

Drucker
Born 1909, Austria
Drucker gained a doctorate in International and Public Law at Frankfurt University in 1931. He has held three professorships, in Philosophy and Politics, in Management and the Clarke Professorship in Social Science and Management.
Drucker is a man with an uncanny ability to spot and describe trends. These trends almost always end up becoming the height of management fashion but usually some years after Drucker first observed them.

Numbers 27:15-17
Moses said to the Lord, "May the Lord the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

Aristotle
Young men have strong passions... They would rather do noble deeds than useful ones.... They think they know everything and are always quite sure about it; this, in fact, is why they overdo everything. [Old men] have lived many years: They often have been taken in... The result is that they are sure about nothing and under-do everything. They "think" but they never "know"... They always add "possibly" or a "perhaps"... They guide their lives too much by considerations of what is useful and too little by what is noble... They lack confidence in the future... for most things go wrong, or anyway worse than one expects.

PART 1 | The Why and What of Leadership

Why do we need leaders?

Are they important, what purpose do they serve, what marks out a leader from a follower?

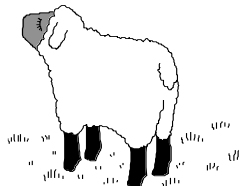
There is a growing view in the World and the Church that we are in a leadership crisis.

"Nothing is more important than leadership"
George Barna, Leaders on Leadership¹

Is this true? Peter Drucker, acknowledged by many as the greatest management thinker of the twentieth century agrees.²

"The manager is the dynamic, life-giving element in every business. Without his leadership 'the resources of production' remain resources and never become production. In a competitive economy, above all, the quality and performance of the managers determine the success of a business, indeed they determine its survival. For the quality and performance of managers is the only effective advantage an enterprise in a competitive economy can have."
Peter Drucker, The Practice of Management

As Moses foresaw his own death, he sought God as to whom should take over the leadership of the people. Joshua was appointed so that the sheep would not be without a shepherd. In Jesus' ministry we see the compassion he has for shepherd-less people, the harassed and helpless.



Matthew 9:36
When he (Jesus) saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Leadership - why now?

This is the question Leighton Ford asks in his book, Transforming Leadership.³ Why, at this point in time is leadership so much of an issue? Have, as proposed by Arthur Levine, the young people of today come to resemble the old men of Aristotle's day?⁴

In his book, Picking Up the Pieces, David Hilborn cites Ambivalence as one of the hall marks of a Postmodern age. Ambivalence is defined by Zygmunt Bauman as "existence devoid of certainty".⁵ Another feature is secondariness, the "world-weary smirk of postmodernity"⁶ others include superficiality, immediacy and pragmatism. Not the characteristics of heroes or the substance of dreams.

Leadership is also undergoing a transition, old styles are deemed inappropriate, new styles are still emerging. What characterises this emerging new style? Bernard Bass contrasts old style, transactional leaders with new style, transformational leaders.⁷

Bernard Bass

- Transactional leaders work within the situation
Transformational leaders change it
- Transactional leaders accept what can be talked about
Transformational leaders change what can be talked about
- Transactional leaders accept the rules and values
Transformational leaders change them
- Transactional leaders talk about payoffs
Transformational leaders talk about goals
- Transactional leaders bargain
Transformational leaders symbolize

Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus in their book, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, talk of "empowering" leadership and define four common elements in leadership.⁸

- Leaders get attention through vision
- Leaders bring meaning through communication
- Leaders gain trust through taking a clear committed stance
- Leaders deploy themselves through a positive self-regard

Peter Senge in his book, *The Fifth Discipline*, sees old leaders as those who set direction, make key decisions and energise the troops. He envisions new leaders as designers, stewards and teachers.⁹

This shift in leadership style is also reflected in the arena of Human Resource Management, with a move from compliance management to commitment management.

	Compliance	Commitment
Psychological Contract	Fair day's work for a fair day's wage	Reciprocal commitment
Locus of Control	External	Internal
Employee Relations	Pluralist, collective, low trust	Unitarist, individual, high trust
Organising Principles	Mechanistic, formal/defined roles, top-down, centralised	Organic, flexible roles, bottom up, decentralised
Policy Goals	Administrative efficiency, standard performance, cost-minimisation	Adaptive workforce, improving performance, maximum utilisation
Guest, 1987		

Contingency leadership

In the midst of these new approaches many still argue for a contingent approach to leadership. The Contingency theory of leadership states that, to be effective, leaders need to adapt their leadership style in relation to a variety of contextual factors, including the nature of the task and the attributes of those they wish to lead.

