How is Leadership Theologically Understood and Practised Across the Church of England?

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Abstract

The word 'leadership' is widely used across the Church of England and has become increasingly prevalent since the 1990's, yet not all users of this word hold the same definition for it. This thesis demonstrates that various understandings of leadership are held across the Church of England, that the differences between these understandings is not often recognised, and that this creates confusions which hamper any attempt to have a serious conversation about leadership in the Church.

By carefully attending to the ways in which leadership is spoken about in different contexts across the Church of England, I have uncovered various kinds of differences. This thesis demonstrates that there are confusions about the terminology used, incompatible ideas about what leadership is, multiple theological interpretations of those ideas, and differing ecclesial practices surrounding them. The multiplicity of theological interpretations of leadership in the Church of England reflects not only the complexity of ecclesial practice but also the lack of a coherent and shared conceptual framework.

I have diagnosed these complexities by uncovering two 'voices' to converse with one another. The first voice is a form of normative voice, uncovered by researching the understandings of leadership expressed in the Church of England's liturgy and official documents. The second voice is a form of operant voice, uncovered through empirical research interviewing members of the Church of England who are involved in parish leadership.

This conversation reveals four recurring areas of confusion: the ambiguous relationship between discipleship and leadership; contrasting views of management and the role of managerialism; conflicting understandings of leadership as either functional or influential; and divergent perspectives on how ordination relates to leadership. Each of these themes is examined to disentangle the confusions and suggest clearer, more constructive ways of talking about leadership. Without this work it is all but impossible to have a good conversation about leadership in the Church of England, as the church does not currently hold even the basic elements of shared categories, language or experience necessary for such a conversation.

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Daniel J Brown

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Statement of Copyright

Date of Research

My research data was gathered from 2020 to 2024

Confidentiality

Full confidentiality was promised to all interview participants, for this reason both churches and individuals have been assigned alphabetic pseudonyms and often have been assigned gender neutral pronouns.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my brilliant family.

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You are the best- I'm looking forwards to having even more time for us to spend together!

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since being ordained as a priest in the Church of England in 2014 I have strived to be a good leader. I have always believed, and still do, that leadership is an important element of ministry in the Church. This thesis is an exploration of what the term 'leadership' means within the Church of England, because I discovered during this research that this is not as straightforward a question as it may first appear.

This research demonstrates that within the Church of England, leadership is understood in diverse ways, yet these differences are rarely recognised or addressed. This lack of awareness creates confusions which undermine and hamper meaningful discussion about leadership in the church. As I researched this subject, I did so with a growing frustration with the discrepancies in understanding among those within the church who discuss leadership, both at the centre of the institution and in parochial ministry. The Church England takes leadership and the study of leadership seriously. Following the Faith and Order Commission's report on leadership that is studied in this research, the Church of England has commissioned 'Leadership Development Programmes' for both senior leaders and incumbents[1] in order to engage with this conversation. However this research uncovered a gap between the understanding of leadership held by those who may be partaking in and contributing to the conversation in the centre of the Church of England and those who are involved in leadership roles at parish level. This gap in understanding is in part created by the way that people form

[1]Church of England Leadership Development Programme, https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/diocesan-resources/ministry-development/senior-leadership-learning-and-development#na

their views on leadership. Individuals are sometimes influenced by negative experiences; however, the proliferation of the internet and social media has created a wide range of information sources from which people obtain knowledge. These influences can lead individuals to become entrenched in particular viewpoints, resulting in increased suspicion toward perspectives that differ from their own. The gap is complicated further by a lack of clarity on the meaning and understanding of words. Words such as 'leadership', 'management', 'discipleship', 'power' and 'authority' are used with different definitions in various Church of England liturgies and documents as well as conversationally. Greater clarity and coherence, as well as a posture of humility and teachability are therefore essential if the Church is to engage more effectively in conversations on this subject.

Asking how leadership is theologically understood and practised across the Church of England was not the starting point for this research. I initially began with the intention of discovering which theological understandings of leadership could be linked to churches succeeding or thriving. In my naivety, I assumed that when I used the word leadership, whomever I was speaking to would hold roughly the same understanding of it that I did. I discovered that in reality there is an ongoing conversation about leadership in the Church of England, but that this conversation is bewildering, with lots of disagreements and lots of confusions. It also seemed to be a conversation in which the diverse voices and experiences of people in local leadership were not often heard.

I have therefore chosen to explore the existing conversation regarding leadership in the Church of England. This research involves a lot of listening. I spend time listening to what Church of England liturgies and other documents with an official standing have to say, listening to the debate conducted in some of the literature about leadership that is around the Church

of England, but above all listening to incumbents and church wardens to hear about their experiences of leadership to see if it is possible to achieve greater clarity and to resolve any of the persistent disagreements.

I begin this thesis with an overview of some of the leadership discussion around the Church of England in the form of a literature review. Some of the texts covered in chapter two contributed specifically to my research, some provided concepts and vocabulary that facilitated my research, and some help to paint the picture of the wider conversation about leadership that is ongoing within the Church of England and beyond. Collectively the texts helped me to understand the influences that have shaped the conversation within the Church of England. The texts covered range from secular leadership research to Christian leadership research and from academic research to more mainstream, popular literature.

Following the literature review and leadership overview I then present my Methodology. This developed as the research matured, due to the complexity I discovered in the sources of data that I was exploring. In chapter three I will present the patchwork methodology that allowed me to complete this research, including justification for each of its elements.

The largest portions of this thesis are found in chapters four and five. These chapters are the two data sets that I researched in order understand the ways in which leadership and related ideas were spoken about in different contexts across the Church of England. Chapter four is my first data set and is a presentation of how leadership is described in key Church of England texts. I prioritise the Church of England Ordinal, the texts used to assess whether individuals hold the characteristics necessary for ordination, and a selection of significant General Synod reports. This data set helps me to build a picture of how leadership is viewed from a form of normative perspective within the Church.

Chapter five is a presentation of my empirical research. I interviewed a selection of incumbents and church wardens who represented a wide range of churches to investigate how leadership is theologically understood and practised by those involved in church leadership. In this chapter I explore both how interviewees spoke about the ideas that are identified as important in earlier chapters but I also allow them to take the conversation in new and different directions.

In chapter six I bring the two data sets into deeper conversation, for the sake of providing a reflective diagnosis of the disagreements and confusions that mark the Church of England's conversations about leadership. The chapter contains elements of theological reflection, and in particular elements of scriptural exegesis. However, my primary aim in this chapter is to diagnose the factors holding the Church of England back from a mature and helpful conversation about leadership.

Chapter seven allows me to summarise the process of this research and to make some suggestions as to how the church might move forwards. This thesis makes an original contribution to the understanding of leadership in the Church of England by uncovering gaps between a normative understanding of leadership as presented by Church of England texts and a form of operant and espoused understandings expressed by interview participants whilst also uncovering confusions within those sources. I hope that it can suggest some helpful steps forwards, allowing the Church of England to understand itself better, and to facilitate conversations that have been unable to happen prior to this research due to lack of understanding across the church. I also hope that it facilitates my initial aim, that I might become a better leader, that I might understand myself and my church more comprehensively, and that I might see the teams or churches that I have the privilege of leading thrive.

Chapter 2, Leadership Overview and Literature Review

2.1 Literature Review, an Introduction

By the time that Steven Croft wrote *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and Leadership in the Local Church* in 1999, he was able to say that in a wide variety of church contexts 'leader' was becoming 'the most commonly used title for a person called to full-time Christian work'.[2]

There is, however, no single agreed meaning of the word 'leader' or of 'leadership'. Roger Gill wrote in 2009 that 'The quest for a general theory of leadership has been a challenging one and unsuccessful so far.'[3] The fact that the meaning of the term leadership is a contested one is no less true in the Church of England.

As I ask the question, 'How is leadership theologically understood and practised across the Church of England?' I will use this chapter to build a picture of the existing conversation about leadership, both within the Church of England and beyond.

There are more books on leadership than could be read in a lifetime. As I write this chapter, Amazon.co.uk is currently selling 57,136[4] books with leadership in the title and more are published every week, therefore this chapter cannot be an exhaustive survey of all leadership literature. I have selected some of these texts because they are well-regarded surveys of understandings of leadership, and some because they illustrate the approaches described. Some texts are included because they have had a widespread influence on the understanding of leadership within the Church of England, or they were named as influential by research

[2] S. Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and Leadership in the Local Church* (DLT, 1999), p.203.
[3] R. Gill, *The Theory and Practice of Leadership,* (SAGE 2006, reprinted 2009) p.78.
[4] As of 25th April 2025.

participants. Some of the texts were particularly helpful to my research, providing ideas and definitions that help to make sense of this research.

In this first section of this chapter, I will review some secular understandings of the term 'leadership' using Simon Western and Roger Gill amongst others. Following this I observe how leadership language and culture crosses over into the church using the work of Parkinson. Finally, I explore how leadership is understood in the Church of England, initially using the work of bishop Steven Croft and then others.

I begin with texts that provide a metanarrative for the leadership conversation both outside and inside the church. Western provides one useful way of describing the history of changing approaches to leadership in the wider culture. For the purposes of this research I am particularly interested in the rise and fall of what Western describes as 'Messiah Leadership Discourse,'[5] therefore I will consider some texts that demonstrate this theory. Gill then provides some helpful descriptors for different approaches to leadership with his synthetic work on how power manifests and his distinction between leadership and management. Kotter's work on management[6] and Greenleaf's work on servant leadership[7] provide some different perspectives on leadership that have also had a significant impact on the leadership conversation.

Kevin Flinn identifies that the reality of applying leadership theory to the lived reality of leadership practice involves a combination of many different factors which led to him developing his *complexity theory*.[8] Flinn's complexity theory bears a significant resemblance

[5] S. Western, *Leadership: A Critical Text* (Sage, 2019).
[6] J. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Harvard Business School Press, 1996).
[7] R Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Paulist Press, 1977).
[8] K. Flinn, *Leadership Development in Practice: A Complexity Approach* (Routledge, 2023).

to my experience of combining leadership theory, practical theology and empirical research and therefore has been a beneficial companion to my research project.

Having created a foundational picture of leadership studies I will then engage with texts that are primarily concerned with the specifics of Christian leadership. The relationship between general leadership studies and Christian leadership is, however, complex and I am indebted to the work of Ian Parkinson in *Understanding Christian Leadership*[9] for providing a helpful overview of it

Stephen Croft's bibliographic journey provides an insight on one Anglican perspective whilst texts from Hybels, Percy and Millbank create a wider picture.

2.2 Leadership Discourse Theory, Simon Western

I will use this section to review the work on leadership theory by Simon Western. There are many scholars that have studied leadership, and lots of significant texts have tried to map the history of leadership. I have chosen to focus on Western because his work offers a thorough overview of leadership theories both geographically and chronologically and he draws on the work of other significant scholars to influence his theories. Western provides one useful way of seeing the big picture of changing attitudes to leadership in the wider culture and my project takes place against this backdrop.

My research is indebted to this work of Simon Western due to his work on leadership theory and his work on how leadership theory itself has impacted culture. Both Western's 2007 text

[9] I. Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership* (SCM, 2020).

Leadership: A Critical Text,[10] which was then re-released in 2013 and 2019, and his 2018 text co-authored with Eric Jean Garcia entitled *Global Leadership Perspectives: Insight and Analysis*[11] provide a helpful insight into global trends within leadership studies.

Western charts the development of leadership discourse through four stages. He describes the first of these as the 'controller leadership discourse.'[12] This discourse emerged in the early 20th century and applied scientific rationalism to the workplace, focusing on efficiency and control. Although Western is primarily concerned with leadership studies, he recognises that the controller leadership discourse describes what most contemporary studies would label management.

The second of Western's discourses, the 'therapist leadership discourse'[13] developed in the 1960s and 1970s as managers appeared to move from the rigid, hierarchical structures of Controller Leadership to a more people-centred approach, integrating psychological insights into leadership and management practices. Although Western identifies a demise of the therapist approach in the late 1970s,[14] the move towards prioritising employees as individuals and taking on a concern for well-being continued to have an impact on leadership practices. Western contends that the therapist leadership discourse laid the foundation for the later leadership models of transformational leadership and servant leadership. In *Coaching and Mentoring: A Critical Text*[15] Western criticises the therapist leadership discourse citing a creation of dependencies, a lack of strategic vision and an individualization of social experience as deficiencies with this model. His primary critique of the therapist leadership

[10] Western, *Leadership*.
[11] S. Western & E. J. Garcia, *Global Leadership Perspectives: Insights and Analysis* (Sage, 2018).
[12] Western, *Leadership*, p.179.
[13] Western, *Leadership*, p.209.
[14] Western, *Leadership*, p.222.
[15] S. Western, *Coaching and Mentoring: A Critical Text* (Sage, 2018).

discourse appears to be that whilst it professes to be people-centred or concerned with well-being it remains a strategy primarily designed for greater productivity and task-focussed prioritisation. It is in part due to this focus on productivity that Western considers this to be a final management discourse before the conversation turns from management to leadership.

Western's third discourse is the 'Messiah Leadership Discourse'[16] which rose to prominence in the 1980s. The messiah leadership discourse arose in response to the decline of hierarchical, bureaucratic organisations and a socio-economic shift which included the rise of neoliberalism. The leadership response to this was to shift focus towards looking for transformational leaders who individually set vision and created culture. There is a large volume of leadership texts that were published around this time including some that I will explore later in this chapter. This began with popular work from authors such as Ken Blanchard in the 1980s and led to thousands of books being written to help people develop in this model of leadership. This leadership development model became a multi-million-pound industry and leadership 'experts' such as Jim Collins[17] or Simon Sinek[18] became household names.

Crucially, as the discourse moved from a therapist leadership model to a messiah leadership model, the discourse also moved from speaking about management to speaking about leadership, which prioritized vision, transformation, and people-centred approaches.[19] The Messiah discourse was particularly concerned with emphasizing inspirational leadership over bureaucratic management. In other texts the messiah model of leadership is sometimes

[16] Western, *Leadership*, p.247.
[17] J. Collins *Good to Great* (Cornerstone, 2001).
[18] S. Sinek, *Start with Why* (Penguin, 2011).
[19] Western, *Leadership*, p.256.

referred to as the heroic model[20] or the directive leadership style.[21] A popular theory[22] is that this transition from management discourse to leadership discourse was pioneered by Zaleznik's 1977 paper that was published in the Harvard Business Review entitled 'Managers and Leaders: Are they different?'[23]

Western names the fourth discourse the 'eco-leadership discourse'. He explains that the leadership theory developed since the 1980s has become overly focused on individuals, neglecting the need for organizations to move beyond their 'obsession with heroic individual leaders.'[24] The eco-leadership model is described by Western as thinking of organisations as 'ecosystems within ecosystems'[25] and he proposes that this emerging leadership discourse should emphasise ethical practices, flexibility and participative structures whilst rejecting the rigid, hierarchical models of management and the individualism of messiah leadership.

Western's work is important for my project because using his discourse theory and language, he charts global trends in leadership and management studies and identifies how both leadership practice and leadership studies have developed over time. This benefits my research on Anglican church leadership as there are significant parallels between Western's identification of a move away from individualistic leadership and ongoing conversations regarding leadership in the Church of England. Western recognises phenomena such as 'mass leadership' which is leadership shared across society and happening in everyday life, across social media, in grassroots movements, communities, and networks[26] and 'distributed

[20] M. Percy, *The Ecclesial Canopy: Faith, Hope, Charity* (Routledge, 2012).
[21] K. Blanchard, *Situational Leadership* (Harper, 1982).
[22] R. Bolden, B. Hawkins, J. Gosling & S. Taylor, *Exploring Leadership: Individual, Organisational and Societal Perspectives* (Oxford University Press, 2011) p.23.
[23] A. Zaleznik, 'Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?', *Harvard Business Review*, May/June 1977, pp. 67–78.
[24] Western, *Leadership*, p.25.
[25] Western, *Leadership*, p.256.
[26] Western, *Leadership*, p.97.

leadership', where leadership is something that is shared and spread out across groups, teams, and systems.[27] He describes mass leadership and distributed leadership as antidotes to outdated models of individualism or messiah leadership. This move away from heroic, individualistic leadership can be identified in many organisations recently, including the church.

Western makes several observations concerning church leadership within his texts, however there is not enough space for him to go into this in much depth. A consequence of this is that despite identifying as a Christian himself, his descriptions of church leadership can be over-simplistic and lack nuance. One example of this is that Western argues that a good model of leadership was the house-group movement breaking away from the institutionalised church, stating that;

> The successful house-group movement [is] the Fundamentalists, acting against a failing and staid institutional church, [they] distributed leadership through dynamic house groups, finding themselves at the centre of worship, rather than watching a performance[28]

Western's argument is that the house-group movement distributed leadership across an organisation instead of relying on an individual. However more comprehensive research into the house-group movement reveals that individualistic leadership styles can and did exist prominently within that movement.[29]

A second example of a helpful observation that could benefit from more research is found in *Leadership: A Critical Text*. Here Western is critical of what he describes as dynamic

[27] Western, *Leadership*, p.61.
[28] Western, *Leadership*, p.142.
[29] A. Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom: The Radical Christianity of the House Church Movement* (Eagle, 1998).

conformity.'[30] This is a form of coercive control in which leaders or organisations create a culture which people are expected to comply with, not through overt pressure or coercion, but through internalized expectations and unconscious processes. He contends that the creation of dynamic conformity is one of the flaws of evangelical fundamentalism in the United States and that the eco-leadership found in churches such as the Quakers (the church of which he is a member) or the house-group movement are an antidote to this conformity.[31] This again is an oversimplification because the dynamic conformity and control described by Western is displayed in many churches beyond the fundamental evangelicals of the United States. This observation is still beneficial to this project because later I will explore how some leaders can create controlling cultures to misappropriate power. In a recent podcast Simon Western stated that 'Christians are particularly susceptible to being drawn in and deceived by an individual presenting themselves as having all the answers'[32] and this is the sort of leadership that can create a dynamic conformity.

