, but also in relation to the dualisms that still lie at the heart of a Western approach to spirituality. This is the point that Nicolini makes about subverting the demotion of practice. Practice theory encourages a reassertion of a grounded practical approach and acknowledges the truth of embodiment of felt knowledge and spiritual know-how. This overturns the Western philosophical bias

towards intellectualism and 'epistemic' knowledge – scientific enquiry, and analytic rationality.

The appeal of practice theory is its capacity to describe the features of the world we inhabit as being routinely made and remade using tools, discourse, and our bodies, and it lies in its resonance with post-modern contemporary culture that experiences the world in flux, and as more deeply interconnected than previously thought.[648] As Raelin argues, 'as we begin to recognize an epistemology conceiving of knowledge as a fluid rather than a permanent form, we need to turn to practice as a perfectly acceptable place to learn to lead'.[649]

Accordingly, it is within practice theory where reparation of the ecclesial discourse can begin. Locating this proposal in practice theory is an appropriate response to the theological deficit around the person and activity of the Third Person of the Trinity, since the church finds a more appropriate intellectual location for understanding the nature of its own being, and how to live and lead 'together' within a pragmatist view. Making a 'turn to practice' allows for a networked relational approach and asks that pneumatology become practically recognizable in the life of the church, which requires that it is made explicit and visible in discourse.

Ecclesial leadership based on a pragmatist perspective can arguably more readily understand and express the inter-relations of its members, appropriate a theory of leadership that fits the nature of this 'in-corporation', and reflect its constitution by both the Son and Spirit. This contrasts with an ecclesiology built on a structuralist social theory that relies on institutional power and authority which then offers a functionalist social ethic.

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[648] Nicolini, *Practice Theory, Work and Organization*, 2.
[649] Raelin, 'From Leadership-as-practice to leaderful practice,' 207.

Thus, a practice/pragmatist approach within ecclesiology allows for, and even encourages an undoing of old lines of authority and power, the inbuilt structural norms, and seeks a re-evaluation of 'what we do together'. Practice theory and a pragmatist perspective is not anti-religious or essentially inherently unchristian. It is an a-religious perspective that seeks to better describe how we thrive together.

As I end this section on the philosophical grounding of LASP, it is apparent that in seeking to establish ground, I run up against various issues. For example, how does this proposal conflict with other forms of existing leadership structure already in place in the church, or how does one 'put into practice' this kind of collective approach, or a notion of sense and sensing, is it practicable or even desirable? I will deal with these issues in the section on possible objections at the end of the chapter. At this stage, I want to give some sense of how the joint constitution of the church by both Son and Spirit might impact leadership and leadership models more generally.

The first thing to say is that it would be erroneous to suppose that this model of LASP only pertains to the 'Spirit bit' of the joint constitution of the church as though the constituting of the church is something that can be cleanly divided between Son and Spirit. Rather, it is because the Spirit is part of a *joint* constitution that the Spirit needs to be present in ecclesial discourse. Ecclesial practices are *equally* grounded in the Son as of the Spirit. Indeed, in relation to leadership, there is good reason to suggest that Jesus of Nazareth himself was led in and through the enabling power of the Spirit, and with the Father, and thus his own life incarnate was borne from a flow of communion.

Secondly, following on from the first, I am not wanting to imply either, that existing entitative orders of leadership and ministry such as the Anglican bishops, priests and deacons are grounded on the 'Christ bit' of the constitution of the church. Some would argue that these constructions are *not* in fact grounded on either Son or Spirit but on historical necessity, and institutional priority. Others do argue that these models are

Christologically based. However, whatever the theological, ecclesial, or historical justification is for these specific orders, it is outside the exact focus of this thesis.

Thirdly, however, I will argue that LASP can sit with, and be put into practice within, entitative models of church leadership. The non-entitative approach can work 'inside' the entitative function, making it a particularly helpful, pragmatic, and applicable. So where there is a paid entitative position such as administrator, or children's worker, or role such as dean, or priest, the value of seeing leadership as emergent from within a social process is that all those in these positions, all those who are tied into a function of the entity of the institution, can nonetheless participate in the fluid process from which leadership emerges. LASP allows Spirit-led leadership to emerge across human and institutional demarcations. LASP can operate fruitfully across such divisions.

Indeed, I would like to suggest that it is precisely because LASP can subvert these divisions that LASP is useful for discourse. It offers a mode of leading that leads us out of our own ecclesial categories. It asks that whatever the project, or whatever the complexion of a group meeting – all taking part are to be intentionally empowered to be part of the conversation from which leadership is to emerge.

De-constructing Leadership-as-Spiritual Practice

Having given shape to the synthesis and established its philosophical grounding, in this section I now seek to identify the essential structuring and organizing nature of the practise itself.

1) Six qualities will shape the social and spiritual interaction.

LASP requires that our engagement with one another will be collective, creative, capacious yet containing, connective, and offer or force a point of crossing. These qualities or characteristics are those that, I suggest, allow for, and encourage, healthy egalitarian social interactions, and spiritual participation.

I worked out these categories and built this typology before much later (a couple of years in fact) coming across Joseph Raelin's '4 c's' needed for 'leaderful' practice, which I mentioned in chapter 8. There is some overlap, but none was intended. However, that Raelin had already laid out this typology supports my thinking about the nature and character of the social interaction needed if an as-practice approach is to be successful. It suggests I am working in the right direction and that this proposal runs with the grain of what has already gone before.

The first shaping quality of leadership-as-spiritual practice is that it has to be collective. LASP includes all those engaged in any project or work. So this might be the parish council meeting around a Quinquennial report trying to decide priorities. It might be a music band working on the set songs for Sunday. It might be a diocesan team trying to work out how to encourage prayer during Lent, or a dean of a cathedral sitting down with the finance team. Leadership-as-spiritual practice will emerge in the collective. LASP does not emerge if there is only consultation, or a 'hearing' by one who decides. Shared decision-making is key. LASP comes to in the round.

LASP will be creative, finding the 'out of the box' solution, and bringing to bear the unknown known. In practice the group at work will want to pray for words of knowledge, wisdom, and inspiration. LASP seeks to tap into the spiritual intelligence and embodied knowing of the Spirit revealed to the Body of Christ.

The actions and social practices that allow leadership-as-spiritual practice to emerge will be generous. LASP comes to in actions that are broad and capacious. Social flow happens more easily when the nature of the sociality is understanding, when it can stretch, be patient, and offer space. Social interactions are shut down when there is grievance, offence, or a mean spirit. There has to be a giving of the benefit of the doubt, trust, and loyalty, and therefore inbuilt relational capacity.

However, when there is conflict, which there certainly will be, the actions and practices that still allow leadership to emerge will be those that can contain that conflict. Where there is no containment, no holding of the emotion, no clear maintaining of the social space for all, then again social inter-actions are shut down, and any leadership will be blocked.

This leads to the fifth headline quality – the practices and social actions that allow LASP to come forth will be connective. They must be such as to draw people into relationship. So social skills around mature conversation, healthy conflict resolution, good negotiation, communication, regulation of emotion all serve to keep connections to one another open. Where relational connection is lost, LASP will struggle to emerge.