Toward a conclusion

Leadership then is not a one-dimensional concept. There is not one style of leadership, nor one set of characteristics that define a leader, some leaders are born others are made!

So, what picture can we paint of Christian leaders. Leadership begins with God, Numbers 27:18 and ends with God's people (humankind), those He came to seek and to save. Our inspiration must be God our aspiration must be to serve His people.

Numbers 27:18

So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him.

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

John 10:4
When he has brought out all his own, **he goes on ahead of them.....**

1 Corinthians 2:9
“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” **but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.**

Jeremiah 20 v9b
his word is in my heart like a burning fire, shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.

2 Corinthians 3:18
And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory...

Ephesians 4:11-13
It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

drives
are innate;
have a physiological basis;
are activated by deprivation; and
are aimed at satiation.

motives
are learned;
have a social basis;
are activated by environment; and
are aimed at stimulation.

What characteristics should leaders possess. Many and various but some helpful insights are presented by Tom Marshall:¹⁰

- Men and women with a goal - people going somewhere - John 10:4
- Men and women with vision and foresight - 1 Corinthians 2:9-13
- Men and women who can impart - Jeremiah 20:9b

Leaders then are people who have goals, inspired by God and who can inspire others towards the fulfilment of those goals.

The final characteristic and role of the leader I want to explore is, I believe, well expressed by Leighton Ford in the Preface of his book, *Transforming Leadership*.

“Jesus provides for transforming leaders - leaders who can enable us to see beyond our narrow and often selfish horizons, who can empower us to be more than we have been. Transforming leaders are those who are able to divest themselves of their power and invest it in their followers in such a way that others are empowered...”¹¹

Leadership must be about taking people somewhere and often the most important journey a leader can take a follower on is the journey of inner transformation. Jesus’ work in us is about transformation, 2 Corinthians 3:18 and our work in others should mirror this.

We have been called to equip others, to pass on what has been entrusted to us, so that the body of Christ may be built up, Ephesians 4:11-13.

Recommended books on leadership

Leighton Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, IVP 1991, 0830816526
Tom Marshall, *Understanding Leadership*, Sovereign World 1991, 1852400536
David Pytches, *Leadership for New Life*, Hodder and Stoughton 1998, 0340721707

PART 2 | Motivation - Ours and Theirs

As we observe people and their actions, we generally believe that their behaviour is purposive. Their behaviour is not random and to make sense of it we attribute motives to them which we believe direct and determine the actions they take.

As we seek to develop our ability to lead others it is very important to understand motivation. We need to understand two things. Firstly, why people do the things they do and secondly, how we can encourage them (make them!) do the things we want them to do. Remember the heart of management is getting things done through people.

So, what is motivation?

Motivation is the internal psychological process of initiating, energising, directing and maintaining goal-directed behaviour.¹²

Motivation can be innate or learned. Innate motivation is referred to as "drives" and learned motivation as "motives".

Maslow's need hierarchy

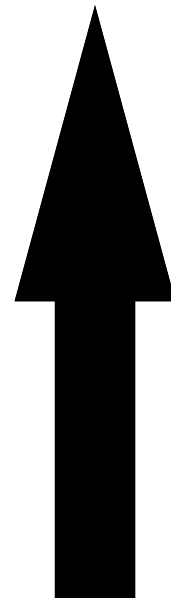
Perhaps the most famous motivation theory, is Maslow's. Maslow identified eight innate needs and a ninth need, the need for freedom of enquiry and expression, which he saw as a prerequisite for the satisfaction of the other needs. Maslow organised the needs into a loose hierarchical structure. He proposed that we seek fulfilment of the lower order needs first and then move towards seeking fulfilment of the higher order needs. Once a need is fulfilled it ceases to be a motivator.

Abraham Maslow
1908 - 1970
Developed his hierarchy of needs in the following articles and books.
1943 - A theory of human motivation
1954 - Motivation and personality
1971 - The farther reaches of human nature

Consider:

Is Maslow correct - in his proposition that we only seek fulfilment of our higher needs once our lower needs are met?
What consequences, if any does this have for evangelism?