A third reflection is that Western suggests that the idea that good leadership is often found in a community sharing a task, rather than a heroic individual driving a team towards a goal, is a new concept. Whilst Western describes *Eco Leadership* as a new way of 'doing' leadership, the shared journey and task of a community working towards a goal might be described as *communitas,*[33] a Christian model of leadership described by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the 1940s. Therefore, what Western describes as being new to the secular world of leadership is not necessarily new to the church.

[30] Western, *Leadership*, p.124.
[31] Western, *Leadership*, p.80.
[32] Remarks made in Clark, K., et al., 'The Leadership Crisis and Our Response', *Affective Leadership podcast*, 8 Feb 2025, https://www.affectiveleadership.net/p/the-leadership-crisis-and-our-response.
[33] D. Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (Harper One, 2009) p.96.

A final question of Western's four discourse theory is how well the linear presentation of the journey through the discourses aligns with lived experience. Western presents the four leadership discourses as being held in distinct time periods. It is worth examining if there is more overlap than indicated, and whether attitudes or beliefs described as historical continue to exist today contemporaneously. I contend that the four discourses are cumulative rather than linear, and that researchers will encounter elements of all four of them in the present day.

To summarise Western's leadership discourse theory; there has been a widespread shift in understandings of leadership from an individualistic model to a more collaborative model and this will increasingly be the case in organisations both ecclesial and secular.[34] I will be exploring whether leadership in the Church of England contexts is understood in more messianic or more ecological ways.

2.2.1 Messiah Leadership Discourse in Popular Literature.

Of the four leadership discourses that Western identifies, the two that are the most prominent in my project are the messiah leadership discourse and the eco-leadership discourse and I am particularly interested in the transition and relationship between the two.

In addition to academic leadership studies from authors such as Western it is difficult to overestimate the impact that more popular texts on leadership have had on the understanding of what leadership is. Since the shift from what Western describes as the 'therapist leadership discourse' of the 1970s to the 'messiah leadership discourse' of the 1980s onwards the discussion has moved from teaching and training on management to

[34]The idea that leadership is not held by a heroic individual but is shared across an organisation is echoed by other significant commentators such as Jackson and Parry (2008), Barnard (1991) and Yukl (2002).

teaching and training on leadership. This led to the creation of a raft of leadership manuals, guides, training courses and other resources, some of which have had a significant impact on leadership understandings both within the church and in the wider world. Due to the relatively new nature of the discourse there is little or no accreditation necessary for somebody to describe themselves as a 'leadership expert' or a teacher of leadership. Parkinson[35] notes that the period from the 1990s to the present day has seen a significant increase in popular leadership literature and points out that the growth of this has been accelerated by societal factors such as an increase in self-help programmes and the impact of the internet and social media. *Harvard Business Review* estimated that the global market for leadership training, development and resources was worth approximately eight billion dollars in 2023.[36]

I will use this section to review two of the most popular 'messianic leadership' texts that have significantly impacted the church and the world's understanding of leadership.

2.2.2 Messiah Leadership and Situational Leadership, Ken Blanchard

In 1982 Ken Blanchard released his book *The One Minute Manager*[37] and followed it up in 1985 with *Leadership and the One Minute Manager*.[38] *The One Minute Manager* has been an influential book on leadership, selling over fifteen million copies.[39] The book is based on Blanchard's 'situational leadership' theory[40] which suggests that managers will need to utilise a different form of leadership depending on the situation that they are facing. Blanchard

[35] I. Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership* (SCM, 2020) p.16.
[36] A. Yimiscigal et al., 'What Makes Leadership Development Programs Succeed', *Harvard Business Review*, Feb 28, 2023, https://hbr.org/2023/02/what-makes-leadership-development-programs-succeed.
[37] K. Blanchard, *The One Minute Manager* (William Morrow, 1982).
[38] K. Blanchard, *Leadership and the One Minute Manager* (Harper Thorsons, 1985).
[39] Blanchard, *Leadership*, p.2.
[40] Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership*, p.16.

proposes that all leaders and the teams or organisations that they are leading will generally work through four stages which he labels orientation, dissatisfaction, production and integration. Although the final integration stage does describe a more collaborative and releasing style of leadership, the theory centres around the success or failure of the task being managed relying on the leader. Blanchard's situational leadership model can therefore be described as an example of Western's messiah leadership.

In the 1990s Mike Breen and Walt Kallestad aligned Blanchard's situational leadership stages with stages in Jesus' earthly ministry.[41] This was renamed the 'leadership square'[42] and marketed as a leadership tool as part of a series called the 'Lifeshapes.' The Lifeshapes leadership teaching picked up a degree of momentum in churches and was estimated to have been used in over three thousand churches in that period. This is one example of popular leadership literature influencing leadership culture in the church, which has been a repeated model.

2.2.3 Messiah Leadership and *Good to Great*, Jim Collins

Jim Collins can be referenced in a similar vein to Ken Blanchard as a popular leadership theorist whose work achieved such a level of popularity that it has become an authoritative text. Collins released his most popular book, *Good to Great* in 2001[43] and it is described by Parkinson as being 'one of the most feted business books of the early twenty-first century'.[44] Collins creates several principles in his book such as 'level 5 leadership,'[45] 'The Hedgehog

[41] M. Breen & W. Kallestad, *The Passionate Life* (Kingsway, 2005), p.98.
[42] Breen & Kallestad, *The Passionate Life,* p.167.
[43] J. Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies make the Leap, and Others Don't* (Random House, 2001).
[44] I. Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership,* (SCM Press 2020) p.7.
[45] Collins, *Good to Great*.

Concept' and the 'Flywheel Effect'[46] which have gone on to influence leadership theory significantly. Perhaps one of the most interesting features of Collins' writing is that when he began his research one of his aims was to exclude leadership as a factor that influenced the success or failure of an organisation. His stance on this is summarized by Parkinson;

> To ascribe such a place to leadership, Collins believed, prevented the researcher from gaining deeper and more scientifically accurate understandings of what were real factors affecting company effectiveness.[47]

Collins describes his inclusion of leadership as a key factor in his work as an 'empirical conclusion rather than an ideological one.'[48] Despite Collins' initial reticence to write on leadership, his work goes on to ascribe importance to the role of the leader, or CEO, as the one who creates culture and inspires others.[49] This is another example of an influential text on leadership modelling Western's 'Messiah Leadership Discourse' by promoting an individualistic approach to leadership and ascribing responsibility to a single person at the head of an organisation.

There is not enough space in this paper to explore all the influential leadership texts that demonstrate a messianic model of leadership however it is worth recognising that work from John C Maxwell,[50] Steven Covey[51] and others contributed to a dominant theme of messiah leadership discourse through popular leadership literature that gained significant traction throughout the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries. It is difficult to overestimate

[46] Collins, *Good to Great*.
[47] Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership,* p.8.
[48] Collins, *Good to Great* p.22.
[49] Collins, *Good to Great* p.87.
[50] John C Maxwell has authored many influential books on leadership, his best-selling book is *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Thomas Nelson, 1998) however the texts most referenced by church leaders were *The 360° Leader* (Thomas Nelson, 2005) and *The Five Levels of Leadership* (Center Street, 2011).
[51] Steven R Covey published *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (Free Press, 1989) which sold 40 million copies, he went on to publish many other leadership texts.

the impact that popular literature and training have contributed to an inherent understanding of leadership that sits within the messiah leadership discourse, particularly as this boom in literature coincided with the growth of social media and the self-help industry. It will become apparent throughout this research that this discourse has a significant influence on peoples' inherent understanding of leadership, not least in the Church of England.

2.3 Interdisciplinary Study, Management and Power, Roger Gill

Roger Gill published his book *Theory and Practice of Leadership*[52] in 2006 and then re-published it in 2009 with amendments and additions. The 2009 reprint included some pedagogical additions such as learning objectives, chapter summaries and discussion questions which indicates that there was an increasing engagement with leadership studies as a development tool. The 2009 edition also contained a greater emphasis on ethical leadership which he sometimes refers to as 'moral leadership'[53] or 'authentic leadership.'[54] Gill's increased emphasis on ethical leadership and his suggestion that it is intrinsically linked to his previous theory on transformational leadership bears some similarities to Western's eco-leadership discourse which also prioritise the ethical and moral elements of leadership.

Gill's work provides a significant contribution to this research for three primary reasons. Firstly, his use of interdisciplinary research, secondly his work on the distinction between management and leadership, and thirdly his work on leadership and power.

[52] R. Gill, *The Theory and Practice of Leadership* (Sage 2006, reprinted 2009).
[53] Gill, *Theory and Practice*, p.134-5.
[54] Gill, *Theory and Practice*, pp.166-7.

Gill's interdisciplinary approach is beneficial for this research project as my aim is to utilise disciplines such as theology, practical theology, sociology and leadership studies amongst others. Gill's approach to leadership studies is also to use tools and research that cross over from other academic disciplines. An example of this is his use of psychological research to analyse how leaders can influence, motivate and inspire those that they are leading.[55] Gill writes that 'leadership is most commonly associated with influencing, motivating and inspiring people. Transformational leadership is associated with people who are motivated to levels beyond what is normal.'[56] Following this quote Gill devotes a chapter to reviewing psychological research into theories and models of motivation. Interestingly he summarizes the chapter by analysing the importance of charisma and inspiration that a leader carries, which would sit within Western's third discourse, the messiah-leadership discourse. This strengthens the argument that the discourse theory is not entirely linear but that elements will cross over. Gill demonstrates interaction with other disciplines throughout the text including sociology, philosophy, ethics, and business studies which provide a rich study of leadership. Gill's demonstration of interdisciplinary research is helpful for this piece of work because it demonstrates that leadership interplays with many areas of life and the wider world which will inform some of the approach of my research as I endeavour to combine leadership studies with practical theology.

[55] Gill, *Theory and Practice*, p.243.
[56] Gill, *Theory and Practice*, p.231.

The second influence that Gill's work has on this project is his analysis of the difference between management and leadership. He writes that 'management is about achieving efficiency and stability; leadership is about increasing effectiveness through change and transformation.'[57] Gill creates this table to define some of the differences between leadership and management[58]

Table 1.1 Differences between Managers and Leaders

The manager	*The leader*
Administers	Innovates
Is a 'copy'	Is an 'original'
Maintains	Develops
Focuses on systems and structure	Focuses on people
Focuses on control	Inspires trust
Takes a short-range view	Has a long-range perspective
Asks how and when	Asks what and why
Imitates	Originates
Accepts the *status quo*	Challenges the *status quo*
Is a classic 'good soldier'	Is his or her own person
Does things right	Does the right thing

Gill goes on to explain that the word management is derived from the Latin *manus* which means 'hand'[59] and is concerned with 'handling' things.

Another author, referenced by Gill who distinguishes leadership and management in a similar way is John Kotter in his texts *Leading Change*[60]and *A Force for Change.*[61] Kotter argues that both management and leadership are important in any functioning organisation but that they have differing foci. Kotter posits that the role of management is to focus on order and consistency and that its primary goal is to cope with complexity and to bring order to systems.

[57] Gill, *Theory and Practice*, p.298.
[58] Gill, *Theory and Practice*, p.18.
[59] Gill, *Theory and Practice*, p.21.
[60] J. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Harvard Business School Press, 1996).
[61] J. Kotter, *A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs from Management*, (New York Free Press, 1990)

This is different to the focus of leadership which should be change and movement; leadership's primary goal is to cope with change and to drive transformation. Kotter writes;

> Management is a set of processes that can keep a complicated system of people and technology running smoothly. The most important aspects of management include planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling, and problem solving. Leadership is a set of processes that creates organizations in the first place or adapts them to significantly changing circumstances. Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles.[62]

Gill and Kotter's work on management provides important context for this research because I will explore the relationship between management and leadership and specifically the perception of them held by people involved in leadership in parish churches. This distinction will become increasingly relevant as the research develops. Whilst the textual analysis of core Church of England texts reveal very little content on management, the empirical research finds that management and leadership have a complex relationship in the minds of the interview participants. There is a danger however of separating leadership from management in too clinical a manner. John Adair was critical of this method, describing it as 'the Zaleznik Error… making a false dichotomy between "leaders" and "managers."'[63] Gill also recognises the danger of oversimplifying the distinction, identifying that it does not don't hold up cleanly in reality because people in organisational roles can perform both leadership and management functions.[64]

The third key element of Gill's work for this research is his work on the relationship between leadership and power. Gill asks the question; 'If leadership is the use of power to win the minds and hearts of people to strive towards a common purpose, where does that power

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[62] Kotter, *Leading Change*.
[63] J. Adair, *How to Grow Leaders, The Seven Key Principles of Effective Leadership Development* (Kogan Page, 2005) p.64.
[64] Gill, *Theory and Practice*, p.261.

come from?'[65] Building on the work of French and Raven[66] he identifies the fact that leaders can hold forms of power that managers may not and explores different types of power including legitimate power, coercive power, reward power, personal power, psychological reward power, referent power and expert power.[67] This is an expansion of Raven and French's list which was limited to *Legitimate Power*, which is based on the position or role a leader holds in an organization; *Reward Power*, which is based on the leader's ability to give rewards, such as promotions, pay raises, recognition, or privileges; *Coercive Power*, which stems from the leader's ability to punish or impose negative consequences; *Expert Power*, which arises from the leader's knowledge, skills, or expertise and *Referent Power*, which is based on the leader's personal characteristics that make them admired, respected, or liked. Gill explores the positive and negative uses of power and how they can be used in both management and leadership.

The distinction between different forms of power, agency and influence surface again later in this project when analysing core texts of the Church of England. The texts studied in chapter four identify two forms of leadership: functional and influential. There are many parallels between functional and influential leadership and Gill's work on legitimate power and referent power and Gill's work provides a useful background for this research

Gill uses the second edition of his book to set up 'authentic' or 'moral' leadership as a direct contradiction to 'coercive' power, of which he is highly critical. The form of power which Gill seems to suggest is the most effective however is referent power. This is interesting because

[65] Gill, *Theory and Practice*, p.245.
[66] J.P. French and B.H. Raven, 'The Bases of Social Power', in D. Cartwright and A. F. Zander (eds) *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory*, 3rd edition (Harper and Row, 2003).
[67] Gill, *Theory and Practice*, p.249.

the use of referent power relies on an individual's effect on others and sits within what Western would describe as a messiah-leadership approach. Gill describes 'referent power' as 'influence that leaders can exert as a result of their perceived attractiveness, personal characteristics or social skills, charm or charisma.'[68] This form of power is not presented without critique however, as Gill does recognise that referent power requires integrity, credibility and honesty or it will quickly be lost. This form of power is also at risk of becoming abusive or manipulative as it relies heavily on the personality or character of the individual leader. Leaders that hold power due to personal charisma or persuasiveness that develops into unhealthy control or manipulation feature in the empirical research chapter of this project and so Gill's descriptor is a helpful highlight at this stage. One theme that features heavily in this research is whether Anglican leadership is understood to be *functional*, meaning that power is held due to the position of the leader, or *influential*, meaning that power is held due to the informal influence that a leader may have. Gill's study of power will therefore inform this understanding.

Gill's work on the relationship between leadership and management is important for my research because this is a theme which ebbs and flows through the work. The theme of management does not occur regularly in the core Church of England texts that are studied and so it does not feature in the initial plans for the empirical research. However, it featured in the interview data to such an extent that it became a prominent feature of the data presentation.

[68] Gill, *Theory and Practice,* p.249.

2.4 Complexity Theory, Kevin Flinn

The texts explored thus far in this chapter have described elements of leadership theory from an academic perspective which allows for an amount of distance from the subject matter. This has created clean distinctions between time periods in Western's linear picture of leadership discourses or of terminological definitions in Gill's description of the differences between leadership and management.

The picture that emerges through the research however is that conversations regarding leadership in praxis will usually involve different influences and factors which inter-relate and can become confusing. Cameron and Duce's work on the four theological voices[69] provides a helpful framework to understand this, which I will explore at greater depth in chapter three. Kevin Flinn's work on complexity theory[70] has helped articulate some of the confusion surrounding inter-related theories that co-exist simultaneously. He identifies that leadership analysis has often been over-simplified to help observations to fit within frameworks of understanding and contends that this usually does not reflect a true picture of leadership.

Flinn's theory of leadership recognises that humans operate in a world of complex social interactions and organizational dynamics, and that leadership studies should respond accordingly. There are echoes of Blanchard's 'situational leadership' theory within Flinn's work due to his argument that leadership should be analysed according to the situation in which it is being practised. However, Flinn's theories engage with wider disciplines such as evolutionary psychology, anthropology, and complexity science to provide a broader

[69] H. Cameron and C. Duce, *Researching Practice in Mission and Ministry: A Companion* (SCM Press, 2013) p.165.
[70] K. Flinn, *Leadership Development in Practice; A Complexity Approach* (Routledge, 2023).

understanding of leadership. Blanchard's content is focused on a business or organisational situation whereas Flinn writes of how leadership styles and structures adapt to different ecological and social challenges such as warfare, resource scarcity, or intergroup competition.[71] In one sense Flinn mirrors Blanchard's situational leadership theory through his challenge to adapt leadership styles to the situation that is presented. In another sense however, the complexity theory emphasises an unpredictable and emergent nature of leadership within dynamic social systems which contrasts with Blanchard's structured situational leadership stages.