Lastly, the social behaviours and practices must point forward. There have to be crossing points into the future. This may take the form of a decision-making moment around a vote, or it may be a deadline that forces a group to get some work done, or it may be a debrief after a time of prayer when a consensus is reached. These are the crossing points that carry the work over into implementation.

2) LASP maps onto the Move of Spirit

Since leadership-as-spiritual practice emerges in social flow, it is better suited to adapt to change and redirection. Entitative forms of leadership are less able to adapt and reflect the inherent flow in the move and role of Spirit – rather they bed down glimpses of truth or institutionalize an experience rather than running with them. Not only that, forms of entitative leadership tend to serve first the institution or organization in which they exist, preserving and stabilizing, rather than flexing in focus ‘as the wind blows’.

Leadership-as-spiritual practise – the verb – taps into ideas of growing, of changing, of increasing capacity, of gaining maturity and expertise, of increasing in spiritual ability, acuity, and know-how. Further, as leading activity is mapped onto the move of Spirit, the

shape of the leadership that emerges becomes increasingly Christ-shaped. This is a move that unapologetically takes the activity of leading towards humility, and towards ecclesial corporeal engagement, and towards a more meaningful expression of servanthood.

However, this does not mean I am suggesting LASP is necessarily linear. The 'flow of unfolding social and spiritual inter-actions' that I have described are not necessarily sequential. That is, in conceiving LASP as ongoing social flow, I might invite an approach that identifies leadership in a formalized logic or linearity such that the 'spiritual' bit is tacked onto the end or beginning of a conversation as some form of 'spiritual' act or response.

This is so often the case in many Church of England scenarios. Meetings are held and decisions are taken, and at the end a cursory prayer or closing grace is said. This is the mistake of linearity, the spiritual act repeatedly becoming an opening formality or closing afterthought. This is not the kind of process I am describing. Spiritual practice creates space in time and place within the collective to bring an embodied spiritual 'know-how', a habituated embodying of the Spirit's presence to all the ways of interaction.

Thus, I am arguing for a participative practice and for participative practising that allows for and makes room for the Spirit to *inhabit the whole process*. So the shape of the practise makes room for, and is illuminated by an awareness of, and participation in, the Spirit-relation. This means that leadership-as-spiritual practice will '*emerge from the flow of unfolding social and spiritual inter-actions that make room for the Spirit'*. To try and express better the inter-connection here, I want to squash the language together and refer to 'social-spiritual inter-actions', or 'spiritual-social inter-actions'. The social and the spiritual need to overlay each other in a way I cannot write.

Another way to conceive how the Spirit inhabits the whole is to turn this into an image. If the six headline qualities of LASP mentioned above can be imagined as six planes or

faces of a cube. The space or room inside the cube is that which the Spirit can inhabit. The characteristics of leadership-as-spiritual practise are shaped so as to be able to host the Spirit. This recalls the work of Grint and his identification of leading as sacred[650] – leadership-as-spiritual practice makes room. The social interacting and leading activities need to be suffused with or infused by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The notion of collective participation in the Spirit-relation is intrinsic to the emergence of leadership as spirit-ual practising. Leadership emerges, the truth comes, decisions can be made, a way becomes clear when we practise participating in the Spirit-relation, together. As the Body of Christ participates in the Spirit-relation, so there emerges a collective 'sense' as to the right outcome, or as to the correct path to take, a strong sense that a decision is ill-judged, as well as a personal sense of one's own involvement. There is a daily and ongoing production of direction.

I want to suggest that it is this participation in Spirit that ensures that the practise does not have the 'soft landing' that formed the critique levelled at the practices of Bonnie Miller-McLemore, as discussed in chapter 7. In her description of the formation of faith, the critique was that in the end the practices were humanistic, failing to make the Divine or the spiritual connection she was aiming for. This is a critique I too need to avoid. Such a soft landing is prevented when the practices or the array of activities that might be undertaken, connect and meet in a spiritual dynamic with the Person of the Spirit. It is the intentional participation in Spirit that makes the practise pneumatologically shaped, and the shared practices of leading from which leadership emerges gain pneumatological assist.

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[650] Grint, *Leadership: A Very Short Introduction,* 117, 126.

3) A ‘co-constructing conversation’.

If I am saying that leadership emerges from and within *‘the flow of unfolding social and spiritual inter-actions that make room for the Spirit’,* can I drill down yet further to identify what that ‘social and spiritual interaction’ is? Even though this invites further empirical study to observe the turning points where leadership arises in practice, I think it is possible to tease out a notion of ‘inter-action’.

I want to suggest that a ‘building block’ for social and spiritual interaction is ‘constructing conversation’ – or more accurately still, a ‘constructive Spirit-led conversation’. This is both dialogue between the actors of an organization – the inter-action, and the shared trialogue with the Holy Spirit – the intra-action of divine participation. Communication is the social skill or practice that lies at the heart of leadership practise, and the co-constructive conversation is the piece or ‘lego brick’ that builds the constructive capacity of discourse.

Viviane Sergi observes that the ‘communicational nature of practices is rarely acknowledged in the practice perspective, while it is clear that interactions and practices happen through communication’.[651] She draws on what is called the CCO perspective – the communicative constitution of organizations. This view ‘builds on the idea that communication is not simply happening in organizational settings and around organizational phenomena, but that it is constitutive of them – in other words, communication materializes them’.[652] Leadership is thus viewed as a fluid process emerging from communicatively constituted interactions of a myriad of actors.[653]

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[651] Sergi, ‘Who’s Leading the Way?’ 125.
[652] Ibid., 116.
[653] Ibid.

By making the Spirit an actor in these co-constructing conversations and interactions, the Spirit is brought right into the centre of the social interaction from which leadership emerges. The Spirit is given place or room in the broader conversation which is in effect the leading process. It is by making the Spirit a part of the co-constructing conversation itself, that an account of the Spirit can now be made in the discourse.

Thus, if I now take my working definition which is that LASP emerges from a *flow of unfolding social and spiritual inter-actions that make room for the Spirit,* I can be more explicit about these inter-actions and explain that one form of these inter-actions will be a *flow of unfolding co-constructing conversation with the Spirit, and one another.*

4) Reception

If I now turn to what a 'co-constructing conversation' is, an obvious point to make is that it is both speaking and listening. The notion of a conversation must include a notion of reception. It is in the waiting, and listening, and hearing in conversation that understanding grows between the participants, and discernment and the 'feeling' towards the right course can emerge. Cross referencing back to Todd's work, this 'sensing' towards understanding might also be articulated in terms of interpretation – a group hermeneutic is found for a particular text or event such that a collective understanding is reached.

Reception can occur in many ways and so it is impossible to generalize, but there will be a 'felt' sense, an embodied knowing that will come. The impartation of guidance can also be direct through dreams or other revelatory events. Hearing from God may be easier in silence, so silence is often necessary, but the experience of silence itself is not hearing

from God. The point is that we have to learn to listen and have to intentionally seek hearing by giving attention to God.[654]

In relation to the work of the Spirit in the body, Zahl writes,

> [I]f the Spirit is the one who mediates God's presence by "actualizing" the work of the Father and the Son "in relation to us," and if a crucial site of this actualization is the material body, then insofar as we are failing to look for the Spirit's work of conviction in the realm of bodily experience we have blinded ourselves to a major site of pneumatological activity. It is no wonder the Spirit might thus appear to be absent from the world.[655]

I want to suggest that this holds true too for the notion of guidance and 'knowing'. It is because the work of the Spirit has not been materialized in the body, that in our search for guidance and leading we have ignored the possibility of reception of the Spirit in our bodily experience or in our fellowship together. I am arguing that in the ongoing practising of co-constructing conversation that makes room for the Spirit we learn together – in practically realizable ways (according to Zahl) – what the leading of the Spirit 'feels' like.