Transcendence
Self-actualisation
Aesthetics
Knowing and understanding
Esteem
Affiliation
Safety
Biological requirements



Victor Vroom
In 1964 Vroom developed the first systematic formulation of an expectancy theory.
He expressed it as an equation
$$M = E \times V$$

where
M = motivation to behave
E = the subjective probability that the behaviour will lead to a particular outcome
V = the valence, or strength of preference, for the outcome
V Vroom, *Work and Motivation*, 1964.

Expectancy theory

This theory of motivation sees our actions as being directed by conscious expectations that we have about our behaviour leading to the achievement of desired outcomes. If we act in a certain way we will achieve certain results. If these results are desirable, then we will be motivated towards that action.

Expectancy theory is impacted by the desirability of the outcomes which is referred to as "valence" and also by the probability that certain behaviour will result in the achievement of those outcomes, the "expectancy".

Let us take an example. You may desire to do well in your examinations. Lecturers may present you with very long reading lists. If you believe that reading all the books on the reading list will

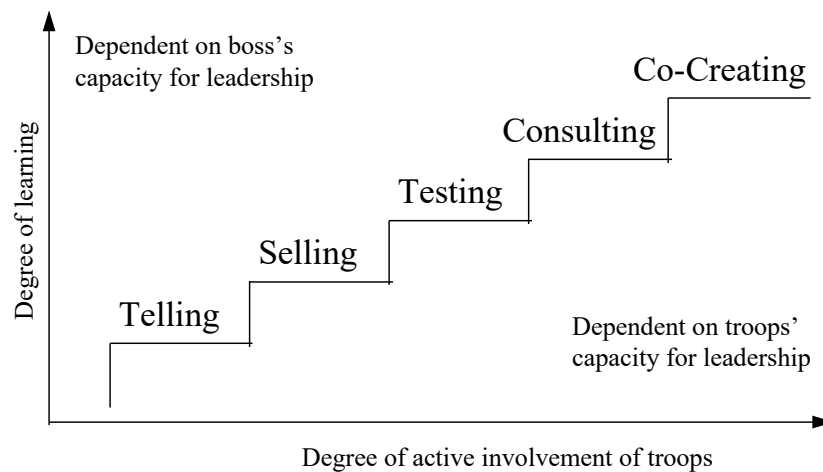
impact your ability to do well in your examinations, you will read the books. It seems simple but often the problem is that we do not believe certain behaviours will result in our desired outcomes and therefore we lack motivation. This is often the case of behaviour that is prescribed for us by others through rules and regulations.

Shared vision

**Peter Senge
Shared Vision**
Telling: The "boss" knows what the vision should be, and the "troops" are going to have to follow it
Selling: The "boss" knows what the vision should be, but needs the "troops" to buy in before proceeding
Testing: The "boss" has an idea about what the vision should be, and wants to know the "troops" reactions before proceeding
Consulting: The "boss" is putting together a vision, and wants creative input from the "troops" before proceeding
Co-creating: The "boss" and "troops", through a collaborative process, build a shared vision together.

"My vision is not what's important to you. The only vision that motivates you is your vision."

Bill O'Brien, Hanover Insurance



Peter Senge outlines an approach to building a shared vision based around a move from a "telling" style of vision imparting to a "co-creating" style.¹³

A word of warning

Matthew 10:16
"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

As leaders we need to understand the people we lead. What are their needs, what do they desire? Sometimes we need to respond to these drives and motives, sometimes we need to change them. This can lead us to become manipulators rather than leaders.

Tim
A young man who simply wanted to help but was seen as seeking control. Meic Pearse, *Who's Feeding Whom?*, p 94

Another danger is that as we seek to understand the people we lead, their drives and motives, we misunderstand them. We misinterpret the motives behind their behaviour. We apply stereotypes, selective perception comes into play and we project on to them the things that motivate us. A common area in which this occurs revolves around power and control. We see those who want to get involved and join in as actual people who want to take control and take over from us.

Our motivation

"All power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Lord Acton

Leadership is a position of power and being in a position of power can be difficult to manage. Our motivation for being there can become confused. Our need to secure our power base may become an

overriding concern as we begin to identify ourselves with our position until who we are as an individual is lost. We need to be needed and as other leaders begin to emerge, we may not be as indispensable as we once thought. Our original motivation to equip the saints can become lost and even purposefully subjugated because an equipped people will not need us any longer!

