



# An assessment of the management skills required of ministers in the Reformed Churches of South Africa

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## Abstract

### **An assessment of the management skills required of ministers in the Reformed Churches of South Africa**

*A congregation is not a business, and to manage it as such would be inappropriate. Although the church is primarily invisible and spiritual by nature, in this world it is functioning as an institution which must be managed efficiently and effectively to ensure that everything is done successfully and in good order. A major part of the responsibility to ensure order and effectiveness rests on the shoulders of the minister. The training of aspiring ministers in the Reformed Churches of South Africa does not involve specific training in managing and leading an organisation. This fact might leave them vulnerable, especially in the earlier stages of their careers.*

*Although some people are blessed with natural skills and talents regarding management and leadership, it has been proven that management skills required to manage an organisation successfully can be acquired by means of study and training.*

*An empirical study was performed to determine whether training in management could assist ministers in the execution of their calling. A questionnaire was sent to all the ministers of the Reformed Churches of South Africa regarding the scope of circumstances in a congregation which can be compared with other organisations, as well as the minister's role in managing the situations.*

*The research concludes with a recommendation that consideration should be given to include a course on management in the training syllabus of aspiring ministers. Furthermore, it is suggested that this course be developed specifically taking into account the background and circumstances of the Reformed Churches of South Africa, and should not be generic like the course which is included for Baccalaureus Commercii or Masters of Business Administration (MBA) students.*

### **Opsomming**

#### **Evaluering van die nodige bestuursvaardighede van predikante in die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika**

*'n Gemeente is nie 'n sake-onderneming nie, en om dit as sodanig te probeer bestuur, sou verkeerd wees. Die kerk is primêr onsigbaar en geestelik van aard; tog funksioneer dit as 'n instituut in hierdie wêreld en moet dit doeltreffend bestuur word ten einde alles ordelik en suksesvol te laat verloop. 'n Groot verantwoordelikheid rus op die predikant van die gemeente om te sorg dat hierdie orde en doeltreffendheid verwesenlik word. Die opleiding van predikante in die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika sluit nie spesifiek opleiding rakende die bestuur van 'n organisasie in nie. Hierdie feit kan hulle dalk in 'n kwesbare posisie plaas, veral in die vroeë stadium van hulle beroep.*

*Alhoewel sommige mense met natuurlike vaardighede en talente rakende bestuur en leierskap geseën is, is reeds bewys dat die vaardighede wat vereis word om 'n organisasie suksesvol te bestuur, deur middel van studie en opleiding aangeleer kan word.*

*'n Empiriese studie is gedoen ten einde vas te stel of opleiding in bestuursvaardighede predikante sal help in die uitvoering van hulle roeping. Vraelyste is aan al die predikante van die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika gestuur om inligting te bekom oor die omvang van die omstandighede in 'n gemeente wat vergelykbaar is met ander organisasies, asook die predikant se rol in die hantering van die situasies.*

*Die onderhawige navorsing sluit af met 'n aanbeveling dat oorweging daaraan geskenk behoort te word om 'n kursus in ondernemingsbestuur by die opleiding van predikante in te sluit. Die kursus moet ontwerp word om spesifiek die omstandighede en behoeftes van die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika in ag te neem. Dit hoef nie noodwendig ooreen te stem met die kursus in ondernemingsbestuur wat by die opleidingskurrikulum van studente vir Baccalaureus Commercii of MBA ingesluit is nie.*

## 1. Background

The church differs from any other organisation or business in the community. It is unique in that it belongs to Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22). God's people are not merely members of a church, but ligaments which support and grow in the entire body (Eph. 4:16). Although the church is unique and God-given, God uses ordinary people (1 Cor. 3:5) to serve his church, and to grow (Matt. 28:19) and maintain (Matt. 28:20) it.

To see the church equal to any other organisation in society which must be organised and managed as such, is wrong (RCSA, 2000: 2.4.1). The church is primarily invisible and spiritual by nature. The institutional character of the church and a congregation is not the primary focus (Van Wyk, 2001:39).