So, in practising co-constructing conversation with others and with the Spirit of God, learning to hear will be key. This will take time to learn, and assimilate into 'conversation', but through practise it can arguably be improved. This is no different from learning listening skills in personal relationships: practising listening to what the other is saying and finding ways to reflect this accurately. Leadership-as-spiritual practice will involve finding words to express what is heard and felt.

Shotter argues that it is in the back and forth of conversation and relation, in the parrying and riposte, that leadership outcomes flow. Shotter using this dialogical-hermeneutical account to describe leadership-as-practice adopts the metaphor of a river – one can imagine the whole process of leadership-as-practice as beginning with drops of rain ...

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[654] Scripture writers emphasize this point repeatedly. Israel was commanded by Moses to 'Hear, give ear, pay attention to' first and foremost so that they could 'keep and do' the law, so 'that it may go well for you'; Deuteronomy 6. 3-9.
[655] Zahl, *The Holy Spirit,* 181.

which then run into streams, which then intra-mingle into rivers … which after much wandering run into the sea with gravity giving a direction to the whole flowing process.[656] He argues that this describes well the dialogically structured process that we conduct from our first understanding of a new situation, the wandering and meandering that takes place in the assessing and working out of a new trajectory for action, until a decision is made. There is 'a kind of dialogical, back-and-forth process'.[657]

5) Leading conversation

So, if I am arguing that 'co-constructed conversation' is an identifiable constituent part to the social process from which LASP comes forth, what makes a conversation a leading one? To answer this, I return to the delineation by Sergi that there needs to be something of the ordering, shaping, and directing about it, something that propels the action forward.

Caroline Ramsey offers a dissection of a conversation in which she seeks to note moments of leadership, or where other tactics are deployed such as deflection, or blocking. As she dissects the conversation, she notes that at any one moment there are choice points that turn the course of the conversation, and the leading role is taken by different people at different times so that the leading is owned within the social circle. Ramsey identifies that the conversation has a trajectory, and that the conversation must travel along

> topic lines, towards agreement or conflict or, perhaps, towards the performance of phenomena such as winning, losing, concluding, or leading. … as we watch or hear a conversation travel, so we will be able to notice times when the trajectory or the mode of a conversation changes. I call these moments of leadership'.[658]

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[656] Shotter, 'Turning Leadership Inside-Out and Back-to-Front,' 145.
[657] Ibid., 145.
[658] Caroline Ramsey, 'Conversational Travel and Leadership Phenomena,' in *Leadership-as-Practice: Theory and Application*, ed., Joseph A. Raelin (New York: Routledge, 2016), 204.

It takes practise to converse in such a way that there is a generative and propelling outcome to conversation – we have to learn to speak to each other and the Spirit, and learn to listen to one another and the Spirit. Those who will carry the leading baton the best will be those who ensure that direction, or something positive, and productive, is taken away from conversational encounters. If, as I am arguing, leadership is found in and emerges *from* a series of co-constructing conversations, then this might explain why so often poor communication is linked to poor leadership.[659] Leadership fails to come forth when conversation fails.

The significance of my focus on co-constructing conversation for an ecclesial setting is that leadership can now be identified *away* from historical institutional and organizational structures. It can be found in the interactions and conversations that we have with each other informally, as well as formally. It means that there can be influence from the ground up – it allows leading to be offered by those who would not otherwise be invited into the executive meeting, or Bishop's staff room. It means that we can identify leadership emerging in the flow from one connection to another: from conversation to conversation, from meeting to meeting, from a team decision to a report that then sets in motion change. Learning to track this flow, being aware of the inflection points, and the leadership moments as they arise, will be part of the practise.

Thus, co-constructive conversation (as dia/trialogue) is the discursive mechanism which threaded together over time, and with a variety of actors in different contexts, produces leadership. LASP is the outflow of direction and orientation that emerges from that process of constructing conversation and communication.

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[659] A link Johnson and Hackman make in *Leadership, A Communication Perspective,* 6.

6) The ideation of *practice* carries an implied meaning of progress, and improvement through *practising* which speaks to a theological imaginary of growth, and reproduction.

By adopting a practice perspective, I am implicitly making this point. There is ongoing enhancement of skill in the repetition of the same action so that as time goes on, the nature and quality of the action being practised improves, but also the *practising itself* improves. The people involved will get better at leadership-as-spiritual practice. There is increased connectivity and understanding, there is better working out of the crossing points in the conversation, there is improved capacity, there will be improved containment of the leading moments in each conversation, and the conversations will become more efficient, and so on. Thus, in relation to the Spirit, this means there can be improvement in discerning what the Spirit is saying, hearing his voice, increase in aptitude in prophecy, or receiving wisdom and guidance. These actions are pursued and practised like any other skill.

Accordingly, the practice perspective forces us to approach the Spirit-relation just like any other relational experience that needs practise. It is a practice perspective that uniquely allows for perception and discernment in the Spirit-relation to be practised so collective wisdom can grow. It means those engaged in LASP cannot ignore spiritual gifts. Such endowments are needed, and these too will need to be part of the practising.

When there is spiritual connection that is relational, observable, felt, tangible, then those engaged in the spiritual exercise can begin to sense together where the Spirit is leading – and the following of that leading becomes the basis for leading others. The practices do not hollow out or feel empty, but the Spirit-relation materializes as practical recognizable effect. The expression of this spiritual perception in affective language – as per Zahl – can thus become part of leadership vocabulary. The leadership lexicon is then able to reflect what is ‘being felt’ about a course of action, rather than decisions being framed solely in terms of ‘what I think’ or in terms of ‘ought’ or ‘should’ and institutional norms.

7) The outcome is optimal experience for the Body of Christ.

The ideation of 'flow' which has already been used in relation to the processual nature of the production of leadership is also a useful metaphorical expression for describing how a positive outcome is achieved, the optimal teleoic experience for the Body in Spirit. Flow carries Biblical resonance and is a natural referent for the work of the Holy Spirit, but it also links to scientific anthropological studies about the nature of well-being and optimum experience in human life.[660] When a human is experiencing the optimal connection between challenge and productivity, the body experiences flow and can enter into a flow state that produces deep satisfaction and happiness.[661]

What I am suggesting is that when participation is practised in the Spirit in concert with others there will be a transformative process that – likened to flow – can bring deep satisfaction, joy, and a sense of well-being. I am proposing that the chafing nature of leadership is not a necessary evil. Leading ought to be a blessing and be good for the life of the Body.

8) Leadership-as-spiritual practice is an adaptive form.

Leadership-as-spiritual practice allows for adaptation and change. It can be culturally sensitive and quickly move to meet local and social needs and projects. So for example, I propose that LASP sits well with and fits the type of 'Liquid Church' Pete Ward advocates. Leadership experienced as a form of social flow runs with the grain of the needs of a church that is seeking to serve a more fluid and fast changing cultural context. On the other hand, the recall of the notion 'spiritual practice' means that there is already a deep resonance at work within the ecclesial tradition that eases its introduction.