Jeremiah 45:5
Should you then seek
great things for yourself?
Seek them not.
Matthew 6:33
Seek first His kingdom
and His righteousness

Why do we lead? To serve? To please God? What about personal satisfaction? Is it wrong to find personal satisfaction in our ministry? Remember the episode of friends where Joey challenges Phoebe to do one completely unselfish act where she will get absolutely no personal satisfaction or reward. She struggles. She gives away money and feels proud, a reward! Whatever she does she seems to gain something even if it is only the positive feeling that comes from helping another human being. God does not want us to hate our ministry. He wants us to be fulfilled and inspired by what we do but our target must be service of Him not ourselves.

"Any ambition which centres around and terminates upon oneself is unworthy while an ambition which has the glory of God at its centre is not only legitimate but positively praiseworthy."¹⁴

Mother Theresa
"We do our work for
Christ, with Christ, to
Christ and that is what
keeps it simple."

Leighton Ford in his book, *Transforming Leadership*, tackles the problem of motivation. He encourages us to ask the following questions:

"What rules in my life? Is it my will? My family? My ambition or comfort? Or is it the Father's will?" He outlines a path of reflection, self-examination and bold faith as a way of grappling with these issues.¹⁵

PART 3 | Groups - Formation, Membership, Synergy

Group Formation Tuckman 1965

Forming: confusion, uncertainty, assessment, testing out, feeling out, define goals and rules, get acquainted
 Storming: disagreements over priorities, struggles for leadership, tension, hostility, clique formation
 Norming: consensus, leadership accepted, trust, standards set, new stable roles, co-operation
 Performing: success, flexible task roles, openness, helpfulness
 Adjourning: disengagement, separation anxiety, positive feelings towards leader, sadness, self-evaluation

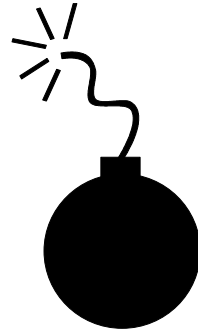
Acts 6:1-5

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against those of the Aramaic-speaking community because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "it would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group.

Question: when do people waiting for a train become a group?
 Answer: when the train is delayed!



What has group theory got to do with disaster movies. If we take a typical disaster movie, say the Towering Inferno or the Poseidon Adventure, we can see a common plot line emerging. We begin by meeting the characters, getting to know them. Next the disaster strikes, action is needed, people begin to take control, but tensions arise and arguments and power struggles follow. Finally, things start to settle down perhaps one of the bad guys dies, an expedient if not very humanitarian solution often used to bring resolution of conflict in this type of film. The group accepts a new leader and gains a renewed sense of purpose. Finally they get a plan, put it into action and survive. The genre of the disaster movie follows a well-known pattern the pattern is that of group formation.



FORM → STORM → NORM → PERFORM → ADJOURN
 Tuckman 1965¹⁶

Consider: If Tuckman is right about the process of group formation what will happen if the storming stage is stifled?

As a group forms it needs to ask itself a number of questions, these questions concern the following areas and issues.

- Atmosphere and relationships
- Member participation
- Goal understanding and acceptance
- Listening and information sharing
- Handling disagreements and conflict
- Decision-making
- Evaluation of member performance
- Expressing feelings
- Division of labour
- Leadership
- Attention to process¹⁷

Consider: What questions do you think you would need to ask under each of these areas?

Definitions

"A group consists of more than one person who share a common interest or purpose, who communicate and interact in various ways, are psychologically aware of each other and see themselves as part of the group having some conscious perception of belonging and being sensitive of each other's feelings."

Glover and Rushbrooke

"An aggregate is a collection of unrelated people who happen to be in close

Belbin - Team Roles

Plant: creative, imaginative, unorthodox, solver of problems
 Resource Investigator: extrovert, enthusiastic, communicative, explorer of opportunities, developer of contracts
 Co-ordinator: mature, confident, a good chairperson, clarifier of goals, promoter of decision-making, delegator
 Shaper: challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure, possesses drive and courage to overcome obstacles
 Monitor Evaluator: sober, strategic and discerning, sees all the options, judges accurately
 Teamworker: co-operative, mild, perceptive, diplomatic, listener, builder, averter of friction
 Implementer: disciplined, reliable, conservative, efficient, turns ideas into action
 Completer: painstaking, conscientious, anxious, searches out errors and omissions, delivers on time
 Specialist: single-minded, self-starting, dedicated, provider of knowledge and skills in rare supply