There are profound differences between a business and a congregation. However, a congregation exists in the same world as other organisations, is confronted by the same political, economical, environmental and social factors, and has ordinary people as members. There are thus also definite similarities between the management of the activities of any organisation and those of a congregation.

## 2. Problem statement

Ephesians 4:11-12 teaches that all the roles and responsibilities in the church have been instituted by Jesus Christ. Nobody acts on own conviction.

According to the inauguration formulary for ministers, the task of ministers in the Reformed Churches of South Africa (RCSA) can be divided into four main categories. Firstly, ministers must preach the gospel in the congregation and in the community. They need to be on the lookout for fallacies, and must refute it in accordance with Titus 1:9-11. In Acts 20:20 Paul indicates that they must be an example to others in living and preaching God's Word. Vorster (2000:35) points out that the believers, or congregation members, are not passive in the congregation. They fulfil the office of believer and have to be kings, prophets and priests in the world and especially in advancing the church. The minister must equip and motivate members of the congregation to fulfil this role.

Ministers must secondly call upon and pray to God, in the congregation as well as in the community. Ministers must also administer and maintain the sacraments, namely the baptising and Holy

Communion. Lastly, ministers must act as shepherds of the congregation. Under their leadership, everything in the congregation must be done efficiently, effectively and in good order. In their caring for the elders, their leadership and guidance must not be based on their own wisdom, talents and skills, but on the Word of God (Vorster, 2000:35). Furthermore, they must ensure that church discipline, as stated in Matthew 18:18, is applied. The ministers must also ensure that their own life is in good order else they would not be able to act as shepherds to others (1Tim. 3:5).

Although a minister is not the head (or CEO) of the congregation, he is seen to be the *de facto* leader of the congregation. The main purpose of the minister is to preach the Word of God and to take pastoral care of the members of his congregation. However, in the execution of his duties, a minister is confronted by a number of issues which are typical of any organisation (Van Rooy, 2006). Some of these include:

- Formulating and crafting a strategy for the congregation.
- Managing and leading the execution of the congregation strategy.
- Managing and leading other leaders such as the elders of the congregation.
- Mobilising congregation members to be doers of and not only listeners to God's Word.
- Conducting an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the congregation, as well as the opportunities and threats facing it (SWOT analysis), in order to choose and execute the correct plans and actions.
- Managing and evaluating new technology which becomes available for use in preaching and spreading God's Word.
- Managing change in a fast changing and volatile society.
- Managing resistance to necessary change.
- Facilitation skills during Bible study, or during effective problem-solving discussions.
- Managing conflict in the congregation.
- Managing diversity, especially in a non-racial South Africa.

- Initiating and managing projects.
- Being chairman or member of the finance committee who administers the finances of the congregation.
- Being chairman or member of the fundraising committee who has the responsibility of raising funds.

Young people entering a professional field are required to spend time in the practice to equip themselves thoroughly for their career in addition to their exhaustive academic training. Chartered Accountants must do three years of practical training at a registered accounting firm. Attorneys need to do one year of practical training at a registered law firm. In contrast to other professionals whose training requires a number of years of practical exposure under the guidance of mentors and principles, it is expected of young and newly qualified ministers to take sole responsibility of a congregation immediately after having completed their studies at university (Van Rooy, 2006). The practical exposure of ministers in training is much more limited compared to that of other professions. They perform practical work with the youth in their fourth year, practical evangelism work in their fifth year, and some practical congregation work in their final year of study. Their training does not include organisation management skills (De Klerk, 2006), and exposure to managing and leading an organisation is limited. This fact might leave them vulnerable and may hamper the successful execution of their calling, especially during the early stages of their career.

### **3. Objectives of the study**

The main objective of this study was to identify some management and leadership skills which can assist ministers in executing their calling more effectively. The identified skills might be considered for inclusion in the training syllabus of prospective ministers. The syllabus needs to be thoroughly tested against the principles provided in the Bible.