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[660] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The classic work on how to achieve happiness* (London, Rider, 2002).
[661] Ibid., 71-76.

Possible Objections

How would LASP work in practice? I foresee objections in relation to issues such as accountability and demarcation of roles. It is conceded that there will always be the need for good management. Of course, plans, budgets, buildings all need to be managed and stewarded well. The complexity of organization cannot be naively ignored, and accountability is part of this. However, tasks can be delegated, and direction, strategy, vision, and guidance as to 'next steps' are not matters that need only be in the hands of one or two. Rather where there are directive steps for the whole, and a collective discernment is needed, then the form leadership-as-spiritual practice can offer the collaboration that leads to a wider consensus.

Another objection could arise in relation to the assumed elision between ordination and leading (or, as it often is, leading and managing) which I have mentioned throughout this thesis. Requirements and rules around ordination have become essential filters for who lead, and how, and when. These mechanisms have become – some argue a necessary – part of the institutional machinery of the church itself, but arguably this has also allowed for an entitative approach to dominate thinking about leadership. This has led now to practical outcomes where, for example, in rural parishes (including my own) there is no service on a Sunday because of a lack of 'ordained' minister.

I would want to suggest that some of the practical problems that are experienced 'on the ground', (some of which are the 'wicked problems' Grint referred to), could find resolution if a relational ontology was allowed to redirect priorities. Through a non-entitative approach to leadership, the notion of ordination could be de-limited, and tasks better shared. The notion of leading and ordination/priesthood could be uncoupled so that leading need not attach to the priestly work of presiding at the eucharist but rather more to a notion of collective guiding, influencing, and steering the local church – to a co-constructing process as to programme for example. The Apostle Paul seems to divide up

the work of ministry into a five-fold team,[662] and within such a team, one could imagine the model of leadership-as-spiritual practice working very well.

Another potential objection, and indeed something that impacts Anglican practice, is the history and suspicion surrounding the move and work of the Spirit. A publicly practised experiential spirituality has failed to become part of the institutional make-up. As Jantzen points out, men from their own positions of power, 'appropriated the concepts of mysticism and spirituality, either by retaining their power but reserving them for male use, or by divesting them of power and thereby domesticating and feminizing them'.[663] By speaking of, and preserving experiences of Spirit as 'mystical' and thus private and 'other', and by defining spirituality to be a subjective experience of (mainly) women, the formal leaders of the church historically did not then have to take seriously or take into account any 'direct' or personal revelation from God to a lay member.

In relation to possible objections around safeguarding, the church has become more risk averse and there has been a collective regulatory clamping down. A critique therefore of a leadership-as-practice approach might be that it would blur necessary accountability, or dilute protections in place. However, the need for regulation and protection need not mean that leading cannot function as-spiritual practice. On the contrary, I would like to suggest that in process with the Holy Spirit and one another an accepted approach could be found in given situations where a more finely attuned solution is needed.

In fact, I would argue that the need for fine tuning is the reason why the Spirit *needs* to be part of leading conversation at a social and ground level. For example, the top-down decisions taken during the covid period left large church buildings empty for many

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[662] Ephesians 4.11.
[663] Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, 347.

months.[664] Leadership-as-spiritual practice is the discursive vehicle that could have brought the Spirit into the leading conversations that were going on at episcopal level between Archbishops and bishops, but also at local level between clergy and communities, allowing for mutually beneficial community-led outcomes.

A Shift in Discourse

I want to conclude this proposal by linking the notion of as-practice, and the improvement that practising brings, to an imaginary of flourishing and natality. By making room for the Spirit in leadership discourse in and through 'co-constructing conversation', the lexicon of leading can begin to employ and utilize a different vocabulary drawn from an entirely different imaginary. There can be an accompanying lexical shift that will have shaping effect on practice.

The significance of the 'as-practice' view is that it allows me to bring to the leadership discourse a network of ideations that are not currently in play in the ecclesial leadership lexicon. An example of lexical difference is found in John Shotter's essay where he uses an unusual vocabulary within an organizational management context. He employs ideas such as 'dynamic stabilities', or 'livingness', 'inner workings', 'fluid streams of activity', and 'intra-mingling'. These phrases sound out of place, yet such ideations allow for a broadening of potential discursive networks of meaning.

Likewise, I posit that leadership-as-spiritual practice or 'leadership-as-spiritual practice/se' can itself become a net-expression, or an over-arching idea within leadership discourse. It can incorporate new metaphors and employ new linguistic forms not usually used, or commonly engaged with in the day-to-day functioning of leadership, and formal accounts

[664] I had personal experience of a 'Stop' sign on the door of a neighbouring church preventing us from coming close. Such was the outcry in the parish of South Pool, the church warden opened the church and instigated a 'one-way' flow system. My own tiny parish church of Wilcote was allowed to stay open only because the local landowner held sway over the vicar. All these local scenarios were opportunities for 'leadership-as-spiritual practice'.

of leading. This will allow new semiotic connections to develop in the ecclesial and spiritual context. It offers a new lexicon that can have ongoing meaning-making effect. This is the significance of relying on the fact that discourse is not only reflective of our sociality, but constitutive of it.

Therefore, instead of the activity of leading being directed by ideations of control, authority, headship, individual decision making within institutional hierarchy, organization, regulation, and power – a quite different set of values can shape leading. The associated language of leading becomes less about rules, regulation, and compartmentalization, and becomes about learning, listening, sharing, consensus, improvement (as mentioned above), finding a way, interpretation, sense, feeling, and flow. The imaginary of leading shifts.

Thus, what I want to suggest is that not only is the 'as-practice' approach to leadership able to address the gap or bias found in ecclesial leadership discourse by giving an account of the Spirit, but also that, by engaging with the Spirit in the practise of 'co-constructing conversation' a raft of new ideations and metaphors can be introduced into the discourse itself.

However, I am aware of the criticism that will question whether it is actually possible to shift the imaginary around leadership in the teeth of history, and years of entrenched language use. Is it possible to draw on alternative representational meanings such as 'practic/se', 'making room', 'realizing flow' or 'flourishing'? Can LASP throw up a strong web of signifiers and a new network of semantic and semiotic practices determining for the concept of ecclesial leadership in practice?

On the face of it, the quick answer is 'no'. But, if what is known about language use and discourse is true – that the use of a word defines its meaning and that the ongoing reiteration of particular words and ideational formations in particular situated uses is itself creative and meaning-making communally, as well as being cognitively creative

individually – then the conclusion becomes a logical 'yes'. The interpolation of a new ideational form into the leadership discourse is the equivalent of throwing a new ball onto the pitch. The 'language game' of ecclesial leadership is forced to adjust, and an interiorization into practice of a re-imagined notion of 'leadership' can begin to take place.

Of course, it is too simplistic to suggest that shifting the ground of the leadership discourse will be straightforward, or occur straight away, or that anyone will even notice the 'new ball' on the pitch to begin with. This is because in ecclesial tradition the language game of leadership has long been wedded to a series of historical tropes, and scriptural representational signs and stories which are heavily ruled in. In addition, the vocabulary of leadership commonly names the role as the description of the task. Thus, the term shepherd not only describes the job but also the nature of the work, likewise teacher, or priest, or judge. More modern additions to the leadership lexicon, such as coach or boss, or archdeacon, are also verbal nouns, describing the action as well as the role.