Revelation 5 v9-10

"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them a kingdom of priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Features of Group Think

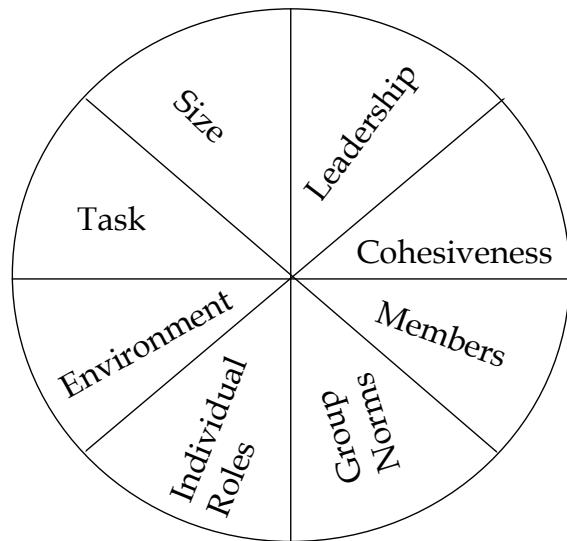
- Invulnerability
- Rationalisations
- Illusions of morality
- Shared stereotypes
- Direct pressure
- Self censorship
- Illusions of unanimity
- Mind guards

physical proximity for a short period of time."¹⁸
 Buchanan and Huczynski

Factors influencing group behaviour

Many factors influence the way groups behave.

One of these factors is the membership. People in groups take on different roles. Belbin's team role theory links the individuals' personality traits with group role behaviour.¹⁹ An effective team will have a balanced mix of roles and will seek to utilise fully the differing contributions each role can make.



Another important feature of the group is whether or not the group membership is homogeneous or heterogeneous.

Consider: What do you think are the advantages or disadvantages of homogeneous groups? What do you think are the advantages or disadvantages of heterogeneous groups?

Groups need to be cohesive and the level of cohesiveness within a group influences how the group behaves.

"Group cohesion is that property which is inferred from the number and strength of mutual positive attitudes among members of the group"²⁰
 Lott and Lott

Group cohesion positively influences group performance but if cohesion becomes too high it can start to have detrimental effects. Those effects include, the "risky-shift" phenomenon and group think. The risky-shift phenomenon is the tendency of a group to make decisions that are riskier than those that the members of the group would have recommended individually.²¹ Group think is a theory developed by Irving Janis. The group's strivings for unanimity override their motivation to appraise realistically the alternative courses of action.²²

Synergy
Synergy is the ability of the group to outperform even its best individual member.
Buchanan and Huczynski

1 Corinthians 12 v12-31
The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts
.....
If the whole body were an eye where would the sense of hearing be?.....
.....
If they were all one part where would the body be?.....
.....
Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it
.....

Consider
Think of a group of which you are a member. Give it a 1(=excellent) to 5(=awful) rating on each of the eleven features proposed by McGregor.

Synergy

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. A cohesive group can reach better, more creative solutions to problems than any individual member of the group working alone.

The film Apollo 13 sees a re-enactment of a group working together to solve, what seems, an insurmountable problem. The film demonstrates group synergy at its best. The concept of group synergy has been utilised within Japanese management structures to release the creative potential of the whole workforce as opposed to just a few "leaders". The establishment of autonomous work groups and processes based on the principles of kaizen were key to the competitive advantage the Japanese achieved during the last two decades.

"For you the essence of management is getting the ideas out of the heads of the bosses and into the hands of labour. We are beyond your mindset. Business, we know is now so hazardous in an environment increasingly unpredictable, competitive and fraught with danger, that their continued existence depends on the day-to-day mobilisation of very ounce of intelligence."

Konosuke Matsushita

Effectiveness

An effective group depends on many factors and on your definition of effectiveness. A useful list of the features of an effective group is presented by Douglas McGregor.²³

1. Informal relaxed atmosphere. Members involved and interested.
2. Discussion fully participated in by all members and task focused.
3. Acceptance by all of group objective.
4. Members listen to each other and make creative suggestions.
5. Disagreements fully discussed, resolved or lived with.
6. Most decisions reached by consensus.
7. Criticism frank, frequent but never a personal attack.
8. People free to express feelings about the task and group process.
9. Actions clearly assigned to group members and carried out.
10. Leadership can shift and is based on expert knowledge not rank.
11. The group is self-conscious and reviews itself frequently.