### **4. Research methodology**

Information was gathered from both secondary and primary sources. A literature study was performed from publications and textbooks on typical management skills which form part of organisation management courses such as MBA. An empirical study was also done by sending a standardised questionnaire to all the ministers in the RCSA during 2007. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, a hypothesis was not formulated. The primary focus of the empirical

study was to determine whether ministers in practice experience situations as described in the literature study requiring specific management skills.

The questionnaire was formulated in accordance with knowledge gained during the literature study. It comprised three types of questions, namely dichotomous questions allowing a Yes or No answer; questions on the views of the minister, indicated on a Likert type five-point scale; and open-ended questions.

## **5. Management and leadership skills**

Some people are endowed with natural talents and characteristics of a leader. The good news is that not all good managers and leaders were born that way. Although experience is an essential way of improving management skills, the art of management can and must be studied by leaders to enhance their ability in this field (Armstrong, 2004:13). A committed leader, who regards his own growth and development important, could acquire these approaches, attitudes, skills and abilities. This requires accepting the responsibility to grow and develop and to capitalise on the available learning opportunities (Coetsee, 2003:75). Following is a brief discussion on characteristic management and leadership skills taught to future business leaders as part of a typical MBA syllabus.

### **5.1 Strategic management**

When managers and leaders evaluate the future of any organisation, there are three central questions facing them: What is the organisation's present situation? Where does the organisation need to stand in the future? How should the organisation reach the future state? (Thompson *et al.*, 2007:2).

Answering these three questions in an orderly and structured manner is at the heart of strategic management. This entails a five-phased process (Thompson *et al.*, 2007:22):

- *Developing a vision.* A clearly articulated vision communicates the organisation's aspirations for the future and helps to steer all energy and resources in a common direction. De Klerk (2007:8) states that a well-formulated vision acts like glue keeping people together – it acts like a magnet attracting members as well as outsiders to the congregation's goals, and acts as a measuring stick to ascertain whether they are progressing towards their goals.

- *Setting objectives which convert the vision into specific targets.* Objectives function as yardsticks for measuring how well the organisation is doing (Thompson *et al.*, 2007:29). These objectives must be balanced between long-term and short-term activities. An organisation with solely financial objectives, for example, would not be sustainable.
- *Developing detailed strategies and plans to achieve targets.* Planning strategy is not only a top management function, but must be as inclusive as possible. The leader must ensure that the strategies and plans of different functions and departments must be horizontally aligned with one another and must be vertically aligned with the strategic objectives.
- *Managing the execution.* This phase is the well-structured and managed execution of the various strategic plans. It is important that leaders ensure that the necessary resources, skills and expertise are coordinated, ready and available for the successful execution of the plans.
- *Monitoring and measuring.* This last phase entails continuous measuring and monitoring of the execution of the strategic plans. A company's direction, objectives, strategies or plans need to be revised whenever the external or internal conditions warrant it.

## 5.2 General management

Any organisation, be it a school, a church congregation, a small business organisation or a multinational or global company, must be managed properly in order to achieve its objectives (Eksteen *et al.*, 2002:327). While strategic management rather focuses on the longer-term achievement of the organisational goals, general management preferably focuses on the achievement of operational (day-to-day) objectives. Although management as a science has developed significantly in recent years, its origins date far back into history. The basic components of general management are evident when reading Nehemiah 2:12-20.

The process of general management consists of four key functions, namely planning, organising, activating or leading and controlling.

- *Planning* is defined as the management process which must consider the future trends, and by considering these trends, determine the best strategies for the organisation to achieve its goals (Eksteen *et al.*, 2002:327). It involves drawing up realistic and executable plans given the available resources. Without proper

planning, the rest of the management function will happen in a haphazard manner (Van den Berg, 2002:48).