Two themes emerge throughout Flinn's work which were helpful for this research project.

The first theme is that Flinn recognises the limitations of simplistic or linear leadership theories. He identifies that as human social groups have grown larger and more intricate over time, complexity of social networks has increased[72] which requires flexible leadership to maintain group cohesion and cooperation. He goes on to say that leaders often had to manage coalitions, alliances, and rivalries within these groups which advanced social cognition and emotional intelligence.[73] This flexibility and nuance reflect the lived experience within the Church of England that is described in this research more accurately than the neater descriptions of Western or Gill.

Western describes four leadership discourses that occurred in four distinct time periods whereas in practice I found that elements of all four discourses exist simultaneously. It is also demonstrated in this chapter that Greenleaf's servant leadership theory was developing

[71] Flinn, *Leadership Development*, pp.29-53.
[72] Flinn, *Leadership Development*.
[73] Flinn, *Leadership Development*, pp.32-37.

alongside the more mainstream model of heroic or messiah leadership in the 1970s. Similarly, Blanchard describes four stages of leadership in his 'Situational leadership' model which progress chronologically. However, some leaders interviewed described elements of all four stages happening at the same time. It also becomes clear through the research that Gill and Kotter's distinctions between leadership and management are more merged in the lived experience of leadership practitioners than they are in Gill's description. Flinn's complexity theory allows for the nuance and flexibility of human nature when engaging reflective practice that is not as clear in some of the more definitive theoretical descriptors. Flinn's complexity theory also helps to engage with practical theology in a similar manner to the way that it helps with leadership studies as it allows for a more flexible approach to applying theory that is at times over-simplified or reduced to academic theory.

The second theme in Flinn's work that influenced my work is his movement towards what Gill would call 'moral leadership'[74] or Western would describe as 'eco-leadership.'[75] In a similar manner to Gill's second edition of *Theory and Practice of Leadership,* Kevin Flinn first published his *Leadership Development in Practice: A Complexity Approach* in 2018 and then released a second edition in 2023. The second edition contained new material on diversity and social justice, providing deeper insights into how leadership development can address systemic inequalities and promote inclusive practices.[76] The addition of material that is more empathetic and more person-centred reflects the journey Gill traversed in his leadership commentary and we will see later demonstrated in the works of Steven Croft. The inclusion of this content by Flinn however provides a new insight due to its housing within complexity

[74] Gill, *Theory and Practice*, pp.134-5.
[75] Western, *Leadership,* pp. 302-303
[76] Flinn, *Leadership Development*, p.245.

theory because this theory recognises and names the nuance and crossover of differing elements of leadership theory.

2.5 Servant Leadership

2.5.1 Introducing Servant Leadership, Robert Greenleaf

Whilst Western identifies the 1980s and 1990s as a peak of messiah leadership discourse and the promulgation of heroic individual leaders, there was a counter narrative gaining traction at the same time. In 1970 Robert Greenleaf published his essay *The Servant as Leader*[77] and included it in his later book *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. This was an influential collection of essays which was reprinted posthumously in 2002,[78] indicating the level of impact that it has had on leadership dialogue. Like Western, Greenleaf identified as a Christian, and like Western, Greenleaf was a practicing Quaker at the time that he wrote his most influential work.

Greenleaf wrote that 'The Servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first.'[79] This was a radical perspective on leadership at the time, although it could be argued that elements of Greenleaf's thesis were influenced by the people-centred therapist leadership discourse and so were not entirely independent of wider leadership movements.[80] Greenleaf wrote that 'The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant—first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being

[77] R. Greenleaf, *The Servant as Leader* (The Centre for Servant Leadership, 1970).
[78] R. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Paulist Press, 1977).
[79] Greenleaf, *Servant as Leader*, p.64.
[80] Western, *Leadership*, p.209.

served' and 'The best test of a servant-leader is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?'[81]

Although Greenleaf does not directly cite French and Raven, their work on the five bases of power that influenced Gill's work does appear to have had some influence on Greenleaf's understanding of power. Greenleaf emphasises using power ethically and for the benefit of others, particularly through persuasion, foresight, and stewardship.[82] He is repeatedly critical of power that comes solely from position or title, described by French and Raven as *legitimate power,* arguing that it is often insufficient for genuine leadership. He goes on to say that 'A fresh, critical look is being taken at the issues of power and authority, and people are beginning to learn that leadership by coercive power is not leadership at all.[83] He believed leadership should arise from the desire to serve others first, not from formal authority. One way of understanding these two approaches to power and leadership is that positional power can be imposed on those being led whilst a servant leadership approach may exert a form of power that respects the freedom and agency of those being led. It is too simple to say that one understanding of leadership removes the choice of the led however there is an element of freedom that is taken away through an over-exertion of positional power. This tension becomes a central tenet of my research. Permission to be led is foundational to Greenleaf who writes that 'Leadership must be granted by those who are led'.[84]

[81] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*.
[82] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*.
[83] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, p.20.
[84] Greenleaf, *Servant leadership*, p.22.

The Greenleaf quote referenced earlier states that 'the servant-leader is servant first… It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.'[85] This process describes a journey that an individual may go on which begins with a choice to serve and ends with a position of leadership. This is an inversion of the power dynamics that many prominent leadership texts were promoting at the time that it was published. Greenleaf was advocating for referent and expert power at a time that these forms of powers were not at the forefront of the leadership discussion.

Greenleaf's work is quoted and referenced in several leadership texts; however, it did not seem to gain traction until the turn of the century. The development of Greenleaf's theory of servant leadership through the 1970s alongside the predominant messiah discourse narrative adds to the argument that Western's leadership discourse theory is not as cleanly linear as his text would posit. There is evidence that the varying discourses can co-exist at the same time and the discourses are inter-weaving and cumulative rather than linear. Flinn's complexity theory explains this phenomenon.

2.5.2 Contemporary Servant Leadership, Arthur Boers

Forty-five years after Robert Greenleaf published his first work on servant leadership, Arthur Boers published *Servants and Fools: A Biblical Theology of Leadership.*[86] This text has been beneficial for this research project as it combines servant leadership theory with Christian leadership theory. It was published in the same year as the Faith and Order Commission's report on *Senior Leadership* (2015). Boers builds on the foundations of Greenleaf's work that had continued to grow and develop, resulting in servant leadership becoming a mainstream

[85] Greenleaf, *Servant leadership* p.13.
[86] A. Boers, *Servants and Fools: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* (Abingdon, 2015).

concept that is referenced by several of the interview participants in my research. Boers references Greenleaf's work and agrees that servanthood is central to leadership but is wary of servant leadership in secular contexts, arguing that it may be co-opted for corporate efficiency rather than genuine servanthood. This is a similar critique that Western expounds of the risk of duplicity in the therapist leadership discourse.

Boers uses this text to promote what he describes as a biblical model of leadership and describes this as superior to secular leadership models. He uses Bible passages such as Jesus washing the disciples' feet in John 13, Jesus' teaching on greatness through serving in Mark 10 and Paul's description of Jesus' humility in Philippians 2 to build his picture of 'Biblical leadership.' Boers argues that the Bible often presents a cautionary view of human leaders, emphasizing the importance of following these values and not relying on what he describes as 'Human logic'[87] to discern the way forwards. Boers is nervous of taking examples of Biblical leaders and unquestioningly accepting that they are inherently good. An example of this is his work on King David. Boers warns against using the Biblical description of David as 'a man after God's own heart'[88] and not critiquing his leadership behaviour. He argues that David is a figure who consolidates power through violence, cunning and 'religious legitimation.'[89] Boers is critical of both the metanarrative of David's reign which he says represents the emergence of a centralized monarchy that benefits elites whilst exploiting ordinary people and of his personal abuses of power in incidents such as the Uriah and Bathsheba narrative which he says demonstrates that sins are excused when it is convenient for the ruling class.[90] Boers

[87] Boers, *Servants and Fools,* p.65.
[88] 1 Samuel 13.
[89] Boers, *Servants and Fools*.
[90] 2 Samuel 11.

critiques a number of Biblical leaders in a similar manner, highlighting Solomon's apostasy and use of forced labour as well as Josiah and Hezekiah's use of religion to exert control over people.

Boers challenges the 'professionalising' of Christian leadership and calls for an authentic, relational model, writing, 'This is the concern right at the core of the work of giving leadership to the church: to focus attention on the way we live the Christian life, the means that we employ to embody the reality and carry out the commands of Jesus who became flesh among us. In other words, nothing impersonal, nothing nonrelational, nothing "unfleshed".'[91]

In summary, Boers criticizes much of the world of Christian leadership studies arguing that it is too controlling and at times manipulative, and that Greenleaf's teachings are more in line with a Christian understanding of leadership.

2.5.3 A Critique of Servant leadership, Chloe Lynch

Chloe Lynch, in her 2019 book *Ecclesial Leadership as Friendship,*[92] offers a different perspective on leadership. Lynch uses Walter Brueggemann's four elements of Prophetic Imagination[93] to critique and re-imagine leadership theology. These four elements are critique, lament, hope and imagination. When engaging with the critique element of this process, Lynch is critical of both Messiah Discourse Leadership and Servant Leadership and offers friendship as a third way of in which the church might consider leadership.

[91] Boers, *Servants and Fools,* p.78.
[92] C. Lynch*, Ecclesial Leadership as Friendship*, 1st ed. (Routledge; 2019).
[93] W. Brueggemann. *The Prophetic Imagination,* (Fortress Press, 1978).

Lynch uses the term 'great man narrative'[94] to describe what Western calls the messiah leadership discourse and describes the rise of the great man narrative and encroaching managerialism as the dominant consciousness of ecclesial leadership. Lynch is critical of the increase of managerialism in the church writing that 'Adopting managerialism's priorities constitutes, first, a failure to recognise ecclesial leadership's proper source and context.'[95] She also questions the compatibility of the telos of managerialism with ecclesial leadership and the effectiveness of a managerial approach to leadership.[96]

There are many critics of ecclesial leadership adopting managerialism; however Lynch is also critical of many elements of servant leadership which brings an interesting dynamic. Lynch criticises an unquestioning Christian acceptance of servant leadership, arguing that there is very little biblical or theological basis for Greenleaf's theories. She points out that Greenleaf draws on Eastern mysticism and Jungianism as primary sources and that he writes that scripture is neither revelatory nor authoritative.[97]

Lynch also suggests that servant leadership theory presents a naivety or perhaps even an ignorance of the realities of power dynamics. She argues that by uncritically adopting a benevolent hierarchy it inadvertently perpetuates existing power imbalances by not engaging with the reality of their existence.[98] This is particularly dangerous in Christian leadership where a language of servanthood can become intwined with a perception of enhanced 'godliness' or professionalism from an incumbent developing an unhealthy power imbalance

[94] Lynch*, Ecclesial Leadership, pp.15-27.*
[95] Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership,* p.21.
[96] Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership,* pp. 20-23.
[97]C. Lynch on the *Talking Theology* podcast from Cranmer Hall, Durham, 22 May 2023, https://podcast.cranmerhall.com/231001/episodes/12584864-chloe-lynch-what-s-wrong-with-servant-leadership-and-is-there-a-better-way.
[98] Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership*

that mirrors that of a messiah understanding of leadership.[99] The text is not dismissive of all of Greenleaf's theories however. As she develops a 'third way' for leadership via a utilisation of friendship she argues for flattening hierarchies, with less emphasis on formal authority and more on relational influence.

Lynch argues that servant leadership lacks a robust theological foundation and that more work needs to be done to understand the relationship between the servanthood referenced in the Bible and servanthood today. She is particularly critical of servant leadership theology that uses what she describes as biblical metaphor and takes it literally, arguing that concepts such as the incarnation or kenosis better reflect the sacrificial elements of Christian leadership.[100] Whilst criticising the theological superficiality of servant leadership, Lynch builds a rich theology of friend-leadership, treating friendship not as a simple social construct but a deep theological category drawing on sources such as Aquinas and Aelred of Rievaulx.[101]

2.6 Christian Leadership

2.6.1 Leadership and Christianity, Ian Parkinson

Ian Parkinson's SCM book, *Understanding Christian Leadership*[102] has been of great benefit to this research as it combines secular leadership theory with a theological understanding of Christian ministry. He writes that 'Leadership in the way of Jesus is not about control or dominance, but about servanthood, humility, and empowering others.'[103] Parkinson bridges

[99] Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership,* p.126.
[100] Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership*, p.182.
[101] Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership,* pp.164-168.
[102] I. Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership* (SCM, 2020).
[103] Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership,* p.78.

the gap between the explosion of secular leadership studies and the impact that this has had on the church with helpful explanation and academic insight.

The text is separated into two parts. Part one is concerned with *understanding leadership* and part two is concerned with *the work of leadership.* The first section intertwines Biblical leadership paradigms, contemporary leadership theories and the nature of power and authority. The second section prioritises the task of leadership and develops tools and guidance that are built on the content of section one.

Parkinson creates a helpful foundation for my research, writing that leadership is not a functional role or a title, but is a relational and spiritual calling.[104] This wrestling between the position of leadership and the spiritual dynamic of that calling is a theme that appears regularly in both the textual analysis and the empirical research of this thesis. Parkinson's theological reflection on Gill's work on leadership is also a helpful springboard for me to work from.

A further challenge that Parkinson brings is that 'leadership is essentially a gift from God and a participation in His own leadership… leadership is ultimately concerned with discerning what God is about and submitting to being led by Him.'[105] This is an important point to return to throughout this research. The first challenge from this text is to avoid theology being crowded out by leadership theory and to avoid the 'creeping secularism' that Martyn Percy warns of.[106] The second challenge is to remember that in all discussion of church leadership, God is the

[104] Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership*
[105] Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership,* p.XXI.
[106] M. Percy, *Engaging with Contemporary Culture: Christianity, Theology and the Concrete Church,* (Routledge, 2005)

primary leader of the church, and all leadership sits under Him. This is particularly prevalent in the study of discipleship, and the challenge of asking 'for whom are we making disciples, God or ourselves?'

Parkinson often brings theological insights into secular leadership theories that provide a helpful foundation for my work. Parkinson argues that 'while secular leadership theories offer valuable insights, they must be critically evaluated and reinterpreted through a theological lens to serve the Church effectively.' For example, where Western, Laloux and others identify leadership theory transitioning from an individual model to a collaborative model, Parkinson positions this in the leadership model of Jesus,

> The practice of Jesus and those who followed him bears witness to these assumptions. Jesus never sees himself as operating alone in his earthly ministry but rather in relationship with the other persons of the trinity…. The earliest records of Jesus entrusting responsibility to others describe him as sending those others out not singly but in pairs. The earliest Christian communities appear to have groups of people sharing oversight together, and those responsible for establishing these new communities leave behind them teams of leaders… Whatever we might say about leadership in the New Testament we must always say that it was plural and instinctively collaborative.[107]

Parkinson also articulates the complexity of looking to an individual to provide leadership whilst holding mistrust of leadership as a concept is a societal issue as well as a church one, describing Western society as having 'a deep suspicion of power and authority exercised in a direct and instrumental fashion'.*[108]*

Parkinson identifies that the relationships between leadership theory, leadership practice, theology and ecclesiology are both complex and also continually developing. Even in the brief

[107] Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership,* p.23.
[108] Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership,* p.18.

snapshot here we can see him identifying collaborative leadership, relational leadership and servant leadership alongside a recognition of the necessity of submitting any position of leadership to God. Parkinson helpfully draws together many different understandings of leadership and recognises that they must coexist, which mirrors Kevin Flinn's work on complexity theory but grounds this work in Theology.

2.6.2 The Christian Leadership Market, Bill Hybels

In the previous section I highlighted Parkinson as one voice that engages with the leadership conversation from a specifically Christian context. It is important to note that this is just one voice and there have been many other, more popular attempts to envision leadership in this way. I have selected Hybels as one of the most influential of these voices, to give an example of how this form of literature has influenced the Christian understanding of the subject. Throughout the 80s, 90s and early 2000s the heroic model of leadership was taught by leadership gurus such as Jim Collins or Ken Blanchard, whose texts sold millions of copies and led to leadership becoming a mainstream topic. This phenomenon was mirrored in the ecclesial world, particularly in the work of Bill Hybels. It is important to recognise, however, that the work of Hybels is now contested due to high-profile moral failure which drew the integrity of Hybels into question and caused Christians to query whether his work should influence Christian leadership culture. There is a particularly cautionary note in exploring Hybels' texts because one suspicion of a messianic leadership model is the danger that the leader will use their position to enable control, manipulation and even abuse, all of which Hybels has been accused of. Several commentators, including Greenleaf, Boers and Percy, are

wary of messianic leaders being empowered to exhibit the kind of behaviour that Hybels demonstrated and therefore this text and its powerful influence could be seen to exacerbate this polemic.

However, I have decided to engage with this text because it became clear through my empirical research that this text has had a significant impact on the leadership conversation within the church. The production of Christian leadership training programmes and literature grew throughout the 1980s and 1990s but it was catalysed by the release of Bill Hybels' *Courageous Leadership*.[109] *Courageous Leadership* was the biggest selling Christian book after the Bible in 2003 and some of the theories and language used became popular through much of the Western church.

Hybels' theory of three-hundred-and-sixty-degree leadership[110] holds similarities to some authors discussed earlier however there is a subtle difference. Hybels suggests that leaders do not simply exert influence or agency over those who they hold positional power over, but that they should also be looking to influence both their peers and those to whom they are positionally subservient. At first glance this is similar to Western's eco-leadership or to the fluidity of offices in Croft's ministry in three dimensions, but this is not the case. Hybels' theory is not based on sharing leadership, but on exerting it. This sits more comfortably under the messiah-leadership discourse and is a model of leadership which many commentators are suggesting is becoming outdated. It is interesting to note the significance that this text has

[109] B. Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Zondervan, 2002).
[110] Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, pp.181-199.

had on the church and its understanding of leadership given that it espouses a form of leadership that was more prominent at the turn of the century.