PART 4 | Perception

What you see is not necessarily what you get!

Balls and Strikes

Three umpires having a drink after a baseball game. One says, "There's balls and there's strikes and I call 'em the way they are." The second responds, "There's balls and there's strikes and I call 'em the way I see them." And the third says, "There's balls and there's strikes, and they ain't nothin' until I call 'em!"

*W. Truett Anderson
Reality Isn't What It Used
To Be*

Seeing is not always believing and as stated above what you see is not necessarily what you get. It is all a matter of perception.

David Hilborn lists one of the features of postmodernism as perceptivism.²⁴ This feature of the postmodern world finds its roots in the writings of Nietzsche as he claims that there is no "true world". Everything is a "perceptual appearance" the origin of which lies within us.²⁵ Nietzsche's concern was with the existence of universal truth which he saw as an illusion. Although this debate is obviously of great importance our interest in perception is not to do with the existence of truth, rather it is to do with our ability to communicate it and see it clearly. Can we engage in meaningful communication or does perception blur, cloud and obscure the achievement of "common meanings".

Communication is the exchange of messages between people for the purpose of achieving common meanings.

Effective communication means raising the level of mutual understanding between one person and another.

What is perception?

Perception is the process by which we organise incoming data and stimuli. It is the way the stimuli are patterned and given meaning. Two factors are significant in assigning meaning to stimuli. Firstly the mechanism by which the stimuli is absorbed, the senses used, seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, tasting and secondly the mechanism by which the senses are interpreted. Interpretation is impacted by our conscious and unconscious mind, it is affected by our past experience, knowledge and emotions. This is why two people can see exactly the same event and arrive at two totally different interpretations of it. Some people argue that to see you must know. That sight without the knowledge to interpret is meaningless. Others argue that to know you must see. That knowledge without experience can never be trusted.

John 20:24-25

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. When the other disciples told him that they had seen the Lord, he declared, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

John 20:29

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

As Christians we walk by faith not sight. Believing without seeing, touching, smelling, tasting or hearing (at least in the audible sense for most of us). Does this lack of physical sensation make our experience of Jesus less real or less true?

The impact of perception

What impact does perception have? Basically, it can cause us to misinterpret and as we seek to communicate clearly with individuals and groups this can be of great significance. Perception can show itself in a range of behaviours:

- Stereotyping; Halo Effect; Selective Attention; Habituation; and Attribution

Stereotyping

A stereotype is a category, or personality type, to which we consign people on the basis of their membership of some known group. Over generalisations, inaccurate but convenient. Adopting stereotypes enables us to shortcut our evaluation process and make quicker if not more reliable predictions of behaviour. Often the stereotypes we assign to groups have more to do with the economic and social status of the group rather than the inherent qualities of the group itself.²⁶ Also adopting stereotypes colours the way we explain and interpret behaviours and we tend to focus our attention on behaviours which reinforce the stereotype (selective attention). Stereotyping is often linked to prejudice. Some argue that holding stereotypical views of a group leads to prejudice, others however, state that being prejudice against a particular group actually results in the development of stereotypical views about that group. Whatever the causality it is clear that stereotyping stops us seeing the true person and for this reason alone we need to avoid falling into this perceptual trap.

John 1:45-46

"We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.

Consider

What stereotypes did Jesus try to break down during his Ministry?

Matthew 13:14

In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them."

2 Corinthians 4:4

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Consider

When did you last notice the bad language in a movie or are we so used to it that it no longer registers?

Halo effect

Closely linked to stereotyping, a halo effect is a judgement based on striking characteristics, such as an aspect of dress, speech or posture. Haloes are generally formed as first impressions, they can be positive or negative, and they can be very long lasting. It is an initial "sizing up" of people. The problem with halo effects is that they often lead us to filter out later information we receive about the person which contradicts the original halo. Perhaps in meeting people for the first time we would be wise to avoid initial judgements and assessments of the kind of people we think they are. It is better to wait and see what emerges as time goes by.