- *Organising* is the structuring, grouping and allocation of resources in the organisation to optimally achieve its objectives (Eksteen *et al.*, 2002:327). The structural organising should be amended to best fit the plans that need to be executed (Payne, 2007:37).
- *Activating* or leading is the process whereby people are influenced to participate and to commit themselves to the execution of their duties, and to convert the plans into action in order for the organisation to achieve its goals (Eksteen *et al.*, 2002:328).
- *Control* is the process whereby the execution process is monitored against set standards. Progress is measured and corrective action must be taken where deviations from the set standards occur (Eksteen *et al.*, 2002:328).

These four key principles are supported by six relevant management activities, namely decision-making, communication, motivation, coordination, delegation and disciplining.

- *Decision-making* is the process whereby alternative solutions are compared and the best alternative then chosen. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004:377) accentuate the fact that there are three dynamics which should be understood by managers for them to be able to make better decisions. These dynamics are knowledge management, decision-making styles and escalating commitment (the tendency to stick to an ineffective course of action for too long).
- *Communication* is the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver and the inference (perception) of meaning between the individuals involved (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004:520). Managers should have a good understanding of the process and various forms of communication (Bendix, 2004:307). Various barriers to effective communication exist that should be eliminated by a knowledgeable manager (Armstrong, 2004:34).
- The term *motivating* is derived from the Latin word *movere* which means *to move*. In the present context, motivation represents all those psychological processes that cause the arousal, direction and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal directed (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004:258).



- *Co-ordination* is defined by Armstrong (2004:44) as “achieving unity of effort”. Co-ordination is required because individual actions need to be synchronised.
- Due to the integrated nature of society, one cannot do everything personally. *Delegation* is not a new concept, as we read in Exodus 18 how Jethro taught Moses the benefits of delegation. Delegation means the allocation of responsibilities, accountabilities and necessary authority over other people in order to execute duties (Kroon, 1995:12).
- The last supporting activity performed by a manager is that he enforces good *discipline*. In Proverbs 20:30 we read about the basic application of discipline. Modern society places strong emphasis on procedural and substantial fairness in the application of discipline (Bendix, 2004:376).

### 5.3 Change management

Change is a constant feature of any organisation (Coetsee, 2003:188). Change is not a new issue, neither is it limited to the business world. In Mark 8:34 Jesus indicates how people must change in order to follow Him, and in Revelations 3:14-21 He tells the church in Laodicea to change their ways, however, the rate of change in modern society is accelerating (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004:672). Due to the increase in the complexity of organisations and their environments, a need for planned pro-active change effort rather than reactive management of the effects of change, is required. Change management involves improving the alignment of an organisation’s environment, strategy and design (Cummings & Worley, 2005:12). The decision of how to react to different changes in the environment is one of the leader’s major tasks. As an example, successful organisations avoid technological fads and bandwagons. Yet, they become pioneers in the application of carefully selected technologies (Collins, 2001:162).

Resistance to change (RTC) can be described as one of the most important threats to successful implementation of change initiatives (Coetsee, 2006:259). Like change itself, RTC is not new, and is not limited to business organisations. In Mark 7:13 Jesus points out what damage is caused to the congregation due to the resistance to employ the necessary change. Although RTC has positive purposes, such as forcing leaders to re-think and re-evaluate the envisaged change, it normally has a negative and destructive side. It is impor-

tant for leaders to learn to manage RTC, because failed change efforts are costly (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004:685).

#### **5.4 Creating aligned commitment to the organisation's goals**

In order to achieve goals, the improvement of performance and productivity is one of the greatest challenges facing managers and leaders in South Africa in all organisations, be it the business world, sport teams or church congregations. This includes unlocking potential and motivating people. Coetsee (2003:17) defines *motivation* as the willingness of individuals and teams to exert high levels of effort to attain organisation goals. But it is conditioned by the effort's capability to satisfy individual and team needs. The quest to get people motivated towards the organisational goals has driven many managers to motivational speakers, the wrongful use of financial incentives and numerous other quick fixes to motivate their teams. None of these, however, has any sustainable effect (Coetsee, 2003:10).