These semiotic labels are doubly effective, carrying meaning at two levels. These are the words that are so hard to shift within the discourse as they occupy so much linguistic territory and are efficacious on different levels. They resist change because, for example, to be pastoral is the definition of the word as well as a job title. This is especially true in denominations where that description of pastor also becomes the name by which the leader is called so that the notion of the pastor becomes attached to that personality.

Another example is the job title of priest. Since only the priest is allowed to preside at the Eucharist – calling other people 'priests' or a 'priesthood' simply does not stick in practice. In fact, the word-idea of 'priest' is particularly hard to shift in leadership discourse. For example, Graham Tomlin offers the idea of priest as a helpful way of differentiating a Christian leadership to more secular forms.[665] However, trying to enforce a notion of

[665] Tomlin, *Widening the Circle,* 134-135.

'priesthood' for those in lay leadership when ordination remains the 'marker' fails to be persuasive in practice. The laity are just not treated as priests. They carry none of the ecclesial markers. So, to move intentionally away from a language of leadership to the language of priest, as Tomlin does means one stays on the old ground of discourse staked out by (what Grace Jantzen calls) 'a necrophilic imaginary'[666] and masculine symbolism.

Even when Tomlin describes 'the notion of Christian leadership as participation in a whole other process and power that lies beyond the capacity of leaders themselves',[667] Tomlin does not mention the Spirit. Rather he discusses sharing in the priestly work of Christ. Once again, though the notion of participation is embraced, participation in the Spirit, and participation in the Spirit's leading, is not explicit. (Yet as I have argued, participation in practice is only possible and logical if there is a pneumatological relation.) Instead, 'sacrifice' is the leading image. The last sentence confirms again the Patrological-Christological leaning – priesthood is 'a means through which Christ does his work of presenting the Church as a perfect offering to the Father'.[668]

How then, against such entrenched ecclesial patterns, historical tropes, and modern theological bias, does one engineer change? How can there be reparation of the discourse? I take my cue from Grace Jantzen. 'One cannot jump out of one's language and culture and tradition to some external Archimedean point. The only way of shifting the tradition will be by destabilizing it from within',[669] for there 'is no other place to start from than the language and cultural symbolic which we inhabit', but 'with intent to subvert, new possibilities can open up'.[670]

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[666] Jantzen, *Becoming Divine,* 171.
[667] Tomlin, *Widening the Circle,* 152.
[668] Ibid., 152.
[669] Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, 72.
[670] Ibid., 73.

Janet Soskice also argues that it is possible to destabilize existing imagery from within the use of language. She defends the use of metaphor and argues that far from being a decorative device in theology, the use of metaphor 'goes beyond the linguistic into the realm of the psychological and perceptual'.[671] Her inter-animative theory of metaphor states that the tenor of the metaphor, and the vehicle that presents it, each carry a network of associations that usefully and actively combine to offer new meaning to discourse.[672] Soskice writes that, 'a strong metaphor is not simple comparison but an interaction which creates a new and unique vehicle of meaning; a strong metaphor compels new possibilities of vision'.[673]

Thus, an as-spiritual practice model that has a relational ontology describing leadership as emergent and flow, offers a critically different metaphor and network of associations that can set to work shaping discourse from within. Leadership described as emergence and flow connects to broader notions of life and growth, and a wider imaginary around flourishing. There is the potential for the existing leadership discourse primarily shaped by the ritual of presiding at the Eucharist and which draws from a masculine, religious necrophilic imaginary – one that centres on function, ritual, sacrifice, death, patriarchy, hierarchy, law, and exclusivity – to be subverted.

The argument is that in the interpolation of the ideation LASP new networks of meaning around the notion of practice and practising, participation, conversation, interpretation, and process can begin to seed within the ground of leadership discourse, even against embedded paradigms. The pattern of practice specifically engages networks of meaning

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[671] Janet M. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (London: Clarendon Press, 1987), 18.
[672] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 48.
[673] Janet Martin, *'The use of metaphor as a conceptual vehicle in religious language'* (D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1982), 93.

around process, emergence, and flow, as well as collective endeavour, maturity, growing together, improvement, well-being, and so on.

Arguing for a new imaginary for leadership sits within an interpretation of the Christian scriptures because one finds that the lexical field around the work of the Spirit and His leading activity is likewise marked out by an imaginary of natality and flourishing. The active leading of the Spirit is cast in metaphorical terms of conceiving, breathing, flowering, productivity, harvesting, and multiplication.[674] References and allusions to Spirit are elemental images of water, rivers, winds, oil, clouds, flame and flow, and the Spirit's work is recognized in growth, fruitfulness, flourishing, movement, cleansing, and most significantly, in birth.[675] The inherent strength of a leadership-as-spiritual practice paradigm is that it can draw on this entirely different imaginary and the natality the Spirit represents.

Thus, the strength and value of a leadership model being based on a notion of practice, one where leadership is found in flow, and emerges from a collective co-constructing process, is that it speaks of, and can more easily indicate and witness to, a symbolic of growth and flourishing that is present in Scripture arising from an imaginary of natality. I am arguing that the activity of leading is better shaped by an imaginary of natality and flourishing than one of death, and it is this imaginary that leadership-as-spiritual practice can offer to discourse.

In all this, I am striving for a creative interaction between language and meaning-making in the discourse of leading. By deliberately employing an imaginative figure of speech such as flow, or to bloom, or make room, it is intended that the metaphor as cognitive device serves as transformative suggestion for the process that is being described.[676]

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[674] Inter alia: Gen.,1.2; John 7. 38-9; Acts 2; Ps.,104: 30; Ex.,13: 21; Ex.,35: 31, Isaiah 32.15.
[675] Luke 1.15 and 35.
[676] Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, 186.

Jantzen writes that, ‘metaphor and idiom typically operate precisely by saying something which is patently not true at a literal level, but which conveys an insight in a striking and creative way within the cultural symbolic’.[677] To that end, re-working the discussion about how to lead in an ecclesial setting in new metaphorical terms can be justified. Describing ecclesial leading in terms of ‘leadership-as-spiritual practice’ opens up a new set of signifiers and creative lexical connections not usually used by ecclesial leaders, and not found commonly within leadership discourse, but which can serve as change agents.

Yet, even if the metaphors associated with a leadership-as-spiritual practice approach are not assessed immediately to be successful, or influential in the language ‘game’ of leadership, at least in the handling of a new ball, something will be learnt, there will be some disruption, and some displacement will have occurred.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reached the Transformation phase of the project, and I have proposed the ideational formation: leadership-as-spiritual practice. This is an original ideation for ecclesial leadership discourse. It offers an articulation of the Spirit’s work in the context and practising of ecclesial leading. This is because at the base of an ‘as-practice’ perspective is the building brick of ‘co-constructing conversation’. Practising a co-constructing conversation offers a means by which one can participate in the Spirit-relation, it is a means by which the Spirit can be present to discourse and become part of it. Leadership-as-spiritual practice ‘makes room’ for the Spirit.

