

## Editorial: Christian Leadership

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On 20 October 2001, the Centre for the Development of Christian Ministry organised a seminar on Issues in Christian Leadership. The two speakers of the seminar, Dr John Ng and Dr Mark Chan, are executive directors of Eagles Communications, a Christian ministry to the churches as well as in the public square. In his lecture, Dr John Ng mapped out the common problems that assail Christian leaders in the modern world, and calls for balance. Dr Ng sketches six practical principles that, if applied, will enable the leader to excel in his role and not succumb to the pressures and trappings. At first glance these principles might appear rather obvious, even 'common sensical'. But in this modern world of ours, in which life is led at an accelerated speed (with no speed limit!), and in which priorities are often overturned, the obvious often escapes us, and common sense has become quite uncommon. In his talk, Dr Ng jolts us from our frenzied stupor and plants our feet firmly on the ground again, helping us to rediscover God's will and purposes for us, and the rationality of our Christian service.

In his paper, Dr Mark Chan continues to provide bearings for Christian leadership by emphasising on the importance of spirituality and character. Only the most naïve will deny the fact that our understanding and conception of Christian leadership is often informed and shaped by secular notions. Once this happens, character becomes subordinated to performance, and integrity becomes overshadowed by eloquence. Dr Chan warns us of this, and launches a critique of perceptions of Christian leadership that have played fast and loose with secular models. He refuses to allow for any other way of looking at spiritual leadership except christologically, through the theology of the cross. For the humility (and humiliation) of the cross turns all modern secular notions of leadership on their heads. The cross compels a great reversal of values and priorities. The cross reveals the true meaning of power – the power of sacrificial service. Dr Chan ends with truth – that troublesome concept for which moderns have very little time and patience. But truth is indispensable to the Christian faith, and the Christian leader, as Dr Chan has rightly insisted, is first and foremost a steward of truth.



It might be somewhat of an exaggeration to say that there is a crisis of leadership in our churches today. To say that the leadership of our churches today is so vulnerable to the rapid winds of change, that some if not most leaders will uncritically sway in the direction that it blows is perhaps closer to the truth. Once pragmatic concerns are privileged over truth, discernment is handicapped. Without truth and discernment, the church is built upon the shifting sands of culture. To do this is surely to court disaster when a storm – be it theological, pastoral, political, social, personal or even economical – comes.

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