2.7 Anglican Understanding of Leadership, Stephen Croft

In this section I am going to review some of the work of bishop Stephen Croft, to profile some thoughts on leadership held within the Church of England. I have selected texts from Croft because as well as writing on leadership he has held significant roles in the church of England, first through pioneering the Mission-Shaped Church movement as the Archbishop's missioner, then as the leader of the Fresh Expressions movement, and more recently as the chair of the Renewal and Reform programme and as a senior bishop. These three programmes have significantly influenced the vision and priorities of the Church of England.[111] Therefore although Croft's views are not as authoritative as some of the texts explored in chapter four, they come from what appears to be an influential voice within the Church of England that understands and speaks from within its culture.

Croft wrote a number of books on leadership and for this section I am going to focus on his 1999 text *Ministry in Three Dimensions*,[112] the second edition of this text which was released in 2008 and his 2016 book, *The Gift of Leadership According to the Scriptures*.[113] The reason that I have selected these three texts is that as they demonstrate the journey of Croft's theology of leadership in the Church of England, in doing so they could also reflect a journey

[111] M. Percy gives a good perspective on how programmes have shaped the Church of England in *The Future Shapes of Anglicanism,* (Routledge, 2017) pp.10-19.
[112] S. Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and Leadership in the Local Church* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1999).
[113] S. Croft, *The Gift of Leadership According to the Scriptures* (Canterbury Press, 2016).

that the theology of leadership in the wider church has been on. This textual analysis will create a foundation for the texts studied in chapter four, as they were written in the years preceding the research for the *Setting God's People Free* report (2017) and the Faith and Order Commission's report on *Senior Leadership* (2015).

In Croft's 1999 book, *Ministry in Three Dimensions*,[114] he explores the relationship between the three-fold orders of ordained ministry within the church where the presbyter leads through sacrament, the deacon leads through service and the bishop leads through oversight. He compares what he identifies as the *presbyteral*[115] ministry of the word and sacrament with what he labels as the *diaconal* element of servant leadership and the *episcopal* element of oversight. In the text Croft argues that each dimension of ministry can be ministered by any ordained minister, it is simply the case that the emphasis of the order of ordination will be reflected in that ministry. This means that a bishop's ministry will have a strong emphasis on the *oversight* dimension but will still hold elements of service and sacramental leadership for example, and the elements are shared in a similar manner by priests and deacons. Croft is keen to point out that *diakonia,* or *service,* is the most important of the three because 'The most important of the three dimensions of ministry and leadership are to be truly Christian and Christ-like.'[116] Which is an interesting statement given the wider discussion regarding servant leadership in this chapter.

Croft's theology of lay leadership develops with his second edition of *Ministry in Three Dimensions* released eleven years later in 2008. A flexibility in the relationship between the

[114] Croft, *Ministry*
[115] Croft, *Ministry*
[116] Croft, *Ministry* (2008) p.45.

three orders of ordained ministry is extended in his 2008 edition where he writes that the specific gifts and callings of the leader are not added or removed with any ontological shift that occurs with ordination from one order to another. The logical next step of this argument is that just as dimensions of leaderships are shared across the orders of ordained ministry they are just as likely to be shared between the ordained person and the lay person. This relationship between lay and ordained leadership is also one that I will explore in this project.

The development of Croft's theology of lay leadership is exemplified throughout the 2008 edition of *Ministry*, which includes an additional chapter. The added chapter is written in the light of the development of ordained pioneer ministry and the publication of *Mission Shaped Church*.[117] In the additional material Croft first unpacks the concept of the pioneer *minister*, explaining that the term 'minister' was preferred to the term 'leader' to maintain the prominence of the diaconal ministry. Following this introduction, much of the additional chapter is written under the sub-heading 'Ordained and Lay Ministry in Fresh Expressions of Church.'[118] This material contends that lay ministry should be central to the leadership and ministry of any mission-shaped ministries and this is an important contention for the questions surrounding Anglican leadership that thread through my research. Having stated that lay ministry should be central to the leadership of any ministry, all references in the text to either ministry or leadership apart from one go on to describe ordained ministry. In addition to this, the one reference to lay ministry rather than ordained is not in a leadership capacity. Despite the balance of the content not reflecting it, the new material does expand the content

[117] Mission Shaped Church Working Group, *Mission Shaped Church* (Church House Publishing, 2014).
[118] Croft, *Ministry*, p.196.

and focus of the text to include reflections on lay ministry and this paves the way for Croft's thinking to evolve in later works.

By 2016 Steven Croft had become the bishop of Oxford and had been a principal architect of the *Pilgrim* discipleship resource.[119] Having focused on ordained leadership in *Ministry in Three Dimensions* and then adding a later chapter to include content on ordained pioneer ministry, fresh expressions and a nod to lay leadership, Croft then released another book: *The Gift of Leadership According to the Scriptures.*[120] In this text Croft identifies what he describes as 'leadership' in a police sergeant, a magistrate, a grandmother and a teacher.[121]

The release of *The Gift of Leadership* allowed Croft to continue to broaden his reflections on leadership to the laity from the clergy focus of the first edition of *Ministry in Three Dimensions.* This text is valuable to review because in 2016 the topic of empowering the laity in leadership roles was a significant discussion within the Church of England. This is highlighted by the fact that the two General Synod reports explored in later chapters were released at a similar time. This text also highlights that leadership is a tool which crosses over the sacred/secular divide and whilst the church is called to influence the secular world, it can be learning from the world at the same time: 'There is much good that the church can learn from good practice developed over many years in the commercial world or public sector.'[122]

[119] S. Croft, S Cottrell and P. Gooder, *The Pilgrim Way, A Guide to the Christian Faith* (Church House Publishing, 2017)
[120] Croft, *The Gift of Leadership*.
[121] Croft, *The Gift of Leadership*, p.8.
[122] Croft, *The Gift of Leadership*, p.36.

Croft had been critical of secular leadership models invading the church in *Ministry in Three Dimensions*[123] but by 2016 seems to have accepted their merits. He uses *the Gift of Leadership* to explore what he describes as the four 'domains' of leadership and these are listed as: working with individuals and teams, leading in the world, guiding and guarding a community, and watching over yourself. My research will naturally be more weighted towards domains one and two due to the focus on leaders of local churches. However, the research does uncover an impact that moral failure of leaders can have on individuals and churches, and it is interesting at this stage to highlight the significance and impact of neglecting domain four.

The chapters of the book are lenses through which Croft explores these domains of leadership and are telling of a clear understanding of leadership. Croft does not give a specific definition of leadership (a feature in many Church of England texts on the subject), but he does identify a wide range of activities in which leadership may be demonstrated including beginning well, vision, self-giving, fruitfulness, pioneering, Sabbath, and resting. He describes leaders' experiences of pain and hope whilst being responsible for tending a flock, for communicating vision and for facilitating change. Each chapter is grounded with a short exposition of a biblical reference, the reference is then compared with an experience and concluded with a suggestion as to how the reader might become a better leader.

A criticism of this text is that whilst Croft states in his introduction that leadership happens in all walks of life, all the examples used are drawn from his experiences of leadership within a clerical vocation. Croft cannot be blamed for this of course because this is where his personal experience and expertise lie. It does not however contribute to the wider development of an

[123] Croft, *Ministry* (2008) pp19-27.

understanding of lay leadership. References in the book to try and compare the leadership tasks facing clergy and primary school teachers or entrepreneurs ask the reader to 'imagine' parallel scenarios[124] without any references or genuine examples.

There is an interesting point in the chapter on 'change' that that links this text to Croft's previous work in which he suggests that leaders of today have an equivalent in the Old Testament; 'Leaders often find themselves in the role of the elders of Israel.'[125] The use of the word *elder* is key because he has previously stated that the terms *presbyte*r and *elder* are effectively interchangeable in the way they are used in scripture.[126] This suggests that if leaders find themselves in the role of elder, then they find themselves in the role of presbyter. This is a continuation of the discussion between both the relationship between lay and ordained, and the conversation between ordination and leadership, both of which are important conversations in later chapters of this research.

In summary, Croft's writings are helpful to review because they provide an insight into how a senior leader in the church has grappled with the concept of leadership and how his theology of leadership has developed in the period that leadership has been a primary concern for the church. Croft began his writing querying the leadership roles of ordained clergy and in *Ministry in Three Dimensions* is primarily questioning whether the church is too structured in the roles assigned to bishops, priests and deacons. When the book was re-released with additional material it began to question how leadership may look outside the ordained, and this publication coincided with the rise of fresh expressions and the mission shaped church report

[124] Croft, *The Gift of Leadership*, p.37.
[125] Croft, *The Gift of Leadership* p.81.
[126] Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions*, p.67.

of 2004. Then in *The Gift of Leadership*, released at a similar time to the *Setting God's People Free* report, he asked what leadership could look like across the people of God, in roles that are both church based and secular. This gradual releasing of leadership, initially between ordained orders and then across the laity reflects a journey that the wider church of England has travelled across a wider time period.

There are several elements of Croft's writings that influence my research, not least his influence and position meaning that his perspective is a representation of how many in the centre of the institution may think. The relationship between ordination and leadership is a key theme of this project and there is a parallel to be drawn between the journey that Croft's theology of ordained leadership traverses and the more general understanding that the church holds or ordained and lay leadership. This research will focus on people that are ordained as priest and not as bishop, however the fluidity between the orders of ordination suggested by Croft does ask questions of what the church believes ordination is, which will inform later conversation.

2.8: Criticism of Christian Leadership Theory, Martyn Percy and Alison Milbank

Leadership language and training is a phenomenon which has been either celebrated or has been accepted as a normal part of Christian life by the authors discussed in the chapter thus far. However, it is important to recognise that there is a vocal section of the church that is at least critical of, if not openly hostile towards a perceived infiltration of leadership culture into the Church of England. This was a voice which surfaced in the research data and there was some work to do in reflecting on this voice in literature.

Martyn Percy has been one of the most vocal critics of Church of England adopting leadership language and culture. Percy wrote of the Renewal and Reform programme, chaired by Stephen Croft, that it was driving the Church of England to move towards 'centralised management, organisational apparatus and the kind of creeping concerns that might consume an emerging suburban sectarianism, instead of a national church'.[127] Later in this text he states that 'it will take more to save the Church of England than a blend of the latest management theory, secular sorcery with statistics and evangelical up-speak.'[128]

Percy's criticism of the church's use of leadership and management is largely theological rather than ideological. He does recognise that management has a role to play in church leadership, acknowledging in a *Church Times* article that 'managerial insights clearly have a place in the Church, and I [Percy] readily affirm that.'[129] One of Percy's primary theological convictions, however, is that the infiltration of leadership culture and management language is causing a secularisation of the church. He writes that 'The Church of England has essentially been transformed into a secular business corporation, driven by a correspondingly unholy ethos of money, economics and PR management,'[130] In another text he writes that

> There is a creeping managerialism within the church, where leaders are increasingly expected to perform like chief executives, applying the latest management theories to complex pastoral and theological contexts. This risks eroding the church's prophetic voice and pastoral heart.[131]

[127] M. Percy, *The Future Shapes of Anglicanism* (Routledge, 2017) p.16.
[128] Percy, *The Future Shapes of Anglicanism,* p.89.
[129] M. Percy, 'Are these the leaders we really want?', *Church Times* 12 December 2014, https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2014/12-december/comment/opinion/are-these-the-leaders-that-we-really-want.
[130] M. Percy quoted in the *Financial Times* 17 December 2024.
[131] M. Percy, *Engaging with Contemporary Culture: Christianity, Theology and the Concrete Church,* (Routledge, 2005)

A second theological conviction that Percy holds is a critique of 'growth for growth's sake.'[132] Percy is nervous of any church leadership that is too 'success driven'[133] or that treats people simply as numbers. This could be perceived to be a similar criticism to Western's writing on church growth in seeking a secular understanding of success instead of a Christian one. Percy is also critical of change for the sake of change, writing that 'new is not necessarily better than old; fresh is not necessarily superior to established; and effervescence is not a substitute for substance.' [134] This could suggest a more general reticence towards change from Percy and a suspicion of the new or different. Percy does demonstrate in other texts a more positive attitude towards changing church practice however so this suggests Percy's primary concern is with change that is not, to his mind, theologically rational.

Although Percy may be one of the most outspoken and well-known critics of church leadership language he is not alone in this view. Alison Milbank has also written extensively and shares Percy's view that 'our bishops have embraced the goals and techniques of managerialism as an unquestioned ideology.'[135] Similarly Stephen Croft criticises the import of 'secular management'[136] into clerical roles *Ministry in Three Dimensions.*

The picture that emerges from authors such as Martyn Percy and Alison Milbank is one of genuine concern and theological questioning of the growth of leadership language and culture in the Church of England. A criticism of their position is that whilst leadership commentators

[132] M. Percy and G. Evans (eds), *Managing the Church? Order and Organization in a Secular Age* (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).
[133] M. Percy, *The Ecclesial Canopy: Faith, Hope, Charity (Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology)* (Routledge, 2012).
[134] M. Percy, *Anglicanism: Confidence, Commitment and Communion* (Routledge, 2013) p.130.
[135] A. Milbank, 'Management and mission: the Church of England is not a machine', *Church Times* 27 October 2023, https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2023/27-october/features/features/management-and-mission-the-church-of-england-is-not-a-machine.
[136] Croft, *Ministry,* pp19-27.

such as Roger Gill and John Kotter expound that the terms leadership and management are notably different, Percy and Milbank can at times use them interchangeably. A recurring theme in the texts is that Milbank and Percy refer to 'managerialism' as a leadership culture and use this as evidence of either creeping secularism or of a professionalisation of church which is also seen as a negative. The lack of clarity between leadership, management and managerialism in the criticism can lead to a more general negativity towards anything that can sound like any of the three. For example, Milbank describes reports from the Archbishop's council as offering a 'queasy mixture of missiology and management-speak'[137] and goes on to say 'They [Archbishop's Council Reports] invoke such vacuous terms as "vision" and "strategy" as a smokescreen for radical demolition of the Church's historic distributed authority.'[138] In these quotes we see a conflation between management and leadership with 'vision and strategy', words associated with leadership, being used as examples of 'managerialism'. The voices of Milbank and Percy reflect voices that are also found in the empirical research later in later chapters. There are examples of interview respondents having negative views of the concept of leadership, yet when explaining the root of these views they go on to describe what would be defined as management.

Amongst the general criticism of leadership language and culture in the church of England the challenges of Milbank and Percy also reflect the leadership culture shift that Western, Laloux and others have identified from a centralised, individual model to a more dispersed one. One of Percy's criticisms of a Church of England report is that 'The text focuses on training people for management tasks that the review group take as givens. No different models of leadership

[137] A. Milbank, *The Once and Future Parish* (SCM, 2023), p.26.
[138] Milbank, *Once and Future Parish*, p.26.

are discussed, such as servanthood, collaborative ministry, or pastoral care.'[139] In a similar manner to this whilst Milbank is generally critical of leadership theory, she is a firm advocate of moving power and agency from what she describes as the 'centre' to the 'edge'. In practice this would mean that more agency and control is held at parish level and less is held at a diocesan level; however, in principle this could be an example of what Western describes as eco-leadership. Whilst Milbank espouses a negative attitude towards leadership in its entirety what may be occurring is a rejection of messiah leadership and a move towards a more dispersed, collaborative model.

Chloe Lynch's work in *Ecclesial Leadership as Friendship* is once again helpful here as she is also critical of managerialism in the church, citing theories such as 'Taylorism and Macdonaldisation'[140] as examples of how churches can become too focused on results and efficiency. Lynch is careful to distinguish managerialism from management, stating that churches all need good management. This distinction is missing at times in the criticism that is promulgated by Percy and Millbank, who can sometimes conflate the two terms. Croft is also guilty of indiscriminately using 'leadership' and 'management' interchangeably.[141]

The themes explored in this chapter will recur throughout the research and there will be opportunity to explore them and to theologically reflect on them in light of the empirical data that is gathered. Having identified a lack of clarity in some of the criticisms of both management and leadership in the church emerging from some writers I aim to use this research to clarify the issues and fears alluded to in these texts.

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[139] Percy, '*Are these the leaders*'.
[140] Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership* p.126.
[141] Croft, *Ministry,* pp.19-27.

2.9 Summary

These texts, amongst others, have set a helpful scene within which to build my research.

Initially I have found that outside the church there is an unsurmountable volume of discussion on leadership, marked by a wide variety of conflicting views. It is impossible to identify a coherent definition of the terms ‘leader’ or ‘leadership’ due to this wide variety and rapidly developing ideologies and theories. Within this variety there is a tension between functional and influential leadership and, an emerging question of whether discipleship is leadership or not, and confused attempts to distinguish leadership from management.

Whilst Western, Gill, Flinn and others create a picture of this discussion in secular leadership studies, much of this variety is mirrored to some extent in the church, and particularly in the Church of England. The waters are further muddied within church discussions as this existing variety of views is joined by differing views on the connection of leadership to ordination and the appropriateness of secular leadership models existing in a church context.

Already there is evidence in the Church of England material not just of variety but of confusion and even division in approaches to leadership. Some examples of this are the conflation of leadership and management or the assumption that leadership must always be practised in a heroic or messianic model.

My research will respond to these confusions. I will first try and discover what understandings of leadership are present in the local context of the Church of England. I will then try to bring some clarity as to how the Church might discuss these understandings.