According to Coetsee (2003:17), one cannot motivate people. The key to unlock, improve and enhance motivation and commitment is for the managers and leaders to create a motivating environment. Leaders can create a motivating environment in the work-place, a sports team, a church council or any organisation. A motivating environment can be defined as an inspirational environment in which people align themselves with and make a commitment to achieving the vision of the organisation (Coetsee, 2003:24).

#### **5.5 Management of diversity**

Due to the political and legal background, diversity in a South African context has a strong race emphasis. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004: 47) define diversity as the multitude of differences and similarities that exist among people. The term *diversity* includes many layers and facets, such as personality, age, gender, appearance, seniority and many others. Management of diversity is not a new issue, neither is it limited to the business world. 1 Corinthians 3 describes how Paul had to manage the conflict which was caused by diversity. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul states: "For we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free." Literature indicates that, in America, church leaders spend up to 40% of their time managing conflict. The main culprit in the conflict is diversity: too many people with too many ideas of how things should be done (Armour & Browning, 1995:5). Cummings and Worley (2005:411) contend that to harness and unlock the value locked up in diversity, managers and leaders must systematically and pro-

actively plan and implement plans regarding diversity. Overcoming the obstacles of diversity is of critical importance to managers and leaders in achieving the organisation's objectives and vision (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004:64).

## 5.6 Financial management

Financial statements of any organisation provide very useful information to stakeholders regarding the past as well as the future of the entity. Users of the financial statements who understand the basic accounting principles and terminology are much more effective in analysing the statements (Libby *et al.*, 2004:721). Managers need not be accountants, but they must understand the different financial statements – what they do or do not tell you about the organisation (Pretorius, 2005:3). Depending on the size and complexity of the organisation, the financial statements will also vary, but the basic principles are the same for all, be it a large company, a school or a church congregation.

## 5.7 Problem-solving and polarity management

Making decisions regarding problems and polarities (dilemmas) are prerequisites in the repertoire of every manager and leader (Coetsee, 2006:240). Knowing the difference between a polarity and a problem will not only make any leader more effective, but will lead to more efficient and effective decisions being taken (Johnson, 1996: xix).

Kreitner and Kinicki (2004:373) define a *problem* as a gap between the actual and the desired situation. For example, a problem exists when you have to pay the rent at the end of the month and you do not have the money to do so. Various models for decision-making and problem-solving are available. A *polarity*, on the other hand, can be described as an insoluble problem. A polarity can only be managed, not solved (Johnson, 1996:82). The reason why it cannot be solved is that the two proposed *solutions* to the problem are interdependent and must both be present to be successful. Choosing the one *solution* over the other will only render benefits for some time, and after a while it will cause even more problems. A typical example of a polarity facing a leader is the dilemma of how much to emphasise team-work and how much to emphasise individual effort (Johnson, 2005:38). Focusing too much on team-work can lengthen processes unnecessarily, while too much emphasis on individual performance can lead to unhealthy competition and misalignment in the team. Polarities cannot be solved and will not disappear. There-

fore the objective of polarity management is to get the best of both alternatives while avoiding the limitations of each.

Solving problems and managing polarities requires creativity. Creativity implies recognising ideas and opportunities that others do not identify (Timmons & Spinelli, 2003:86). It relates things or ideas which were previously unrelated. Good leaders are both creative and logical. Creative thinking is necessary to get the maximum possible solutions and ideas on which to decide. Logical thinking is, however, necessary to make the right decision (Armstrong, 2004: 55). As is the case with all other leadership and management skills, evidence suggests that one can enhance creative thinking (Timmons & Spinelli, 2003:87).