Further to the above, employing the ideation of practice allows access to a new associated lexicon. It offers a new vocabulary to the leadership lexicon that points to an imaginary of growth, of optimal experience, and improvement. Such vocabulary will carry

[677] Ibid., 184.

shaping effect and carry fresh modes of meaning into our understanding and experience of leading in practice.

In sum, *leadership-as-spiritual practice emerges from a flow of unfolding co-constructing conversations and social inter-actions that make room for the Spirit, and one another.*

Chapter 10

Conclusion: Repairing the Discourse

Introduction

I have now moved through the three phases of this project: search, encounter, and transformation. Having identified dissonance in the leadership discourse of the Church of England, I researched this by way of content analysis, and found a theological deficit around the person and work of the Holy Spirit. I then encountered three inter-disciplinary voices in conversation, and through these interactions, I arrived at a creative synthesis which I believe has the potential to repair leadership discourse.

I propose that leadership-as-spiritual practice can repair ecclesial leadership discourse by giving an account of the Spirit in discourse through the participatory practise of co-constructing conversation, and by virtue of the raft of new semantic constructions and metaphors that will thereby be introduced into discourse through the ideation of practice.

Return to Reflect on where I Stand

The synthesis of LASP that has emerged from a fusing of different horizons is a form that is non-entitative and which is thus not confined to a title or role or ordination. This is despite my own ministry being defined by ordination. This may seem to be at odds with my own position. Yet it has become increasingly clear to me that there is need to recognize that leadership as gift can be found in a variety of roles and offices across the Body of Christ, and that the ability to lead does not depend on one's title, or pay, or position, but on one's ability to listen to the Holy Spirit who is Leader. So, if I bring together a recognition of the role of the Spirit more fully and the idea that leadership flows out from collective mutual action within the Body of Christ, there is the potential to realize that aim.

I acknowledge that ordination is still most likely to be elided with leadership in function, role, and title in current discourse, which some may view to be problematic. This is not something I can solve or set out necessarily to amend. The aim of this thesis was to bring the Spirit into leadership discourse where there was a gap. Having said that, the LASP form has the potential to operate across the lay-ordained dividing line. So, for those who are lay, LASP is a means of participating in the leading process and offers a meaningful way in which to share in the leadership that emerges. At the very least it is a way for those who are not ordained or in a job role to gain a voice in process.

I think this has become especially important to me as I have become increasingly dis-enfranchised by not being in formal ministry or with a job title while I write this D Phil. I am a lay member to all intents and purposes, and LASP has therefore taken on personal relevance. I have from my position and horizon realized just how important it is to empower lay members, and what a waste it is not to listen to all the voices in the church. It has therefore been from my position as observer, that I have been afforded a perspective which has shown me how important it is to find ways to lead together.

Suggestions for Future Research

How would a leadership-as-spiritual practice model operate in practice? Would it be possible to trace how leadership is formed and shared through the micro-social interactions in any one day? I think it can, and I would like to see if I can identify where leadership 'comes to' in co-constructing conversation, and whether I can identify those conversations where leadership is or is not more likely to occur.

This would be an exercise in diagnosis, and an attempt to pin down the turning points in collective 'listening' that make the difference. Within any co-constructing conversation, it would be useful to find the ingredients in the conversational travel that do or do not make room for leadership to emerge. Could we learn as teams and communities when and how leadership pools or drains away? If I can find the conversational DNA, this would affect

how we train leaders. It would mean we could offer training to church groups so that they can learn co-constructing conversation in and with Spirit that produces leadership more effectively. If a conversation can be effectively dissected, then I am in a better place to help in leadership situations which have gone wrong.

This would link into practising how to hear from the Holy Spirit. What does listening to the Spirit's voice feel like in a corporate setting? Can we find ways to discern and test what the Spirit is saying together in material practical ways? How do we practise leading at levels of deeper revelation so that there can be a sense of flow that brings optimal experience?

In addition, I would like to explore how the LASP model could be used within secular partnerships or charities, or if the LASP model could be a useful approach in cross cultural settings. By listening to the conversations that are taking place in an organization I think one could offer a diagnostic tool to help that organization identify whether their conversations are building a leadership process or not, whether the process is stifled, or whether their collective communications are encouraging leadership to emerge. This may be as simple as guiding a group towards collective prayer, and active inter-personal listening.

Implications and Advantages for Anglican Discourse and Practice

What I am suggesting is not impossible, nor too culturally radical. In fact, I think there is an example documented of something like a leadership-as-spiritual practice process.[678] In February 1959 in the Coventry diocese a conversation began in a clergy chapter meeting that sparked a movement in the diocese leading to a series of events to mark the consecration of the new Cathedral in 1962.

[678] Stephen Verney, *Fire in Coventry* (The Diocese of Coventry, 2010).

Stephen Verney describes a 'rich and burgeoning confusion' that gave birth to new 'companies of Christians'. Clergy and laity were both learners, where the 'one leader of the group is the Holy Spirit'.[679] 'What was demanded of us was a new technique of leadership that blends speaking with listening, that knows how to get others both to speak and to listen, … we were beginning to understand what Jesus meant when he said, "when he comes who is the Holy Spirit of truth, he will guide you into all the truth".'[680]

Verney writes that when 'the right question is asked, "what is the Spirit saying to the churches?" then the possibility is open for the Spirit of truth to speak … This he began to do immediately, and his truth was unfolded to us step by step'.[681] He goes on, '[t]hen we began to experience the Spirit of truth in a second way, as the one who is "the leader of the group", the inner voice not so much of the individual as of the company'.[682]

However, 'our most overwhelming experience of the Spirit of truth was that he led us into *reality*',[683] and when 'the Spirit of reality began to blow through the diocese, he made religiosity look ridiculous'.[684] 'You cannot trap the Spirit in any form or pattern of ecclesiastical organization. … Nor can you contain him in words and shut him up within the chapter of a book; the best one may hope for is to describe him in action as he passes.'[685]

Verney was ahead of his time seeing the problems still faced today. He argues the laity must discover who they are and that the relation with clergy 'must be partnership and at every level the laity must be given and must take their full responsibility in the governing

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[679] Verney, *Fire in Coventry*, 45.
[680] Ibid., 54.
[681] Ibid., 109.
[682] Ibid.
[683] Ibid., 111.
[684] Ibid., 112.
[685] Ibid., 107.

of the Church. At parish level they must share in making policy, hammering it out with the vicar in continuous discussion and prayer'.[686]

Today the Church of England is in a process of change and a sense of dissatisfaction is pervasive. Arguably the current organizational model is cumbersome, hierarchical and the default 'modus operandi' disempowers its body politic. In contrast, an 'as-spiritual practice' form offers an egalitarian participatory leadership form to the Body of Christ. It avoids the issues around power that historical, institutional, and hierarchical forms carry, and it offers a way to meet many of the criticisms highlighted at the start of this project. I would argue it offers a way for change, and for that change to be sustained. An 'as-spiritual practice' approach allows for pneumatology to be appropriately re-located within the leadership discourse.

Of course, this approach will need teaching and training. It will take learning and practice. However, I do believe that although on the face of it this model would require a change in approach, use of time, inclusion of personnel, and so on, there could be a 'soft' start to the way this model is introduced. It would not mean dispensing with job titles and roles – although a re-shaping of organization would be desirable – but it would require a change in the approach taken in those roles, as seen in the Coventry example above.