The theological question throughout this thesis is 'where is God in this conversation and what is he saying?' Parkinson provides a helpful link between leadership and theology, describing leadership as 'a relational process of social influence through which people are inspired, enabled and mobilized to act in positive, new ways, towards the achievement of God's purposes'[142] and Mike Higton helpfully reminds us that 'any action we call "leadership" is a joining in, a participation in what God is doing.'[143]

In the following chapter I will explain the methodology that I will use to build on the foundations of this literature review to explore the question 'How is leadership theologically understood and practised across the Church of England?'

[142]Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership*.
[143] M. Higton in Alexander, L and Higton, M (eds), *Faithful Improvisation? Theological Reflections on Church Leadership including the Faith and Order Commission's Senior Church Leadership Report* (Church House Publishing, 2016) p.192.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Methodological Overview

The aim of this research is to explore the question, 'How is leadership theologically understood and practised across the Church of England?' There are many ways in which this question could be answered. It would be possible to answer it by seeking authoritative or official teaching from the church, or it could be answered by researching how people in the church think or act regarding leadership. I am particularly interested in the latter, the ideas about leadership and practices of leadership that are found in the local church. I am also interested in how these ideas and practices relate to, and even interact with, central ideas held by the church. For reasons that I will explain later in this chapter I will refer to more official or authoritative understandings as 'normative' understandings of leadership in the Church of England.

I will create a conversation between such normative understandings of leadership, insofar as they can be found in core texts of the Church of England, and the theological understandings of leadership that are understood and demonstrated in practice at local church level. Leadership is demonstrated in many different forms within the local church, and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore all of them. I am going to use the role of the incumbent as a model of leadership; through analysing understandings of this model I believe I will uncover more general understandings of the term. Incumbency is a good model to use because almost every member of a church will have experienced somebody in this role and will have some understanding of its function, even if these understandings differ. One complexity that arises

when looking at the role of incumbency is the relationship between leadership and ordination. I will explore this relationship as the thesis develops.

There are several influences that have contributed to my methodology, and I will explore them in this chapter. Primarily, I will ground the work within the discipline of practical theology. Practical theology is concerned with the relationship between theology and practice, and how these influence one another. The methods that I use in this research are designed to explore this relationship.

In this chapter I explore the purpose of practical theology in general and my choice of some specific practical theological frameworks to guide my work. I then describe and justify my research plan and my choice of empirical research methods, and the methods I use for my analysis. I also highlight adaptations that I had to navigate along the way.

This research was conducted in several stages. First, I examined several core texts which present a central voice on leadership within the Church of England and reflected on the theology that they present. This provided an initial data set for the research. I then interviewed people involved in leadership at parish level to create a second data set using the empirical evidence that I had curated. Later in this chapter I will describe the rationale behind my use of interviews, as well as explaining my process for selecting the participants, and coding and presenting the data.

I will set the two data sets in conversation with each other to reflect on how the term 'leadership' is understood theologically across the denomination and explore where differing theological perspectives conflict with one another.

3.2 A Framework for Interpretation, The Four Voices of Theology

The task of practical theology is to develop a theologically reflective praxis that correlates cognitive understanding and practice. To interpret my research effectively I found that the framework and language of the Four Voices of Theology, as developed by the Action Research: The Church and Society (ARCS) research group[144] was a helpful tool. I turned to it because I was interested in how the local understandings of leadership related to more official Church of England teaching on the subject. Clare Watkins writes that 'The four voices are an innovative approach to discerning the complexities, layers of theology, and revelations of the Spirit in a situation and can help articulate a thick description of the theology at play.'[145] This 'thick' description of theology is the result that I aimed to achieve with this research. As described above this is a conversation between normative theology and lived theology in the church and the four voices approach provided me with a way of articulating the nature of that conversation more precisely. The framework of the four voices allowed me to assess theology from different approaches and understandings, providing a variety of layers for analysis.

Cameron and Duce identified that for many Christians, the theology that they profess can be different from the one that is lived out in their praxis. As part the ARCS team,[146] Duce and Cameron identified four 'voices' of theology that exist in the lived reality of peoples' faith. These voices are the operant, the espoused, the normative and the formal. The operant voice of theology is the theology that is expressed by how people live out faith, which may differ from an espoused theology, which is the theology that they would profess if asked to articulate

[144] H. Cameron and C. Duce, *Researching Practice in Mission and Ministry: A Companion* (SCM Press, 2013) p. 165.
[145] C. Watkins, *Disclosing Church: An Ecclesiology Learned from Conversations in Practice* (Routledge, 2020), p.40.
[146] See Pete Ward's summary of the four voices of theology in *Introducing Practical Theology* (Baker Academic, 2017) pp.60-62.

it. This is not necessarily an act of dishonesty but is more a lived reality that people rarely reflect on and is a result of the complexity of a living faith existing in a largely secular world. Normative theology is the theology which is owned by the faith community either as a shared theological understanding or as tradition. All three of these however, may differ from formal theology. Formal theology is the theology of the academics who are either informing the life and leadership of the church or are producing an overview of the church's shared theology from an external perspective. The important point is that, in the lived reality of Christian disciples, there can be a disconnect between the formal theology held by academics and senior figures of a church or denomination and the operant theology lived out in the day-to-day lives of individuals.

3.2.1 The Four Voices of Theology, a Critical Analysis

I identified two main problems with relying on the four voices approach too heavily or using them uncritically. The first was a danger of underplaying the ongoing dynamic interaction of the voices. The second issue arose with the complexity of identifying the voices distinctly in the first place.

The way that the voices interrelate is key in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the four voices as a theological framework. Sweeney, a member of the ARCS project team, reflected on the relationship between lived theology (for which we can read the espoused and the operant) and the formal and normative theologies of the church: 'Lived theology is not autonomously constructed but is determined and patterned, to a greater or lesser degree, by

… formal theology … and … the normative theology of the Christian churches'.[147] None of the voices exist in independence and it would be a fruitless exercise if I were to ignore the correlation and crossovers that exist. The four voices approach provides an example of a theory which can appear to be 'neat and tidy' when presented on paper but is often considerably 'messier' when explored in interviewees' lived realities.[148] Kevin Flinn's work on complexity theory,[149] which I described in chapter two, was helpful as I tried to navigate the voices I researched and the many nuanced views and positions of people who have been influenced by several factors themselves. The four voices all appeared to interrelate to some extent but there are two relationships that are particularly prevalent. These are the relationship between the espoused and the operant voices, which we can call lived theology, and the relationship between the formal and the normative voices which proved to be more complex, particularly in the setting of the Church of England.

The difficulty of distinguishing these voices was particularly prevalent as I aimed to discover a normative voice of official or authoritative teaching. Just as the operant and espoused voices can merge to become a 'lived' theology,[150] there is a complex crossover when considering which texts could be classed as formal and which ones would be considered normative. Whilst the Church of England does not have a normative voice per se, as there is no exhaustive or explicit constitution, recognising that there are central texts which carry a level of authority brought clarity to my analysis of the influences within the Church. The Church of England has many texts that could provide a either a normative or a formal voice depending on the context

[147] J. Sweeney, G. Simmonds and D. Lonsdale (eds), *Keeping Faith in Practice: Aspects of Catholic Pastoral Theology* (SCM Press, 2010).
[148] Alan Bryman writes that qualitative research is at its weakest when complex data is oversimplified in order to be presented simply, in *Social Research Methods* (OUP, 2008) p.373.
[149]K. Flinn, *Leadership Development in Practice: A Complexity Approach* (Routledge, 2023).
[150] Sweeney et al, *Keeping Faith in Practice.*

in which they are used. In lieu of a theological constitution, the Church of England finds its theological orthodoxy in liturgy and in canon law. For example, the Book of Common Prayer BCP) provides an authoritative source of the Church of England's normative theology,[151] but it is also a liturgy that forms a large part of the church's worship life, shaping people's operant and espoused theological voices. This means that the BCP can be seen as a normative text which provides an official, or central theological position but it can also be seen as a formal text which presents an over-arching, or distanced position that can be utilised academically. In a similar sense, a report commissioned and accepted by a local or general synod might have considerable influence without carrying any formal authority and blur the lines between the formal and the normative. This is because it could be perceived to be a formal voice because it is produced by the Church of England, but synodical reports are also used in academic papers concerning the Church of England and so can also provide a formal voice of theology.

Having considered these complications, using the four voices as a framework for the research became even more beneficial to the research as I remained aware of them. Engaging with these criticisms allowed me to hear the different voices whilst holding an awareness that the four voices did not exist in isolation but crossed over and influenced one another.

Identifying the relationship between an espoused theology and an operant theology in a local context and then asking the question of how these might relate to a normative context that surrounded that local context revealed a helpful observation. It highlighted a conflict between what practitioners may feel under pressure to present as a 'correct' theological understanding echoing what may have been heard in a normative or formal theology and the theological

[151] *Canons of the Church of England,* https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/canons-church-england/section#b8

understanding that is borne out of their lived experience. Awareness of this factor was vital in order to ensure that the results had integrity and added value to the research when it came to gathering qualitative data.

There also arose a small terminological complication as the word 'normative' is used in several texts on Practical Theology in a way which holds subtle, but not comprehensive relationship with Cameron and Duce's 'normative voice' of theology.[152] One example of this is that Osmer uses the term 'normative' to name a stage of the research process, asking the question 'what ought to be going on?' whilst Cameron and Duce use it to name an authoritative source that a researcher might draw upon. This terminological difference did not affect the research methodology but it was important that when using the word 'normative' I was clear about the context within which I was using it.

3.3 Finding a Form of Normative Voice, The Texts

Cameron et al define normative theology as 'what the practicing group name as its theological authority.'[153] The Church of England is a difficult organisation from which to try and extract a normative voice. Mike Higton writes that 'The Church of England is a complex reality, with some national-level structures and processes, some diocesan-level, some parish-level, and all sorts of others woven around them'.[154] In practice this complex reality means that there is

[152] H. Cameron and C. Duce, Researching Practice in Mission and Ministry: A Companion (SCM Press, 2013), p.165.
[153] Cameron et al., *Researching Practice*, pp.54-55.
[154] M. Higton, 'How should the church respond to race? – A reply to Ian Paul', *Kai Euthus*, 6 May 2021, https://mikehigton.org.uk/how-should-the-church-respond-to-race-a-reply-to-ian-paul/. Liz Graveling uses a similar phrase to describe it in the report *Moving in Power: Transitions in Ordained Ministry* (Church of

rarely a consensus on what constitutes a normative theology, or which texts can be considered authoritative.

For many organisations, the normative voice would be found in a constitution or document of core values. However, the Church of England does not have a theological constitution in the manner that many other denominations do.[155]As my research developed, I found that an early assumption that I had made about the existence of a clear normative theology of leadership in the Church of England was unfounded. Cameron et al write that 'Sometimes the very question of what is normative theology for a particular group becomes *the* question for attention'[156] and I found this to be true of the Church of England. I had written a paper exploring the theology of leadership as held by *The Setting God's People Free* report of 2016[157] and discovered that even a report commissioned and accepted by the Archbishop's Council did not provide a straightforward normative voice. It was not clear what status or authority the report held despite the clear influence that it had had, and even within the report there were several conflicting understandings of leadership described and so it did not speak with a single voice. It quickly became clear that defining anything that could represent a normative theology of leadership for the Church of England was not a simple task and would require some significant work. The complexity involved in defining a normative voice of theology of leadership in the Church of England dictated that this task would require a considerable proportion of the research and there was a risk that it would become the dominant element.

England, 2021), https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/Living%20Ministry%20Qualitative%20Panel%20Study%20Wave%202%20-%20Moving%20in%20Power.pdf

[155] See the Methodist Church's *Constitutional Practice and Discipline*, for example: https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/governance/cpd/.

[156] Cameron et al., *Researching Practice* p.55.

[157] Lay Leadership Task Group, *Setting God's People Free: A Report from the Archbishops' Council* (Church of England, 2017, https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/gs-2056-setting-gods-people-free.pdf.

Therefore, while I carefully considered the texts that I selected to see what normative theology they might yield, the research could not be exhaustive.

In the Church of England, theological orthodoxy is defined by adherence to liturgies and creeds and the 39 articles. Canon A5 dictates that the doctrine of the church is contained in the 39 articles, the Book of Common Prayer and The Ordinal.[158] This section of canon law also states that the doctrine of those texts is derived from scripture, from the major historic church councils and from the teachings of the early church fathers. Yet, although it is true that those texts define doctrine and can dictate theology, when they are closely studied there is little content pertaining to the theology of leadership in either the 39 articles or in the Book of Common Prayer, and so The Ordinal becomes the primary source of theology of leadership.

This led to the conclusion that a primary text that I would use was the liturgy of *The Ordination of Priests* (The Ordinal)[159]. Terms related to 'leadership' occur several times in this document, which is used in the ordination of priests and of deacons, including when the ordinands who are to be ordained priests are asked, 'will You *lead* God's people in proclaiming his glorious gospel?'[160] For the purposes of this research I will use the ordinal of Common Worship,[161] a liturgy used by the Church of England since 2005. There are other ordination liturgies available for the Church of England to use, primarily the Alternative Service Book[162] (ASB) ordination

[158]*Canons of the Church of England*
[159] *The Ordination of Priests,* (Common Worship) https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/ministry/common-worship-ordination-0 (emphasis mine)
[160]*The Ordination of Priests,* (Common Worship) https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/ministry/common-worship-ordination-0
[161] *Common Worship: Ordination Services, (*Church House Publishing, 2007)
[162] The Alternative Service Book 1980: Services authorized for use in the Church of England (Oxford University Press, 1980)

liturgy and the Book of Common Prayer[163] (BCP) ordination liturgy. The reason that I am using the Common Worship ordinal is primarily that this is the liturgy that is used in a vast majority of the ordinations. Common worship effectively superseded the ASB and the BCP ordinal remains legally authorised but is rarely used outside rare traditionalist contexts. In addition to this, all incumbents that I interviewed had used the Common Worship liturgy at their ordination and most if not all the church wardens will have experienced primarily, if not exclusively Common Worship ordination services. Therefore, it is the wording and liturgical language of the Common Worship ordinal that will have contributed to any form of normative understanding.

A second text that provided an insight into the understanding of leadership held by the Church of England is the selection criteria for ordained ministry. This is an important text because it sets out a list of personal qualities that a person must display in order to be ordained in the Church of England. There is an implicit relationship between leadership and ordination in the Church of England explored in chapter five. This is partly because it is requisite that a person is ordained before they are given certain leadership roles in the church and it also relates to the 'soft' power that ordained people carry in the Church of England. A complication arose during the research as this document was replaced with a new one entitled the 'Qualities for Ordained Ministries Framework.'[164] This was beneficial to my research however, because the transition from the old selection criteria to the new qualities framework demonstrated the theological journey that the Church of England was going on regarding ordained ministry. This

[163] The Book of Common Prayer, CUP Edition (Cambridge University Press, 2004)

[164] *Criteria for Selection for the Ordained Ministry in the Church of England*, https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/ime-1-priest-qualities-and-evidence-from-autumn-2022.pdf

provided a much clearer picture of what could resemble a normative voice of a theology of leadership which was live whilst I researched. I was not able to disregard the former document however, because it contained the criteria which all my research participants had been assessed against, and they had used in their ordination discernment process.

There have been over seventy reports commissioned by General Synod that are concerned with leadership in one way or another, and this research does not have the scope to study each of them in depth, but there are some that have gained such traction in the church that it would have been remiss not to explore these texts. One of these is the *Setting God's People Free* (SGPF) report.[165] This began as a report that brought recommendations to General Synod and it developed into a national program with many recommendations being implemented across the denomination, in dioceses including Sheffield, which is where my qualitative research was conducted. The SGPF report contains several elements that I will explore in chapter 5, including its description of the 'soft' power that is held by ordained ministers in the Church of England, its way of distinguishing between functional and influential leadership in the Church, and the perspective that it offers on the relationship between lay and ordained leadership. The text of The Ordinal and the selection criteria are of course primarily concerned with the roles of the ordained, however ordained clergy only represent two percent of the church, therefore any reflections of clerical leadership will be held in the light of the church as a whole.[166]

A second report that I will prioritise over others is the 2015 Faith and Order Commission's (FAOC) report on leadership that had been commissioned in 2009. This report is prevalent

[165] *SGPF Report.*
[166] *SGPF Report*, p.4.

because, although it focuses on senior leadership in the church, it is explicit in the way it uses the term leadership and has facilitated a conversation within the Church of England about the impact of management culture in the church. The FAOC report also provided helpful reflections on the relationship between leadership and management. This was not a prevalent feature in the study of central texts however the subject arose a significant amount during the empirical research and so it became a central feature of my data analysis and theological reflection.

3.4 Finding an Operant Voice, Empirical Research

The task of my empirical research was to ascertain the lived theologies of leadership held by those involved in local parish ministry by analysing the operant and espoused voices that were discovered through empirical research.

My aim was to carry out qualitative research to gather data that would allow an insight into the lived theology of leadership of people ministering in positions of leadership. I initially explored the idea of using a large-scale questionnaire, but it became clear that any results collected via that method would be too limited in what they revealed as there were likely, by nature, to miss the nuance and complexity of people's theologies.