Selective attention

Already mentioned above selective attention is a very powerful and often very misleading perceptual effect. It is the ability (often exercised unconsciously) to choose from the stream of sensory data, to concentrate on particular elements, and to ignore others. We filter out, often the unexpected, the unwanted and the things we don't understand, and we also filter in the things we do want. We don't want to hear and see certain things so we don't. We do want to hear and see certain things and we do. It is important for us, as we seek to see and listen to those with whom we wish to communicate, to recognise our selective attention. However, it is also important to recognise as we talk and interact with others that they too will be selective in what they hear and see. Jesus and Paul talk about the spiritual blindness that resides in people. Sin and Satan will make eyes blind and ears deaf, as Christians we fight not only the natural

selective attention in other people but also the Spiritual selective attention.

Habituation

Habituation concerns the decrease in response to familiar stimuli. The perceptual threshold is raised so we do not perceive the things we used to. An example of this is the tolerance we build up against background noise. At first it is audible but over time we cease to be aware of it. Habituation is a dulling of the senses, you could even say a numbing of the senses.

Attribution

This is the process by which we attribute cause. It is our understanding of causality, what caused this event or action to take place. We construct theories about behaviour, ours and others. Common features appear in our attribution. We tend to attribute our own behaviour to our situation and the behaviour of others to their personality. We attribute our successes to our capabilities and our failures to our circumstances. Attribution can rear its head when we counsel others. We seek causes for their problems and behaviour and often we project on to them the causes of our own behaviour rather than truly identifying the factors impacting them.

I Corinthians 2:12-16

We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words ...
 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ

Summary

So what can we conclude? Will we ever be able to see, hear and understand clearly? Probably not but we can improve. Firstly, by being aware of the impact of perception we can be on guard against it. Secondly through the renewing of our minds by God, through reliance on the Holy Spirit for understanding and by seeing and hearing with God's eyes, ears and heart we can move beyond our perception and into God's perception.

Listening

It has become obvious in our exploration of perception that it is particularly significant to the activity of listening. How well do we listen? Without doubt not as well as we think we do!

Matthew 17:5

...a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

Projective Listening

Concentrating on the core of the message and pulling out the really salient facts.

Obviously we can improve our listening by being aware of the impact of perception. What else can we do? We need to be active listeners. Active listening is to do with participating in ways which improve our concentration on what is being said. Making eye contact, an alert posture, giving vocal and non vocal encouragement to the speaker, all help us listen and encourage those we are listening to. The techniques of repetition, paraphrasing and summarising can all help us to check our understanding and ensure we are really hearing as we listen. We need to be credulous listeners, people who believe that what the other person is saying is true to them, withholding our assumptions and judgements.

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- ¹ George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership*
² Peter Drucker, *The Practice of Management*, p 195
³ Leighton Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, Ch 1
⁴ Arthur Levine, *When Dreams and Heroes Died*, p 26
⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity, or Living with Ambivalence*, reprinted in J Natoli and L Hutcheon (eds), *A Postmodern Reader*, pp 9-24
⁶ David Hilborn, *Picking up the Pieces*, p 31
⁷ Bernard Bass, *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*, Chs 1&2
⁸ Bennis and Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*
⁹ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, Ch 18
¹⁰ Tom Marshall, *Understanding Leadership*, p 9
¹¹ Leighton Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, p 15
¹² Buchanan and Huczynski, *Organizational Behaviour*, p 68
¹³ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, p 314
¹⁴ J Oswald Sanders, *Problems of Christian Discipleship*, p 86
¹⁵ Leighton Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, p 80-86
¹⁶ B Tuckman, *Development sequences in small groups*, *Psychological Bulletin*, vol 63, pp 384-399
¹⁷ R Allan et al, *Effective Behaviour in Organizations*, p 142
¹⁸ Buchanan and Huczynski, *Organizational Behaviour*, p 187
¹⁹ Meredith Belbin, *Management Teams: Why They Succeed or Fail*
²⁰ Lott and Lott, *Group cohesiveness as interpersonal attraction*, *Psychological Bulletin*, vol 64, pp 259-309
²¹ Buchanan and Huczynski, *Organizational Behaviour*, p 280
²² Janis, *Victims of Group Think*, p 8
²³ Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise*, pp 232-235
²⁴ David Hilborn, *Picking up the Pieces*, p 27
²⁵ Stanley Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, p 91
²⁶ Augoustinos and Walker, *Social Cognition*, p 261