LASP demands an un-doing of many of the processes we rely on and think we cannot do without, yet these are the very things that so often get in the way of change and cause frustration in the face of decline. I am arguing that there cannot be the change we know we need if we are not prepared to do things differently. I believe a LASP approach is a loose yet more inter-connected form of leading that has the potential to bring leadership solutions to seemingly intractable problems.

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[686] Ibid., 127.

One aspect of application to note is that, possibly controversially, leadership-as-spiritual practice makes a demand on all those on a team or part of a project. At heart, as already expressed, it requires that there be a re-assessment of power and authority so that space is made for the Holy Spirit to be part of the process. This means that, for example, a decision to take on another member of staff might emerge from a series of meetings and co-constructing conversations that have taken place over a period of months in a variety of contexts. A consensus emerges that everyone can own. This can then be handed over to the administrative and management team to implement.

This model will also necessitate a culture shift in how we operate as teams and for example, how formal meetings are chaired. Very basic assumptions about 'who is leading' can be challenged. There still needs to be someone who directs the work-rate of the discussion group but not in a way that that one 'owns' the decision at the end. Calling many of the working groups that operate within Anglican local churches, or in dioceses, 'teams' is a misnomer. A consultative approach with the chair taking the decision is not what this is.

This means too that where disagreements or offences surface, the commitment to being part of the leadership practice forces connection and a 'working-out' of the problem in conversation. If one has 'signed up' to be part of the leadership practice, then there is a commitment to work in and through the conversation. This will again of course require learning. An advantage of this approach is however that it gives an opportunity to practice a better understanding of true teamwork, calls for deeper emotional maturity, and better communication skills.

It is of course much simpler, to consult, assess opinion, and then take one's own decision irrespective of what others might say. I have been in situations where I thought a consensus had been reached and that the direction of travel was one way, but then later found another decision was taken after the group had broken up. There is group disbelief

as to ‘how this happened?’ or ‘how did we get here?’ Leadership-as-spiritual practice is suited to avoid this kind of scenario.

Accordingly, I want to suggest that LASP has the potential to reinvigorate democratic debate that takes place at deanery, diocesan, and national synod level. There is no reason why leadership-as-spiritual practice cannot be put to work at these different levels and in these different groupings. LASP can be adapted to meet the needs of these different working parties and projects, while offering the same essential practice form. The fact that such groups meet regularly, and the personnel get to know each other over time, means that these forums are well suited to becoming the working environment for ongoing co-constructing conversation.

In addition, Anglicans from other nations where there is a greater degree of experience in and with the spirit life can come together around a practical participatory practice in Spirit. This form offers therefore great potential to move across differences and offer a conciliatory approach in learning to lead together. Rather than being divisive, LASP is mediatory and inherently conciliatory since the essential form is a co-constructing conversation in which all have a voice.

The approach to leading that I am advocating here can also have value in ecumenical relations and offer a locus for connective engagement with Pentecostal or charismatic streams of church. LASP offers a way of making decisions together which could arguably align with the current Synodal process instigated within the Catholic church. In addition, LASP might offer some synergy with the decision-making processes of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), and there is the potential to engage with the Quaker

business method.[687] Thus there might be productive overlap with denominations that could be an advantageous tool to use when exploring ecumenical projects.

Further, leadership-as-spiritual practice brings to bear the experiential side – the affective language of spirituality into the field of leadership practice. It gives permission to feel differently about what we do together as church on Sunday, but also in the quotidian. I think this is liberating for many dis-enfranchised people. If leadership is understood to be a spiritual practise that operates across the local Body of Christ, or across the wider church, then those previously silenced or those who are used to spectating, might be encouraged to find their voice.

Lastly, I want to suggest that an advantage will be a reassertion of active faith. The as-practic/se form demands an exercise of belief as LASP is a means by which participation with the Holy Spirit is expected, prioritized, and practised. The human trait to control, regulate, and hold onto what is safe can be subverted.

Last Word

Language and words play an important part in this thesis which has been an attempt itself to 're-say' leadership in a way that makes room for the Holy Spirit in the leadership discourse. I have argued that through the ideation of 'leadership-as-spiritual practice', the church can access a new vocabulary and lexical field for leadership. The philosophical ground can shift to an imaginary of natality. Words materialize meaning and create new realities, but the true and lasting value of leadership-as-spiritual practice is that it offers a way for a deeper pneumatological reality to emerge in practise. One where the Spirit is Leader.

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[687] Burton, Nicholas, and Jonathan Bainbridge. 2019. 'Spiritual Discernment, the Incorporated Organization, and Corporate Law: The Case of Quaker Business Method', *Religions,* 10, no. 1: 35. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10010035.

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APPENDIX 1.

Data Summary for Content Analysis			
References	**God/Father Almighty**	**Jesus/Christ/Son Lord/Jesus of Nazareth**	**Holy Spirit**
In Each Generation: Programme for Reform and Renewal, GS1976	3	3	1
Developing Discipleship. GS1977	43	29	10
Resourcing the Future, GS1978	3	3	1
Resourcing Ministerial Education, GS1979	3	3	2
Simplification, GS1980, Church Commissioner's Report, GS1981.			
Discerning and Nurturing Senior Leaders, GS1982	4	2	0
Talent Management for Future Leaders/Report of Lord Green Steering Group, 2014	19	19	1
Nurturing and Discerning Senior Leaders, GS2026	2	2	0
A Vision and Narrative for Renewal and Reform, GS 2038	13	9	0
(Total)	(90)	(70)	(15)

References	God/Father/ Almighty	Jesus/Christ/ Son/Lord/Jesus of Nazareth	Holy Spirit
An Update on Renewal and Reform, GS Misc. 1150	0	0	0
Setting God's People Free 2016, GS2056	42	53	7
Vision and Strategy, Nov. 2020. GS 2180	1	1	0
A Vision for Lay Ministries, Nov. 2020, GS Misc. 1265	36	11	5
Simpler, Humbler, Bolder: A Church for the whole nation – July 2021. GS 2223	26	43	3 (2 in quotes only 1 in text.)
Vision and Strategy, Nov.2021, GS 2238	4	12	1
Update Setting God's People Free, Nov. 2021.GS Misc.1302	30	15	0
Governance Review, July 2021. GS 2239. (Update Jan. 2022. GS 2249.)	8	14	6
God's People Set Free, Feb. 2022. GS 2248	24	27	0
Synod Documents Total	**261**	**246**	**37** (approx. 1/7th)

References	**God/Father/ Almighty**	**Jesus/Christ/ Son/Lord/ Jesus of Nazareth**	**Holy Spirit**
Faith and Order Commission Reports			
Faithful Improvisation 2015	**148**	**85**	**46**
Kingdom Calling 2020, GS Misc. 1254			
Introduction	45	16	3
Chapter 1	116	41	4
Chapter 2	57	70	9
Chapter 3	90	119	23
Afterword	6	7	0
Total	**314**	**253**	**39** (9 in quotes, 30 in text)

GRAND TOTAL of synodical reports	**723**	**584**	**122** (approx. 1/5th)