It was important to recognise at this stage that it is unhelpful for qualitative and quantitative research to be seen as binary options, and that any project involving theological reflection and practical theology will have some elements of both. Uwe Flick argues that qualitative methods should be preferred to quantitative only if the research question demands it and not simply

for dogmatic reasons, that is to say that different research questions will require different methodologies and the researcher should not simply jump straight to a qualitative approach without assessing its merits.[167]

As there is a multiplicity of meanings ascribed to the term leadership, there were likely to be a variety of responses when people are questioned about the subject. Simon Western writes that to study leadership a researcher must 'account for how leadership is impacted by subjective, non-quantifiable, affective and cultural influences'.[168] Therefore a qualitative approach to the empirical research allowed for varied and nuanced responses. A quantitative method of research could have limited the way that people could respond and could have caused data to be insufficient for the kind of analysis that I am looking for. Swinton and Mowat write that 'at the heart of the enterprise of qualitative research is the search for meaning and the process of interpretation'.[169] Leadership is more a complex concept with multiple meanings than it is a defined term with a single meaning, and a qualitative approach allowed me to be flexible within the process and respond to problems arising when researching it. The strength of qualitative research when approaching a subject with a more fluid definition is the reflexivity that it brings to research methods and approaches.

I use an understanding of ordained incumbency as a lens through which to reveal a broader understanding of leadership in the Church of England. To do this I studied understandings of leadership within incumbency in selected case studies. I selected 10 case studies from

[167] U. Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research, 5th* edn (Sage, 2009), p.13.
[168] S. Western, *Leadership, A Critical* Text (SAGE, 2019), p. xvi.
[169] J. Swinton & H. Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (SCM, 2006), p.97.

Sheffield diocese.[170] These were largely situated within the city of Sheffield. I interviewed the incumbents and the church wardens of each of the case study churches using semi-structured interviews. The reason for focusing on the incumbent and the church warden is that they are both in licensed positions of leadership whilst holding different roles and perspectives on the same situations. The language of The Ordinal and the selection process for priests and the language used in the Archdeacon's visitation services[171] use the term *lead* or *leadership* in describing these roles, so it is a fair assumption that they are roles that involve leadership in some form. The church wardens also held unique perspectives on the leadership demonstrated by their respective incumbents due to their understanding of their individual church situations. Interviewing both people from the same church allowed me to hear how the incumbent reflects on their own administration of leadership and compare it with a second perspective on the same situation. Interviewing the incumbents allowed me to investigate their theology of leadership as both the leader of a local church and a member of the body of clergy of the Church of England, so to consider what it is to lead but also to be led. Paul Avis writes that 'no ordained minister can exist without an ecclesiology'[172] and this research led to a variety of ecclesiologies being espoused as incumbents reflected on their own situations.

Interviewing the wardens did, to some extent, allow me to hold the church incumbents' espoused theology up against their operant theology, as I could use the interviews to explore how they *believed* they were leading in certain situations or programs whilst also hearing the

[170] Martin Denscombe: 'the prospect of getting valuable and deep insights by being able to investigate things in a way which is different from, and in some cases better than, what is possible using other approaches'. M. Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p.52.
[171] This is the service in which church wardens are licensed to commence their duties.
[172] P. Avis, *The Anglican Understanding of Church* (SPCK, 2000), p.6.

wardens' perceptions of their leadership. Interviewing people who were currently engaged in positions of leadership allowed me to discover a phenomenological perspective on leadership and to draw an operant theology from this. Swinton and Mowat describe practices as 'performative of particular beliefs' and 'bearers of tradition'[173] and it was my hope that the empirical research would highlight which particular beliefs were demonstrated by the way leadership was exercised. The relationship between the incumbents' responses and the wardens' responses will create a case study for each of the ten pairs.

3.4.1 Selecting Case Studies

I wanted to hear from incumbents from across the Church of England and I believe that the ten different studies undertaken were enough to reach a level of saturation. I decided to select churches from across the diocese of Sheffield. This ensured that the sampled churches carried shared experiences of engagement with society despite there being a broad range of demographics represented.[174] Sheffield Diocese has some of the richest parishes in the country as well as some of the poorest.[175] Several parishes were within the five percent most deprived parishes in the country as well as some that are in the five percent most affluent.[176]

Sheffield has many ethnically diverse parishes as well as a lot of largely white British ones. I selected my case studies carefully to ensure that I collected data from a range of church traditions, ensuring that all the major facets of the church of England were represented. I drew

[173] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, p.20.
[174] See Appendix B for the case study churches
[175] The Church of England map at ArcGIS identifies Ecclesall Brierlow as sitting in the top 50 richest parishes in the UK whilst Richmond is within the 50 poorest.
https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap9.
[176] Statistics taken from the Church Urban Fund census of 2022 and the Church of England Research and Statistics unit.
https://cuf.org.uk/poverty-england/poverty-look-tool
https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=67bce0ed36dd4ee0af7a16bc079aa09a

data from across two spectrums, one of church tradition and one of social demographics to ensure that my data is representative of the national church.[177]

When considering incumbents, I tried to select incumbents who had been in their posts for a minimum of five years, to make sure that their observations of their respective churches carried perspective and would have been reflected on over time.

The twenty candidates represented ten churches and comprised ten incumbents and ten church wardens. There were twelve male candidates and eight female candidates. The ages of participants ranged from twenty-nine to seventy-eight. In an early question in the interview I asked them to self-identify their church traditions and the responses included Anglo-Catholic, Open Evangelical, Reformed Evangelical, Liberal, Liberal Catholic, 'Greenbelt', 'New Wine' and 'Middle of the Road'. Eighteen of the candidates were white British and two were of Global Majority Heritage, both of these being Hispanic. Three of the candidates were born outside of the UK. There was a range of previous educational attainments represented, from leaving school without O levels (GCSEs) to doctoral level qualifications. I chose to interview people with a wide range of life experience because although this research will clearly demonstrate findings from the Diocese of Sheffield, the range of individuals interviewed will provide a broad sample[178] that is generally illustrative of the Church of England as it exists across the UK.

Due to the limitations of time and constraints on the research it was also a pragmatic choice to limit the spread of research to one geographic area as I intended to conduct face-to face-

[177] This strategy is modelled on the guidance on case study selection in Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research,* (Sage Publications, 2010) p.122.
[178] A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (Oxford University Press, 2008), p.168.

interviews wherever possible. This was because I felt I would be able to pick up on non-verbal communications more easily in a face-to-face interview.

3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity for the participants to shape the direction of the conversation and for me to extract data on the themes that were central to my research whilst also allowing a flexibility within the interviews for interviewees to reflect on their own unique experiences and theological perspectives. Semi-structuring the interviews gave opportunity for interviewees to go 'off piste' with responses and allow conversation to develop organically. It was often during these 'off piste' tangents that some of the most stimulating observations occurred. Keeping the interviews as semi-structured also mitigated the risk that I would limit the results of the interviews by anticipating answers and pre-empting the interview process. I used follow up questions reflexively depending on the participant, allowing them to direct the conversation and to set priorities and agendas as the conversations developed. Bryman writes that it 'is possible to collect observations in a manner that is not influenced by pre-existing theories'[179] and I tried to create a lot of space for this in the interview process, which gave participants opportunity to talk expansively about their experiences of leading and being led.

I also added an additional question at the end of the interview which simply asked if the candidates had anything that they wanted to add or perhaps had been intending to say since they knew that they were being interviewed on leadership. This ensured that the interviewees

[179] A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods,* (Oxford University Press, 2008) p.15.

had not been confined to the pre-existing framework of leadership understandings and meant that they could bring in fresh observations and priorities. This process brought content to the data that had not been informed or shaped by the prior framework and produced phenomenologically authentic responses.

I was aware that due to the research that I had already conducted and also having spent much of my time in ministry moving in evangelical circles I had received a lot of teaching on leadership that came from a particular angle that could create a degree of bias prior to beginning research. I may have had preconceptions and expectations regarding what the research would yield, and that this had both positive and negative connotations. Gadamer refers to bias that has developed through research as a 'forestructure'[180] and a condition of knowledge that determines our ability to find intelligibility in a situation. I therefore had to approach the case study process with awareness not just of bias that I held due to previous research, but also that I brought from my personal lived experience. This forestructure was not necessarily a negative factor in the research but it was important to be aware of it. I ensured that I used bespoke, responsive follow-up questions in the interviews which allowed participants to direct the travel of the conversation.

Uwe Flick writes that as well as bias that researchers may be bringing to the qualitative research, they should also be aware of the relational dynamics between themselves and their research participants.[181] I wanted to be aware of how my presence in the interview could affect the participants' responses. I was not distanced from the context of the research; I was interviewing incumbents in the diocese of Sheffield and I was an incumbent in the diocese

[180] H-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (Crossroad, 1989), p.266.
[181] U. Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (Sage Publications, 2010) p.17.

myself. I had also been in post longer than eight out of the ten candidates which brought an element of seniority that I had not previously been aware of. This created a form of relational capital in the diocese which could have created an unhealthy power dynamic due to the participants' perception of my closeness to their employers. I also reflected that being a white male evangelical with a degree, I represented positions of power that some people can find intimidating[182] and I had to find a way to counteract this. I planned to meet in peoples' homes or churches, where they felt safe, and hoped that this would cause power to be more evenly distributed. I also intended to assure participants that this process was not concerned with placing value judgements on individuals' successes or failures, but that each participant had something of value to bring to the conversation by sharing their lived experience.

Alongside interviewing incumbents, I interviewed the church wardens from each of the corresponding churches, using a similar same semi-structured interview plan with slightly altered questions.[183] This allowed me to see how a different form of leadership was expressed in the same setting. It also allowed me to see how the incumbents' exercising of leadership was viewed, and to compare that with their espoused theological reflections. In one case, having interviewed an incumbent I was unable to interview the corresponding warden. The incumbent interview had yielded some interesting data but unfortunately this data was not useable without the respective warden's observations alongside it. The method of interviewing incumbents as well as their corresponding wardens provided some fascinating insights as two people reflected on the same churches and situations from different perspectives without knowing what the other had said. The data yielded from this was a

[182] Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research,* p.217.
[183] See Appendix B for the Interview Questions

unique insight into how people perceived leadership and the role of a leader in the local church.

3.5 Coding, Data Organisation and Analysis

Following the collection of data, I coded the responses and looked for patterns and similarities. I used the coding to identify what it was that linked particular theological understandings of leadership and what the influences for these ideas were.[184] I found that this data provided a fascinating picture of how incumbents and church wardens understood the term leadership and how it affects praxis across the church.

It was difficult to anticipate the full spectrum of coding required for the data at the early stages of the process. However, early research had indicated some analytics that were helpful to begin to analyse the results. I was guided by Roulston who wrote that 'In broad terms, analysing interview data includes the phases of (1) data reduction, (2) data reorganisations and (3) data representation'*[185]* Flick highlights that the first step is identifying relevant passages in interviews which should then be categorized and ordered around the issue of the research.*[186]*

Both Swinton and Mowat,[187] and Bryman[188] write that the coding process in qualitative data analysis will require coding and re-coding each transcribed interview text, reviewing codes

[184] See Appendix C for the final codes used
[185]K. Roulston, *Interactional problems in research interviews*, SAGE journals vol 14, Issue 3 https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1468794112473497 p.301.
[186] U. Flick, An Introduction to Qualitative Research (Fifth Edition) (SAGE Publications, 2009), p.237.
[187] Swinton and Mowat, Practical Theology and Qualitative Research.
[188] Bryman, Social Research Methods, 3rd edn (Oxford University Press, 2008), p.543.

and adding more levels of coding as new themes become apparent. This process formed a large part of the empirical data analysis as various levels of coding were identified, re-indexed and reduced.

Preliminary research into a normative theological voice had indicated that there were a multiplicity of meanings of the term leadership that had been referenced in the normative texts. These included, but were not limited to; functional leadership, influential leadership, power, control, ordination, discipleship and agency. I began my coding process by sorting through the transcribed interview texts looking for references that could be assigned to codes and creating codes new codes when new themes were identified. Using thematic analysis the data was then coded again and each section of the text was assigned to a theme or an example of a topic.[189] This process was repeated several times and by the end I was working with thirty two different codes.[190]

Alan Bryman describes this process of indexing data and analysing it thematically as analytic induction, writing that 'The researcher seeks universal explanations of phenomena by pursuing the collection of data until no cases that are inconsistent with a hypothetical explanation of a phenomenon are found.'[191] My aim was to sort the data in such a manner that analysis would allow me to follow his guidance that all data is 'pursued until all cases are consistent with a hypothetical explanation of a phenomena.'[192] In this case I was hoping to

[189] Using the coding method described in A. Bryman's Social Research Methods (OUP, 2008), p.550 and also J. Lofland , 'Analytic Ethnography: Features, Failings, and Futures' in Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 24.1 (1995), https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/089124195024001002, p.34.
[190] See Appendix C
[191] A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (OUP, 2008), p.539.
[192]Bryman, *Social Research Methods* p.539.

discover if particular understandings of leadership were linked to certain ecclesiologies, ethnographies or even theological positions.

I had to adapt my initial research plan during the theological reflection which is found in chapter six. Having established that 'discipleship' was a recurring theme in the textual analysis and a word that was used a lot by interview participants, further research revealed that, in a similar manner to leadership, discipleship did not have a universally accepted definition. To research a definition fully was beyond the scope of this research, so I decided to try and ascertain what the interview respondents meant when they used the term. To acquire this definition, I contacted each of the incumbents that I had interviewed and asked them to summarise what they understood by the term discipleship in a single sentence. This data was beneficial to both my data analysis and my theological reflection. I will expand on this in chapters five and six.

My hope was that the results of this process would either provide an operant theological understanding of leadership or a multiplicity of operant understandings that could then be analysed in conversation with the normative voice previously ascertained. Although I am primarily analysing the operant understanding this will be determined by analysing the theology espoused by participants and so the espoused theology will play a prominent part. I intended to analyse the data through the questions that had been raised in the textual analysis. These questions were concerned with the functional or influential nature of leadership, the relationship between leadership and discipleship, and the relationship between ordination and leadership.

3.5.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Once I had coded the data and began to analyse it, I came across a problem. My prior research into leadership and my curation of a form of normative theology from the texts I had analysed had created a framework of questions within which I expected my data to fit. When I came to analyse the data, I found that participants' reflections on their own lived experience, or their phenomenology, did not always fit easily into the analysis plans with which I had begun the process.

At this stage I introduced the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to analyse the interview results. IPA is a qualitative methodological tool that is commonly used in psychology and is concerned with utilising respondents' personal interpretations of their experiences as valuable data in and of itself. It is an experiential method that is interested in the systematic exploration of personal experience. It draws on the philosophy of phenomenology for both its central concerns and its approaches. Tomkins refers to these central concerns and approaches as the 'what' and the 'how'[193] of phenomenology and links this approach with the philosophical work of Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur. IPA is built on the belief that human beings are inherently interpretive sense-making creatures and it offers methods and principles to examine the nature, processes and consequences of this sense-making.[194] I used IPA for this particular element of the research because I recognised a need to allow interview participants to begin to associate meaning and reflection on their answers before I aligned them with any preconceived theological framework that I had created from

[193] L. Tomkins, 'Using Interpretative Phenomenological Psychology in Organisational Research with Working Carers' in L. Brooks & N. King (eds) Applied Qualitative Research in Psychology (Macmillan, 2017), pp.86-100.
[194] J. A Smith and N. Osborn, 'Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis' in J. A. Smith, Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Methods (SAGE, 2003), p.78.

the first data set. I did not want the first data set to restrict the results that emerged from the second data set, but to allow space for the conversation to develop. This process benefited from the use of semi-structured interviews that had allowed the participants to affect the direction of travel.

The inclusion of IPA[195] as a methodological tool allowed me to process data collection and analysis alongside the influence of Duce and Cameron's four voices of theology.[196] Combining these methodologies aligns with Mowatt and Swinton's encouragement that qualitative research is a 'utilization of a variety of methods and approaches which enable the researcher to explore the social world in an attempt to access and understand the ways that individuals and communities inhabit it.'[197] One measurable adaptation that IPA brought in was the introduction of a fourth question through which to analyse the empirical data. I concluded chapter four with three questions that had arisen through the textual analysis of core texts. When interview participants reflected on their own experience and understanding of leadership, a fourth question concerning management became a dominant theme. I therefore needed to adapt my data analysis to reflect the outcome of allowing participants to interpret their own experience.

3.6 Summary

John Swinton said in a 2020 lecture that 'methodology is all about listening well and reflecting responsibly'[198] and this is what I have tried to do with my methodology for this research. I

[195] Smith and Osborn, 'Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis', p.78.
[196] ARCs research unit.
[197] Swinton and Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research,* p.29.
[198] John Swinton lecture at DThM conference, Sept 16th 2020.

have utilised the the language of ARC's four theological voices and the interpretive method of IPA. I have learnt not to allow these to constrict the research but to use them flexibly and to adapt them when it is needed. This flexibility between methodologies was influenced by Kevin Flinn's complexity theory in his approach to leadership theory, recognising that complex situations may require a nuanced approach. Swinton and Mowat write that practical theology;

> 'approaches particular situations with a hermeneutics of suspicion, fully aware that, when the veil is pulled away, we often discover that what we think we are doing is quite different from what we are actually doing'[199]

This was certainly my experience as I regularly had to adapt and then re-adapt my methods to respond to the often-surprising directions that my research took me.

Richard Osmer's[200] four stages of practical theology invite the researcher to move through a process of research and reflection towards a practical or applicable result. My hope is that this research will facilitate a conversation between those who hold different theological understandings of leadership and will help those holding different positions understand and respect one another and move towards working well as a whole church. I believe that the first step to achieving is this by asking the question 'How is leadership theologically understood and practised across the Church of England?'

[199] Swinton & Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, p.xi.
[200] R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Eerdmans, 2008), p.4.