## 5.8 Project management

The Project Management Institute defines a project as a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product or service. *Temporary* indicates that every project has a definite end, while *unique* means that the product or service is different in some distinguishing way from other similar products or services (Burke, 2001:2). Projects range in size, scope, cost and time from mega-international projects costing millions of dollars over many years, to small domestic projects with low budgets taking only a few hours to execute. Examples of projects range from civil projects (designing and constructing a new building), marketing projects (launching a new product), information technology project (implementing a new computer system), sports project (a rugby team going on a tour), entertainment project (*Rolling Stones* undertaking a world tour), to domestic projects (going on a holiday) (Burke, 2001:2).

Burke (2001:3) defines *project management* as the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities in order to meet stake holders' needs and expectations of the project. In other words, the project manager must do whatever is required to make the project happen. Due to the characteristics of a project, namely unique and temporary, managing a project needs other managerial skills than those that are normal to manage an organisation in general.

## 5.9 Leadership

Leadership abilities and leadership style each has a very profound effect on any organisation. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004:594) point out that leadership is positively associated with the success of com-

panies. Coetsee (2003:46) proves that the quality of leadership is the most important factor in determining job satisfaction by employees, ahead of factors such as remuneration, promotion opportunities, working conditions and job security. Collins (2001:39) indicates that a common denominator for companies achieving sustainable good results is quality leadership.

Numerous sources are available indicating what good leadership entails. Effective leaders know the difference between management and leadership, and also have the ability to find the right balance between the two. Management is seen as controlling and directing subordinates' work efforts through planning, organising, motivating and co-ordinating. With leadership, the emphasis is on creating a shared vision, generating energy, empowering, coaching, mentoring and creating a motivating environment for people to align and commit themselves to the vision (Coetsee, 2003:62). The one is therefore not right and the other wrong (Johnson, 1996:183). Leadership and management must both be included as valued contributions within an organisation. If a visionary leader cannot manage the people and structure of the organisation in pursuit of the vision, it remains a "wish dream". On the other hand, if a leader emphasises action and implementation without vision, there may be much sweat and activity, with none of it tied to any sense of purpose and direction (Shawchuck & Heuser, 1993:23).

## **6. Management skills in a church congregation**

To determine whether management skills are necessary and applicable to leaders, and specifically to the minister of a congregation, an empirical study was undertaken. A questionnaire was forwarded to all the ministers of the RCSA via electronic mail. Response was received from 58 ministers, which represents a 27% response rate. The following conclusions were drawn from the said responses:

### **6.1 Strategic management**

A congregation should focus not only on current issues, but also on an appropriate long-term plan in order to achieve its goals (RCSA, 2000:2.4.6, 2.4.13 and 2.4.14). Van Rooy (2007:40) warns that a congregation is seeking its own destruction if survival has become its main purpose. A congregation that focuses on internal issues only, is not true to its calling. Van Wyk (2001:81) states that a church, standing idle like a ship moored in the harbour, will rust and sink. The ship's work is on the open sea. This is indicative of the work of the church in the world beyond the borders of the congregation. If a

congregation is not clear on what the criteria are for measuring its success, it will tend to measure its success against the wrong criteria, such as membership growth, financial assets or the number of projects initiated (Vorster, 1999:6). This will lead to wrong perceptions; thus resulting in wrong decision-making.

Responses to questions indicated that only 41% of the responding congregations have a shared vision available in writing. Having a well-articulated vision which is easy to communicate and that gives direction and meaning is the first step in strategic planning (Thompson *et al.*, 2007:20). Although 81% of respondents indicated that they measure themselves against a set of criteria to determine whether they are true to their purpose, many of the criteria are not specific, and some are subject to different interpretations.

Empowering ministers with the fundamentals of strategic management would benefit them in successfully executing their calling.

## 6.2 General management

God demands that everything in his church must take place in good order (1 Cor. 14:33 and 40). Of the respondents 62% are bogged down with tasks which could potentially be delegated to other members of the congregation. Of the responding congregations 29% are not doing formal operational planning, and 38% of the responding congregations that actually do this planning, only do it once a year. De Klerk (2007:8) warns that “when you fail to plan, you plan to fail”. The idea that a congregation can just copy what happened in the past, or the plans of another congregation, without cognisance of its own specific context, must be rejected as not acting in line with the Bible (RCSA, 2000:2.4.13).