References	**God/Father/ Almighty**	**Jesus/Christ / Son/Lord/ Jesus of Nazareth**	**Holy Spirit**
Common Worship: Daily Prayer (London, Church House Publishing, 2008).			
Prayer during the day on Monday, p.29-32 Prayer during the day on Wednesday, p.37-40 Prayer during the day on Friday, p.45-48	12	14	1
Morning Prayer on Monday, p.125-130	21	8	5
Morning Prayer on Wednesday, p.149-154	21	9	5
Morning Prayer on Friday, p. 173-178	27	14	5
Forms of Penitence, p. 91-97	28	12	3
Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England (London, Church House Publishing, 2000).			
Morning Prayer set for Sunday, p. 30-37	24	21	8
Evening Prayer set for Sunday, p. 38-45	23	14	10
Thanksgiving Prayers, p.46-47 p.54-55	7 5	10 14	1 3
Order for Morning Prayer from Book of Common Prayer, p.62-67	24	9	3
Order for Night Prayer (Compline), p. 81-87	22	12	6

Total	**214**	**137**	**50**

References	**God/Father/ Almighty**	**Jesus/Christ/ Son/Lord/ Jesus of Nazareth**	**Holy Spirit**
Holy Communion Order One, Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England (London: Church House Publ. 2000), p.167.			
The Gathering	1	1	1
Greeting		1	
or Easter provision	1	1 1	
Prayer of preparation	1	1	1
Prayers of Penitence	8	4	
Kyrie omitted			
Absolution	1	1	
Gloria	7	7	1
Gospel reading responses		4	
Nicene Creed	11	8	3
Response after prayers of intercession	1	2	
Lord's Prayer	1		
Breaking of Bread		1	
Agnes Dei omitted			

References	**God/Father/ Almighty**	**Jesus/Christ/ Son/Lord/ Jesus of Nazareth**	**Holy Spirit**
Prayer of Humble Access	3 Or 2	1 2	
Invitation to Communion	3	5	
Prayers after Communion	1 Or 1	1 3	1 1
Blessing	4	2	1
Dismissal	3	3	
Total	**49**	**49**	**9**
Eucharistic Prayers A-H			
A	4	5	4
B	4	5	4
C	6	5	2
D	5	8	2
E	5	7	2
F	8	6	4
G	4	4	1
H	6	4	1
Total	**42**	**44**	**19**

References	**God/Father/ Almighty**	**Jesus/Christ/ Son/Lord/ Jesus of Nazareth**	**Holy Spirit**
Common Material in Eucharistic prayers: Opening Dialogue		1 Or 1	1
Sanctus	2	1	
Acclamation		3	
Forms of Intercession, p. 281-287	14	14	8
Eucharist Seasonal Provisions:			
Ash Wednesday to Ascension Day, p. 308-319	23	39	3
Ascension Day to Pentecost, p. 320 p. 321 p. 322 p. 323	 2 6 5 3 (16)	 2 3 5 3 (12)	 6 6 5 3 (20)
Collects: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, p. 376-386	31	49	21
Collects: Pentecost to Advent, p. 406-426	64	74	44
Total	**150**	**194**	**97**

Baptism Service			
Collect	1	1	3
Liturgy	37	47	16

References	**God/Father/ Almighty**	**Jesus/Christ/ Son/Lord/ Jesus of Nazareth**	**Holy Spirit**
Holy Communion Order Two, BCP version, Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England (London: Church House Publ. 2000), p. 228.			
Lord's Prayer	1		
Prayer of Preparation	1	1	1
Summary of Law	2	1	
Omit Kyrie			
Collect for Sovereign	1	1	1
Gospel reading responses		3	
Creed	11	8	3
Intercessions	4	3	
Invitation to Confession	2		
Confession	3	3	
Absolution	1	1	
Comfortable Words	2	4	
Preface	7	1	
Prayer of Humble Access	3	1	
Prayer of Consecration	2	2	
Omit Agnes Dei			
Giving of Communion		4	
Lord's Prayer	1		
Prayer of Oblation	3	2	1
Prayer of Thanksgiving	2	4	1
Gloria	6	4	1
Blessing	4	2	1
Total	**55**	**45**	**9**

Ordination Services			
Deacons			
Excluding Eucharist, and responses 'by the help of God we will', and 'Lord have mercy'.			
Declarations	**12**	**9**	**2**
Ordination Prayer	**3**	**6**	**4**
Whole Service	**42**	**59**	**17**
Priests			
Excluding Eucharist, and responses 'by the help of God we will', and 'Lord have mercy'.			
Declarations	**14**	**17**	**4**
Ordination Prayer	**4**	**9**	**3**
Whole Service	**48**	**74**	**21**
Bishops			
Excluding Eucharist, and responses 'by the help of God we will', and 'Lord have mercy'.			
Declarations	**10**	**19**	**5**
Ordination Prayer	**4**	**5**	**4**
Whole Service	**49**	**55**	**27**
Ordination Services Total	**139**	**188**	**65**
GRAND TOTAL Liturgical Services	**687**	**705**	**268**
Rounding to nearest 10	690	710	270

References	**God/Father/ Almighty**	**Jesus/Christ/ Son/Lord/ Jesus of Nazareth**	**Holy Spirit**
Stephen Cottrell: Hit the Ground Kneeling, Seeing Leadership Differently			0
Stephen Cottrell: On Priesthood			
Chapter 1	37	30	2
Chapter 2	23	25	7
Chapter 3	32	30	7
Chapter 8	56	32	11
Totals	**148**	**117**	**27**
Total refs. to Spirit			40
Steven Croft: Ministry in Three Dimensions, 2008.			
References to the Holy Spirit			
Chapter 1			0
2			0
3			10
4			3
5			0
6			2
7			3
8			4

9			4
10			3
11			6
12			0
13			3
14			2
15			2
Total references in book			**42**

Many of these references come from Scripture quotes that ‘catch’ the Spirit even when not the focus of the writing at that point.

Comparative Samples	Service as a Presbyter: Ministry in the Second Dimension		
Chapter 7	13	19	3
Chapter 8	19	14	4
Chapter 9	17	14	4
Chapter 10	41	34	3
Total	**90**	**81**	**14**
Revised Edition 2008 Chapter 15	15	10	2

Andrew Watson: The Fourfold Leadership of Jesus, 2008.			
Chapter 7	18	35	14
Chapter 8	19	26	11
Chapters 9-12	71	127	6
Total	**108**	**188**	**31**

The 6 references in Part 3 comprising of 4 chapters: ‘Waiting for the Gift’, pages 97-133.

p.107 – the coming of Spirit,

p.108 – the Father gives the Holy Spirit,

p.112 – Spirit who comforts,

p.114 – love poured through the Spirit,

p.125 – the coming of Spirit,

p.131 – Jesus driven by powerful wind of Spirit.

Justyn Terry: The Five Phases of Leadership, 2021.			
Phase 1	52	17	32
Phase 2	15	11	7
Phase 3	32	12	2
Conclusion	11	1	3
Total	**110**	**41**	**44**

James Lawrence: Growing Leaders			
Introduction	22	18	2
Chapter 1	44	37	11
Chapter 2	6	10	1
Chapter 3	88	91	7
Chapter 4	Omit - about stress		
Chapter 5	144	49	10
Chapter 6	26	36	6
Totals	**330**	**241**	**37**

This concludes the Data section.