Chapter 4 Exploring Key Texts to Discover a Form of Normative Voice

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will review texts that contribute to a form of normative theology of leadership held by the Church of England. The texts that are analysed in this chapter are texts which embody official or authoritative teaching about leadership in the Church of England. I will use this chapter to explore the theology of leadership displayed in these core texts of the Church of England and identify any potential conflicts that exist in them that could lead to a multiplicity of theological understandings or a lack of theological clarity.

4.1.1 The Use of Texts to Discover a Theology of Leadership

Leadership in the Church of England can be ordained leadership or lay leadership. Not all leadership in the Church of England is conducted by ordained ministers, but certain leadership roles are reserved for ordained people, in part due to the types of roles that only ordained people can be licensed to; for example you must be ordained priest to be the incumbent of a church due to the tasks that incumbency involves[201] and you also must be ordained in order to become an archdeacon or a bishop. This is in part because these roles contain sacramental duties that only ordained people can perform. Paul Avis, in *The Anglican Understanding of*

[201] *Canons of the Church of England, Section B,* https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/canons-church-england/section-b

Church comments on the 'combination of episcopal and pastoral leadership and oversight'[202] of the Church of England, noting that the leadership of the church is synodical and conciliar. He comments on the importance of both lay and ordained contribution to church leadership as a constitutional tenet of the church. I will therefore investigate texts that are relevant to ordained leadership and to lay leadership to create a general picture of leadership in the church.

The Church of England does not hold a formal constitution in the way that other denominations do, but one can be found by theologically reflecting on its texts and worship. In this chapter I will begin by analysing texts that create a theology of ordained leadership. To explore a theology of ordained leadership I am going to focus on the theological understandings of leadership espoused by The Ordinal, the Selection Criteria for ordination and the newer Qualities Framework for ordained ministry.

Leadership in the Church of England is not restricted to the ordained, lay leadership forms a large part of leadership in the Church of England. To assess the held theology of lay leadership, I will carry out a close reading of the *Setting God's People Free* report and the Faith and Order Commission's report on senior leadership. I have selected these because although there are many General Synod reports on leadership these two reports hold significant profile and have had a notable influence on the churches understanding of leadership. The SGPF report is specifically focused on lay leadership and the FAOC report creates a more general understanding of leadership.

[202] P. Avis, *The Anglican Understanding of Church* (SPCK, 2000), p.25.

In the texts studied I find three primary themes which occur regularly. The first is the existence of both functional and influential understandings of leadership. The second theme is the relationship between ordination and leadership. The third theme that arises is the concept of discipleship and how it relates to leadership.

4.2 The Church of England Ordinal

A primary canonical text of the Church of England is its ordinal, the liturgy used when priests and deacons are ordained. Canons A4 and C1[203] indicate that The Ordinal, through being the only authorised text that can be used for ordination, is a primary source of the Church of England's teaching on the role of priests and deacons. Canon A5 also states that The Ordinal is a primary source of the Church of England's theological teaching on ordained ministry,[204] therefore within The Ordinal we can expect to find both the practical role of a priest and the theological understanding of that role. As explained in chapter three, I will be using the ordinal in the liturgy of Common Worship. Common Worship was authorised as a liturgy in 2000, and the ordinal was authorised in 2005 using canon B2.[205] The Common Worship ordination liturgy superseded the ordinal of the Alternative Service Book which had been used since 1980 and prior to this the Church of England had been using variations of the same ordination liturgy since 1662. Nearly every person who is tasked with leading an Anglican church in the UK would have been ordained using this liturgy, including all the candidates that are interviewed to

[203] *The Canons of the Church of England,* https://www.churchofengland.org/about/governance/legal-resources/canons-church-england/canons-website-edition.
[204] See Canon A5 'Of the Doctrine of the Church of England', *Canons of the Church of England, Section A,* https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/canons-church-england/section.
[205] *The Canons of the Church of England.*

create the research data, and so we can assume that it has had an impact on their understanding of leadership.

Regarding leadership, there are several points within The Ordinal which indicate the behaviour and character that might be expected of priests and deacons, and so as priests and deacons are licensed to positions of leadership, we can use the text to investigate what form that leadership might take. In the Selection Criteria used to discern a calling to ordination, Criterion B explicitly states that candidates should have an understanding of their ministry which is 'informed' by The Ordinal. For the purposes of this study I will be focusing on the ordination to the office of priest, however it is important to note that those ordained to the office of priest will not necessarily carry out the same role. Priestly ministry has a scope beyond church leadership; for example some priests may be archdeacons or deans, some may be military chaplains or hospital chaplains, and some may be called to work in a secular role. In addition to this variety, there can be vast differences in what church leadership may look like from priest to priest depending on many factors such as the size of their church, their level of seniority in a church (Some may be assistant or associate leaders), and the budget and resources that they are working with. For this thesis to be useful I have often narrowed the scope of research to those priests who are serving as incumbents of churches. This provides a useful framework from which to explore the relationship between leadership and ordination. Whilst there is not scope within this thesis to explore the relationship between ordination and leadership in all the roles fulfilled by priests exhaustively, I believe that the findings and observations made by focussing on incumbency will provide insights into how leadership interplays with all ordained ministry.

As mentioned earlier, there are two forms of leadership explored in this thesis. On of these is the *functional* form, through which someone can influence others due to the authority which comes with the role that they hold. The second form is the *influential* form, through which a person can influence others due to their capacity to persuade or to affect change without having to use a formal position of authority. It is worth noting at this point that whilst The Ordinal may seem to be primarily concerned with the influential roles that priests will assume, the majority of roles in the Church of England which involve functional authority require the holder of those roles to be ordained before they can assume them. The incumbent of a church or the archdeacons and bishops of a diocese will have to operate in functional leadership roles as part of their jobs. The vicar will have to chair PCCs and supervise staff and the bishop will have to work strategically and will manage a staff team for example. It is therefore important to note that the text of The Ordinal, which at first seems to carry little reference to the functional leadership that priests and deacons are going to assume, is the gateway to stepping into these roles. It therefore requires a close reading to investigate what normative theology of leadership in both its functional and influential dimensions is contained in the liturgy.

The ordination of priests includes the phrase 'Priests are ordained *to lead* God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the gospel'.[206] Neither the syntax nor the context make it clear whether this act of leadership is meant to take place during acts of worship, during specific times *outside* of acts of worship or as a wider vocational lifestyle, so we can perhaps assume that it is concerned with all three. The inclusion of the word 'lead' in this text is different to the text for the ordination of deacons, in which the only explicit reference to leadership states that deacons are to share in 'the pastoral ministry of the church and in

[206] *The Ordinal* (emphasis mine)

leading God's people in worship'.[207] This suggests that the difference between the two ministries is that priests, who are usually put in positions which hold more authority than deacons, are required to lead in worship (*the offering of praise)* and in mission *(the proclamation of the gospel)*, whilst the wording of the ordination of the diaconate removes the assignment of leadership of mission leaving only the leading of worship. Following this textual progression through suggests that, with priests holding more responsibility than deacons, leadership responsibility increases as seniority increases. This is significant because it is demonstrably true in the pragmatics of ordained ministry. Although the difference between deacons and priests is not necessarily one of hierarchy or progression as for some the role of deacon is a distinct vocation, there is an increase in responsibility held as different offices are assumed and we can therefore identify a potential increase in leadership responsibilities as a deacon becomes a priest.

A functional aspect of leadership is described in The Ordinal, where priests are described as those who 'share the oversight of the church with the bishop'. The use of the word 'oversight' comes from the Greek *episkope*, from which the word 'bishop' is derived. It suggests a hierarchical understanding of leadership where the priest holds and wields authority over others. Although the liturgy here states that the priest shares the authority for oversight of the church with the bishop, it is also true that the priest sits under the authority of the bishop; the bishop is the primary holder of the oversight. The Bishop also asks the ordinands as part of the service 'Will you accept and minister the discipline of this Church, and respect authority

[207] *The Ordinal,* p.6.

duly exercised within it?'[208] This is a further example of functional leadership because once ordained priest, the person steps into an authoritative position simply by becoming priested.

There is another more subtle example of functional leadership in The Ordinal. For a priest to lead God's people 'in worship and proclamation of the gospel' we can assume that there is an element of this which is achieved through leading gathered worship. It is the priest's responsibility to oversee this worship, and this is in part a functional matter because the responsibility for decisions concerning how this worship is performed falls to them. The ordination is part of a sequence of events that will probably involve a priest being licenced to a specific parish or benefice and assuming authority to make decisions about the worship in that place. This is part of a legal settlement that gives the incumbent the authority to make those decisions and implement them, thus putting them in a position to exercise functional leadership in the leading of gathered worship.

There is also an influential mode of leadership in the text of The Ordinal. The ordination service for deacons includes the following charges; 'to feed and provide for His family, to search for His children in the wilderness of this world's temptations, to guide them through its confusions', to fashion [their] own life and that of [their] household according to the way of Christ',[209] which shows that the role entails requirements that exist beyond gathered worship. Deacons are asked to 'make the love of Christ known through word and example' whilst priests are asked to 'be a pattern and example to Christ's people.' These are all examples of deacons and priests being charged with what we can call influential leadership. This leadership ministered by the priests and deacons is achieved through inspiration and

[208] *The Ordinal,* p.6.
[209] *The Ordinal*, p.12.

encouragement but perhaps most importantly through example as they live their lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. Although the leader is in a position to enact decisions about worship or other activities by virtue of their ordination and licensing, they can also influence others and reveal Christ by the way they live and not just the authority that they hold.

Linking an influential form of leadership with ordination is not without its problems. The text states that part of ordained ministry is to set an example of Christian life ('make the love of Christ known through word and example/be a pattern and example to God's people') which holds a risk that members of the church could view ordained leaders as somehow being 'better' Christians than the laity. There is a risk that people perceive ordination to be a natural progression as they try to grow in their faith or to become 'better' Christians rather than ordination being a distinctive call to some of God's people. In a sense the risk is that there is a danger of clericalism lurking here, which is explained in the *Setting God's People Free* report and also evidenced in the empirical findings in chapter five. It is clear that all who are ordained are called to set an example of Christian life but this does not mean that all who set a good example of Christian life are called to be ordained, or even that all who are ordained will necessarily set such an example.

The sacramental authority of the priesthood is described in The Ordinal within the instruction to 'sustain the community of the faithful by the ministry of word and sacrament, that we all may grow into the fullness of Christ'. Although there is no explicit mention of leadership in this phrase, the text indicates that the Christian community does not experience fullness without the ministries of word and sacrament and these ministries are tasks which require

leadership as established by the earlier charge to 'lead God's people in … worship'. At ordination the priest *becomes* a person authorised to deliver sacramental ministry and so we can ascertain from this that sacramental leadership is a part of priestly ministry.

There is a further element to the sacramental element of leadership, not necessarily found in the text of The Ordinal, but in its existence: the idea that a sacramental element of priestly and diaconal ministry is not only held in the sacramental tasks performed by the priest, but in a change in what a priest is, or perhaps what they *become* at the point of ordination and who they are as they carry out their ministry.

The service and indeed the act of ordination is a ceremony, containing liturgy which has been synodically ratified, ensuring that it is both canonically legal and theologically orthodox. Therefore, we can be confident that the theology used during the service is a true and accurate representation of the theology held by the Church of England. In an ordination service, there is an act of ordination, the moment where a bishop lays hands on a candidate and prays 'Send down the Holy Spirit on your servant *N* for the office and work of a deacon/priest in your Church'. A Christian understanding of prayer is that when words are prayed to God, He responds and answers.[210] Therefore we can assume that as the bishop requests invocation of the Holy Spirit for this purpose, God does indeed send down the Holy Spirit upon them and they 'become' a person ordained by God.

One understanding of ordination is that priests are not merely being licensed to new authority in an earthly sense, but that as they are equipped for their new role by the Holy Spirit are also

[210] Consider Matther 16.19: 'Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven' or James 5.16: 'The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective'.

becoming something new via the work of that same Spirit. The text of The Ordinal describes part of the priestly role as a role of leadership, therefore once they are ordained priest, they perhaps *become* a leader regardless of what they do or do not physically 'do'.[211] The understanding of what happens in an ordination, however, and whether or not there is a change in a person during the ceremony, differs across the church of England.

Clerical ordination is also not the only way in which people are 'anointed' into, or for, roles of leadership in the Church of England. People are 'prayed into' roles in both formal services such as licensings and in informal acts of praying for a person as they assume a role or even perform a task. It is common practice in many churches for a person to be prayed for by the laying on of hands and for others, not necessarily bishops, to ask that the Holy Spirit would 'bless' or 'anoint' them for a task such as children's work or leading worship. This is a parallel of what is happening in an ordination and people's expectation of what God is doing in that moment may be similar to what they believe He is doing at an ordination.

The theme of being a servant is regularly referenced throughout the ordination services of both deacons and priests. The bishop opens the ordination of deacons with a preface describing the role of deacons.[212] A recurring theme in this preface is the element of service as part of the ministry, which would be expected as the term deacon comes from the Greek word *diakonos,* which means servant. The preface states that they are to 'serve as heralds', to 'serve the community', and even compares the diaconate ministry to that of Jesus who 'for our sake took the form of a servant'. This servant imagery is repeated in the ordination of

[211] V. M. Karkkainen*, Pneumatology* (Baker Academics, 2001) p.112.
[212] *The Ordinal*, www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/ministry/common-worship-ordination-services#mm013

priests, which opens with the declaration that 'Priests are called to be servants and shepherds'. The reference to the servant nature of both deacons' and priests' ministries is used again in both ordination prayers, which, having referenced the servanthood of Christ, pray for the deacons and the priests, 'we give you thanks that you have called these servants whom we ordain…'.

The language of The Ordinal suggests that the person ordained takes on certain tasks and responsibilities as well as certain expectations of their lifestyle and influence over others. Part of this role involves being an example to others, part of it involves oversight of others, and there is also a sacramental element which is concerned with both what the leader does and who the leader is. This is not an exhaustive list of ordained ministerial elements, and The Ordinal gives little explicit detail as to what these elements will practically entail although there are indications as to what it may look like. The word 'lead' is used sparingly in The Ordinal, yet we can find elements throughout the liturgy that resemble the functional and influential elements of leadership explained elsewhere in this thesis. These are not equally weighted, nor are they explicitly described; however, the description of priestly and diaconate ministry as described in The Ordinal does contain these elements.

Beyond The Ordinal, other authoritative texts used or referenced by the Church of England can at times take one of these forms of leadership and elevate it above the other two. In many cases this occurs without referencing or acknowledging the existence of the others. This has led to the potential of a multiplicity of meanings held across the Church of England when referring to leadership, which has the potential to generate confusion. I will explore some of these key texts in the next sections in this chapter.

4.3 The Selection Criteria and The Qualities Framework

I am going to look at two texts in this section, the 'Selection Criteria' and the 'Qualities Framework'. Prior to 2023, the Selection Criteria were used in the process by which decisions were made about whether to accept someone for ordination training, again when the decision is made about whether to proceed to ordination, and throughout their initial training. These were replaced during the course of my research with a framework of qualities that have been deemed necessary for an ordained person. However the old Selection Criteria were used in the discernment process for all the interview participants that contributed to my empirical research so are important to this thesis despite being replaced.

People who seek to become ordained priests in the Church of England are recommended by their priest to the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO). The DDO recommends the candidate to the Bishops' Advisory Panel (BAP) for further scrutiny.[213] Candidates are evaluated against the Qualities Framework (previously the Selection Criteria), at every stage of assessment. Successful candidates become ordinands, they are recommended for theological training and are trained at a theological education institution under further scrutiny in the light of the Qualities Framework. Following ordination, they will take up a curacy in which again, they are assessed according to the Qualities Framework. These texts are therefore central to people's own understanding of ordained ministry. As I have demonstrated, this means that they are consequently central to the church's understanding of leadership.

[213] M. Grundy, What They Don't Teach You at Theological College: A Practical Guide to Life in the Ministry (Canterbury Press, 2003) pp.18-25.

4.3.1 The Selection Criteria

Whilst references to leadership within The Ordinal were relatively sparse, they were much more explicit in the Selection Criteria.[214] The text included *Criterion F: Leadership and Collaboration* as one of the nine criteria by which potential ordinands were assessed; this criterion was added in 1993 by the Working Party on Criteria for Selection for Ministry in the Church of England,[215] who at the time released a report which said that

> A basic ability required of leaders is to identify where the group or community stands and what it should aim to achieve. Leaders should then be able to set out the means to obtain the objectives, drawing the group or community towards the aim and motivating its members towards the goal.[216]

This quote is revealing, and perhaps the fact that this description of leadership is in a General Synod report but did not make it to any of the explanatory notes or bullet points on the final version of the Selection Criteria itself is also interesting. This quote reveals the rationale behind the insertion of the leadership criterion. It also gives some clues as to what General Synod understood by the term leadership (or at least what it understood by the term in 1993). There are elements of both functional and influential leadership in this quote. The idea that someone is expected to be a leader and so to have the right to determine aims and objectives simply by virtue of their ordination suggests an element of functional leadership, whilst the use of the words 'drawing the group' or motivating' suggests that influential skills will be needed as well. It is also possible, of course, that people other than the ordained person could have the role of 'setting aims and objectives', so the distinction is not an absolute one. It is significant that this guidance concerning what is meant by the term leadership and what it

[214] Ministry Division of the Archbishop's Council, *Criteria for Selection for the Ordained Ministry in the Church of England* (2014), https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/selection_criteria_for_ordained_ministry.pdf
[215]Advisory Board of Ministry, *The Report of a Working Party on Criteria for Selection for Ministry in the Church of England*, Policy Paper 3A (London: Central Board of Finance of the Church of England, 1993)
[216] *The Report of a Working Party on Criteria for Selection for Ministry in the Church of England,* (1993)

may look like were left out of the official drafts of the Selection Criteria; it is possible that this has in part contributed to the multiplicity of understandings that we are investigating in this thesis.