Empowering young ministers with the basic skills of general management would assist them in ensuring that everything in the congregation takes place in good order. It will also assist ministers in creating time which can be used in preaching the Word of God, and taking pastoral care of the congregation.

## 6.3 Change management

Change is a constant feature of any organisation (Coetsee, 2003: 188). De Klerk (2007:7) asks the open question whether the RCSA is ready to embrace the change in the classis meeting structure after the synod decision of 2006 to combine the previously white and black classis meetings. Resisting necessary change (*solus status*

*quo*) as well as change for the sake of change must be rejected as not in line with the Bible (RCSA, 2000:2.4.4 and 2.4.15).

God calls on his church for continuous responsible renewal and reformation (RCSA, 2000:2.3.4.7.2). Du Plooy (2007:7) cautions that, although renewal and change in a reformed church are necessary, wrong changes can destroy the RCSA. To empower ministers with the skills to pro-actively identify necessary changes and to successfully implement planned changes, will be a major asset to ministers of the future. Although resistance to change is normal to all humans, empowering ministers with the skills to manage resistance to (necessary) change will contribute to the success of the congregation.

## **6.4 Creating aligned commitment**

According to the responses, participation in and commitment to activities in the congregations are not satisfactory. Attendance of Sunday church services in the responding congregations is on average 50%. Of the congregations 73% indicated that participation in initiatives with an outward focus is less than 30%. Ephesians 4:12 requires that God's people must be prepared for a life of service. Romans 12:11 also encourages Christians never to lack in zeal, but to keep their spiritual fervour serving the Lord. The Bible does not acknowledge any congregation where only the minister, elders and deacons work, and the rest are passive. Creating a motivating environment and obtaining aligned commitment from members is a very important task of a leader. In 1 Corinthians 3:5-7 it is stated that God uses people to plant and give water, but that God gives growth. Empowering ministers with a good theoretical basis of motivational theories and the knowledge of how to create a motivating climate, gives them additional tools to plant and give water more efficiently. This will contribute towards the successful execution of their calling. Creating a motivating climate and aligned commitment would also make it easier for the minister to delegate certain tasks to other members of the congregation, which will create time for the minister for preaching and pastoral care.

## **6.5 Diversity management**

Responding to questions, some items are listed as opportunities regarding diversity the RCSA should exploit, namely cooperation with other Christian denominations, utilising the capacity and strength of the youth, and the demographic changes and growth in size of suburbs.

Some of the items listed as diversity-driving forces which will have a determining influence on the way the RCSA functions in future are the following: race integration of suburbs; multicultural society; growth of a strong black middle class; securing and maintaining the commitment of 18 to 25 year-old people; and the successful integration of the traditionally black and white synods of the RCSA.

The RCSA is entering one of the most important phases in its existence with the implementation of the decision to unify the traditional white and traditional black classis (De Klerk, 2007:7). Not recognising the unity of Christians across cultural or ethnic borders must be rejected (RCSA, 2000:2.4.23). To successfully manage and exploit these opportunities and driving forces, and to prevent the negative side of mismanaged diversity, ministers will be required to have a sound theoretical understanding of the management of diversity.

## **6.6 Financial management**

In 61% of the congregations that participated in this study, ministers form part of the finance committee of their congregations. Empowering them with a basic understanding of financial statements and the interpretation thereof would assist them in being more effective and efficient as members of the committee.

## **6.7 Problem-solving and polarity management**

Of the responding ministers, 66% are required to be involved in problems and conflict for a material portion of their time. Knowing the difference between a problem and a polarity is one of the first steps in dealing with these situations successfully. Empowering ministers with a good theoretical basis regarding problem-solving, polarity management and conflict management would assist them in executing their duties. Due to the complexity of all the challenges, the minister will, however, not be able to solve all the problems on his own. Empowering a minister with the skills to enhance creative thinking of groups of people, such as the church council, would make the congregation more successful in dealing with threats, and exploiting the opportunities.

## **6.8 Project management**

Projects are a common occurrence in congregations. Responding congregations indicated that 91% has fundraising projects, 95% has congregation get-together projects, 72% has welfare projects (such



as soup kitchens), 60% has evangelism projects and 67% has missionary projects (such as visits to black townships). Empowering ministers with project management skills would contribute to the projects being executed in good order, and would also contribute to the successful outcome of the projects.

## 6.9 Leadership

The inauguration formulary for ministers states that they must act as shepherds (leaders) in the congregation. Under their leadership, everything in the congregation must be done efficiently, effectively and in good order. De Klerk (2007:8) emphasises the importance of good leadership in a congregation to guide it through the volatile environment of the 21st century.

In their responses, 55% of ministers indicated that, apart from their leadership role in the congregation, they also play a leadership role in the broader community. Being a member of a school governing body (56% of responding ministers) and of an old-age home governing body (41% of responding ministers) is the most common external leadership role. This provides an excellent platform for the minister to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ beyond the borders of the congregation.

Empowering young ministers with leadership training and development would benefit them. Especially focusing on aspects such as emotional intelligence, leadership styles, and the fine balance between being a manager and being a leader would contribute to the successful execution of their duties. The purpose of leadership training should not be to make *better bosses* out of them, but to make them better servants of God (VDM).

## 7. Conclusion and recommendation

The church belongs to Jesus Christ who uses ordinary people as instruments to work in his harvest field. Developing the leadership and managerial skills of ministers by means of a training course is only one of the ways to exploit their God-given talents to the fullest. On its own, these skills will not contribute to any success in a congregation. It should be seen as only one of the many things that should be done in order for a congregation to fulfil its purpose.

Consideration should be given to include a one-year course in management as part of the syllabus of prospective ministers. Of responding ministers 95% indicated that they are of the opinion that

such training would be beneficial to ministers. The course should be developed specifically taking into account the background and circumstances of the RCSA, and should not be generic like the course which is included for Baccalaureus Commercii or MBA students. The aim of the course should be to empower the minister to be more effective in the execution of his calling, namely to communicate the Word of God, and to care for the congregation. The course should be developed based on Biblical principles, taking into account the history, culture and circumstances of the RCSA. Much should be learned from similar existing courses, such as the six-week certificate program presented by the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Kenya (2008), the 24-month Master of Science in Church Management presented by Villanova University (Villanova School of Business, 2008) and the Pastoral Ministry Degree offered by Boston University in conjunction with MBA (*Business Week*, 2008).

Due to the dynamic and fast-changing world of the 21st century, the issues confronting leaders are changing rapidly, but also the improved methods to manage it. For this reason it is proposed that an abbreviated version of the course should be compiled. This should be presented as a three to five-day course to ministers who are already in congregations. The purpose will be to supplement their practical experience with new and additional theory and ideas on managing and leading specific situations in the modern congregation.

Managing and leading a congregation should not only revolve around the minister. Members of congregations should be encouraged to attend the course together with their ministers. Members of congregations should attend the training course with the aim of enhancing the orderly achievement of the goal and purpose of the congregation. This will enhance the ability of the congregation to function efficiently during times in which congregations do not have a minister. It will also assist ministers in creating time in their own schedules to concentrate more on studying and preaching God's Word and taking pastoral care of the congregation. If members of the congregation attend the course together with their ministers, it will also assist in the alignment within the congregation on how to plan and execute chosen strategies.

The course should only be a means to an end and not an end in itself. The content of the course should be thoroughly tested against Biblical principles to ensure that it does not view the church as an institution that must be managed and governed like a business. The

course should acknowledge the fact that the church is primarily invisible and spiritual, and that the visible organisation is not the primary focus.

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### **Key concepts:**

church  
congregation  
management  
minister

### **Kernbegrippe:**

bestuur  
gemeente  
kerk  
predikant