Most of the criteria have descriptions of how the particular giftings will be displayed in practice, however until 2021 under *leadership and collaboration* it simply stated that a candidate recommended for ordination could 'Reflect accurately on his/her own leadership skills [and] Have the potential to exercise leadership effectively and flexibly.'[217] The text was updated in 2021 with some loose description of leadership roles, but initially there was little or no description of what exercising leadership effectively actually looked like in practice, leaving it open to interpretation. The 2021 additions were added after any of the candidates that took part in my empirical research had finished their training so had no effect on their discernment or understanding of their role.

In 2021 subheadings were added to the criterion F, listing expectations that successful candidates for ordination should; 1) display a knowledge and understanding of leadership, 2) have potential for exercising leadership, 3) have effective communication skills, 4) show potential for collaborating with others, 5) show potential for creative leadership and 6) show potential for exercising team leadership. Despite the addition of the subheadings and bullet points, the descriptions of what good leadership may look like in practice is light on examples.

[217] *Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England*, section F https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/selection_criteria_for_ordained_ministry.pdf

Other criteria in the list of criteria contain relatively explicit examples of what demonstrating the criteria may look like. For example, Criterion C, which is concerned with spirituality, expects candidates to 'have a disciplined personal pattern of prayer' evidenced by 'Show[ing] a disciplined, structured and realistic pattern of prayer that sustains him/ her,' 'Engag[ing] in personal Bible reading' and 'faithfully participat[ing] in corporate worship',[218] amongst others. This is not the case with Criterion F. Criterion F states that candidates should display knowledge of and have potential for exercising leadership without any examples of what leadership might look like.

There are some clues as to what could be considered evidence of leadership ability in a later edition of the text. One is that, in criterion F a candidate was asked to 'reflect on his/ her experience of delegating' and to 'reflect upon how he/ she has affirmed and enabled the gifts of others' which tells us that part of leadership is concerned with encouraging and enabling others into tasks or ministry, and being a releasing leader who does not do everything themselves. A candidate was required to be 'an effective team player within a group: working effectively alongside others.' This could be read as suggesting an influential dimension to the leadership involved.

Some attention is given to having good communication skills. Candidates need to be able to deliver a 'presentation that engages and holds the attention of an audience', they need to be able to 'Communicate personally and persuasively', 'clearly and effectively' in both verbal and written formats. The rationale that communication is a skill of leadership is not explained in

[218] *Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England*, section C

the text, but the use of the word persuasively could indicate some links to another influential mode of leadership.

Another example of a specific skill is that a candidate should 'Show that he/she can effectively chair and facilitate a group'. Although once again there are no examples of what this may look like, or any link to ministry functions such as chairing a PCC or a working party, it is a little more helpful in trying to understand what leadership can look like. There is a question to be asked about why the words 'chair' and 'facilitate' are used instead of the word 'lead'. The use of these words suggests that if someone is inhabiting a role in which this is required, they might choose to use an influential approach to carry it out.

In a later addition to the leadership and collaboration criterion, before the criteria were replaced by the Qualities Framework, extra evidence was required for those who are expected to take on incumbency status, including evidence of being able to 'show initiative, drive and creativity in planning and implementing change'. This demonstrates a more functional form of leadership, in which the leader is in a position of authority and is using *oversight* as described in The Ordinal.

What comes across in the Selection Criteria is that there is no simple explanation of what a leader is or is not, or of what leadership entails; instead, there are a few suggestions that come without specific parameters. This left a freedom for interpretation within this criterion which was not there in the others. This freedom for interpretation has been exercised by many in the church, which may have contributed to the multiplicity of meanings of the term *leadership* and the potential for confusion when discussing leadership across the church.

4.3.2 The Qualities Framework

In 2023, the Church of England stopped using the criteria for selection for ordination and instead began to use qualities to be inhabited. This marked a different way of exploring a person's potential call to train for ordained ministry and training. There were initially six qualities to be inhabited, which were: Love for God, Call to Ministry, Love for People, Wisdom, Fruitfulness and Potential. In 2024 Trustworthiness was added as a seventh quality. These qualities are explained through a grid in which each quality is connected to the candidate's relationship with four elements: Christ, the Church, the World and the Self; they are also described by the Church of England as being 'grounded in the Church of England's Ordinals'. [219] The rationale behind this change was communicated in these terms:

> Inhabiting a quality speaks more of a life-long process that is ever deepening and it might offer resonance with the ancient term 'habitus' which speaks of dispositions lived out through being immersed deeply in a wide variety of lived contexts and relationships, all of which shape our living and calling.[220]

The change from the old Selection Criteria to the new Qualities Framework makes some theological statements, both in the changes themselves but also in the level of description and explanation of what is expected of the ordained, compared to the sparse bullet points that were previously used. Although there were some expansions to the initial Selection Criteria descriptions, they were still thin and relatively vague.

There is more content in the new Qualities Framework describing what leadership may look like, with the most explicit leadership references appearing when the qualities of 'wisdom' and 'potential' are seen in light of the relationship between the ordination candidate and the

[219] Formation Framework IME 2 for Ordained Priestly Ministry, https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/fil es/2021-11/ime-2-priest-qualities-and-evidence-from-autumn-2022.pdf

[220] Formation Framework IME 2 for Ordained Priestly Ministry

church. Examples of this are the expectation that someone ordained as priest and operating at incumbent level;

- Shows leadership that enables thriving and healthy churches, handles conflict, and can lead in mission
- Manages change, and sees the big picture
- Can make creative use of the resources of scripture and theology and contemporary perspectives on leadership and organisations to inform discipleship, leadership and community formation in the changing contexts of the Church of England
- Is developing visionary leadership gifts within a church setting, is able to exercise them with integrity, and can reflect critically on their own leadership preferences and demonstrate flexibility in adapting a leadership style to the context
- Can see the bigger picture and has the capacity to develop a strategy for growth which takes people with them
- Shows initiative, drive and creativity in implementing growth so as to encourage, enable and develop the leadership of others
- Is developing qualities of leadership such that they can defend unpopular decisions if needed to
- Can demonstrate the part they have played in collaborative leadership,
- Demonstrates the capacity to hold the ring in terms of decision making when the buck stops with them
- Manage their own and others' use of authority, responding appropriately to the dynamics operating within the local church
- Leads maturely which promotes safe and harmonious Christian communities
- Identify where there needs to be change in the life of a church community, reflect on the implications for themselves and to have the negotiation skills to manage change effectively
- Show understanding of the challenges, tensions and costs inherent in real collaborative leadership[221]

These are all given as examples in the Church of England's formation framework for ordained priestly ministry. Some dioceses such as Southwark have included additional examples or rephrased versions of evidence in the frameworks shared on their websites. These include examples such as 'cast a vision with others and develop strategy for growth which takes people with them,' 'Show initiative, drive and creativity in implementing growth so as to promote and

[221] *Formation Framework IME 2 for Ordained Priestly Ministry*

release others' or 'Understand the relationship between power and authority, understand their dynamics and exercise both with wisdom and humility.'[222]

There is plenty of content here which demonstrates examples of what has previously been identified as leadership. There is also evidence of a change in approach to what leadership may look like. Whilst there are examples of both functional and influential leadership modes in all of the texts that I am examining, there is more evidence of functional leadership demonstrated in this text than most of the others. Phrases such as 'the buck stops with them', 'develop strategy for growth' and 'manage change effectively' all suggest an element of leadership in which the incumbent will be expected to implement plans that have been developed from the 'top down', I.e. they begin with the leader or incumbent. This method of leadership can be associated with a functional mode of leadership because the incumbent is expected to do these things by virtue of their position.

The Qualities Framework appears to use functional language because there is an implicit assumption that ordained ministers will be the ones that develop a strategy for growth or manage change and will be expected to do so due to their functional position. However, these functional terms are all couched in language of 'collaboration', 'humility' and 'encouragement' that evidences an awareness of the relational side of this task.

'Visionary leadership' is referenced in the list of examples which is a popular phrase in leadership descriptions and spans the dichotomy of influential and functional modes. 'Visionary leadership' could be understood as involving someone taking a church in 'their'

[222]Diocese of Southwark, *Qualities for Discernment Priest and Distinctive Deacon* (including Safeguarding and Discernment) https://southwark.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/01.-Combined-Grid-2021-safeguarding-final.pdf

direction in a functional way, i.e., simply because it is their role to do so, which may be why the expectation is for a potential incumbent to be able to reflect critically on 'visionary leadership' specifically. 'Visionary leadership' can also, however, involve leading people by utilising good communication skills, teamwork or personal charisma, which would align more closely to an influential understanding of leadership.

There are phrases such as 'take people with them', 'real collaborative leadership' and 'Understand the relationship between power and authority' in the text which suggests a need for an awareness of relational dynamics and emotional intelligence in leadership. One of the examples begins with 'Show initiative, drive and creativity in implementing growth' which sounds like a task-driven mode but is finished with 'so as to promote and release others' so again we see different modes of leadership evidenced and recognised. Although it is too large a leap to directly equivalate functional leadership with heroic leadership and influential leadership with collaborative leadership, there are some similarities between the two sets of leadership modes. These links are further explored further in later chapters which demonstrate implicit links between the two in peoples' general understandings of leadership.

Another difference between the old Selection Criteria and the new Qualities' Framework is the reduction in references to collaboration. All three guidance notes that use the word 'lead' or 'leadership' in the 2014 additions to the Selection Criteria do so in the context of collaborative leadership.[223] This contrasts with much of the writing that was explored in chapter two which often celebrated a 'heroic' model of leadership that relied on strong leadership from one individual. There is considerably less mention of collaborative or team

[223] *Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England* (2014)

leadership in the 2023 qualities grid and the examples of evidence that are given in it and even the examples of team leadership appear to prefer a more individual model of leadership.

There are still examples in the Qualities Framework where the term 'leadership' is used without qualification or explanation, but on the whole it provides a fuller description of what Christian leadership may look like than the old Selection Criteria. There is a theological statement being made here in the movement from the Selection Criteria's model of leaving the interpretation of leadership and collaboration open to providing narrower criteria for what it may look like, which I will explore in chapter six.

In addition to the theme of functional and influential modes of leadership, we also see the theme of discipleship occur in the guidance notes for the new Qualities Framework. There is a section entitled 'lifelong learning and formation'[224] which bears similarities to the concept of discipleship, given that the word disciple comes from the Greek *mathetes* or 'learner'. However, despite the section being titled 'lifelong learning', the content is only concerned with candidates while they are in the formation process and are part of IME 1 (initial training) or IME 2 (curacy). There are also examples of what could be defined as an intentional approach to discipleship in the evidence examples for some of the other qualities. For example, one of the ways to evidence love for God in a relationship with Christ is 'growing in Christlike character in daily living' and one example of a way to evidence a call to ministry in a relationship with Christ is being 'committed to their own growth as a disciple and to forming new disciples'.[225]

[224] *Formation Framework IME 2 for Ordained Priestly Ministry,* p.5.
[225] *Formation Framework IME 2 for Ordained Priestly Ministry,* p.5.

The thread that does connect both the old Selection Criteria and the new Qualities Framework however is that the sections on leadership do not espouse a theology of leadership directly. To discover one involves theological reflection in order to find a held theology of leadership in these texts, although it is there to be found if we look. In one sense, the lack of clarity, detail or example is a theological statement in itself, when compared with some of the detail given for the other criteria.

I have identified both functional and influential modes of leadership espoused in the selection texts, although the terms are not used directly and they are at times blended. Discipleship is also alluded to in a more abstract manner. I will continue to look for these and others in the texts explored in the rest of this chapter.

4.4 Setting God's People Free, A General Synod Report

The Archbishop's Council's Lay Leadership Task Group released the *Setting God's People Free* report in 2017 and it quickly became an important contemporary Anglican text. It asks how lay people can be better released into leadership and ministry.

Whilst The Ordinal and the Selection Criteria explain the roles of ordained members of the Church of England, and the empirical research of this thesis is primarily concerned with how incumbents' leadership role is understood, lay leadership is an important factor in understanding leadership in the Church of England more generally. The SGPF report contributes to the theological understanding of leadership as it asks questions of where power and leadership are held in the church.

The first reason that I have selected this particular text for a closer reading is because it has gained more traction and profile than most other Synod reports concerned with leadership, despite there being several reports written about the subject.

The second reason that I have selected this report for a closer reading, is that it is helpful to read this report in tandem with the Faith and Order Commission's *Senior Church Leadership* report, which was also released in 2017, to provide a theological understanding of what leadership is and how it functions within the Church of England. Although neither report would intend to position members of the church in any sort of hierarchy in which lay members are at the bottom and 'senior leadership' are at the top, the reflections on lay leadership and 'senior leadership' will give perspectives from two ends of a spectrum between leadership expectations of those in senior positions within the Church of England and of the laity. This will allow a broad perspective of leadership across the whole church. I will examine the Faith and Order Commission's report later in this chapter.

The SGPF report is a result of the Lay Leadership Task Force recognising that they needed to broaden their focus to consider the function of discipleship as well as that of leadership, as it recognised that the two were closely related. The report contends that 'the creation of a culture of forming disciples is the foundation and enabler of lay leadership'[226] and this comment, found in the introduction, posits that leadership is a *product* of discipleship, or that enabling discipleship can lead to enabling leadership. The conclusion of this process is that the task of creating leadership begins with the task of discipleship. The relationship between leadership and discipleship is a theme that recurs frequently in the texts studied in this

[226]*Setting God's People Free,* https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/gs-2056-setting-gods-people-free.pdf p.1.

chapter, explicitly in the SGPF and FAOC reports and implicitly in the other texts. Discipleship becomes increasingly prevalent in this research and forms a central theme of this thesis.

The enabling of leadership is a primary purpose of the task force, as stated in the challenge put to General Synod in the opening paragraph of the report. It asks synod;

> Will we determine to empower, liberate and disciple the 98% of the Church of England who are not ordained and therefore set them free for fruitful, faithful mission and ministry, influence, leadership and, most importantly, vibrant relationship with Jesus in all of life?[227]

Alongside discipleship, the challenge to release the laity into influence and leadership is a theme throughout the report and I will explore what, if anything, the report suggests that leadership might entail.

Whilst reading the SGPF report, it is important to read it in the light of the *Resourcing Ministerial Education*[228] report which targeted a 50% increase in the number of ordinands and led to the creation of the Lay Leadership Task Force. This means that the report is not without agenda. The report is written to contribute to a project whose task is to increase clergy numbers.

One term which is used regularly in the SGPF report is 'influence', and the conflation of the terms discipleship and leadership outlined later in this chapter is mirrored in the conflation between the words 'influence' and 'leadership.' When describing leadership, the report

[227] *SGPF Report,* p.1. (highlights my own)
[228] *Resourcing Ministerial Education Report* https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/gs-1979-resourcing-ministerial-education-task-group-report.pdf

identifies that leadership is usually in either a functional mode or an influential mode and I am grateful to the SGPF report because this distinction is central to this thesis.

The SGPF report explains that it will focus on the influential mode of leadership for the rest of the report. At times when describing leadership it will follow the word with 'influence' in brackets, e.g. 'Lay involvement and leadership (influence) is expressed in four broad areas.'[229]In other sections of the report however, influence is listed alongside and separate to leadership e.g. 'the mission and life of the Church of England is critically dependant on the fruitfulness of lay ministry, influence and leadership'.[230] This can come across as confusing because on the previous page it writes that 'influence' is a function of leadership and yet here it is listed as a separate entity. If we are to assume that the two can be separated, and that the report is focusing on the 'influencing' side of leadership, then a question arises as to why there are times in the report where influence is described as an alternative to leadership and times where it is described as a form of leadership.

Similarly, the tasks of 'ministry' are sometimes given as examples of leadership but sometimes are seen as being different from leadership. In fact, the examples of leadership given in the report are sometimes described as discipleship, sometimes as influence and sometimes as ministry, amongst other things.

Discipleship, ministry and influence are three things that are at times described by the *Setting God's People Free* report as elements of leadership, but at different points they are also described as being separate to leadership. This means that leadership can exist without them,

[229] *SGPF Report* p.9.
[230] *SGPF report*, p.8.

although it is not explained what this may look like. The report is not always clear about how these terms relate to leadership. This confusing relationship is explored throughout this thesis.

4.4.1 Setting God's People Free, Functional and Influential descriptors.

To understand the perception of both leadership it is helpful to investigate the SGPF report's definition and description of it. The SGPF report groups leadership into two categories; *functional* (positional) and *influential* leadership.

> We recognise that there are different modes of leadership and we have found it helpful to think in terms of 'functional' (or positional) leadership and 'influencing' leadership. Functional leadership is bestowed in the context of leading organisations, teams and tasks. Influencing leadership derives not from formal structures but from earned recognition in the eyes of others. [231]

This distinction mirrors two of the aspects of leadership explored in the previous chapter and identified in The Ordinal earlier in this chapter. It recognises that leadership can be 'functional' via a formal position or 'influential' via the leader 'influencing those around them using relationship or perhaps charisma.' As the report develops it also uses the terms 'influential' and 'inspirational' interchangeably, so when reading one we can take it to mean the other. The *SGPF* report elects to describe these as 'modes' of leadership, which suggests that any leader in a given situation may prefer to operate in one mode or the other, or perhaps a combination of the two. This descriptor and the use of the word 'mode' establishes that leadership is not a mutually exclusive choice of being either functional, inspirational or perhaps something else, but that leadership will demand various *modus operandi* depending on the situation, as Ken Blanchard contends in his books on Situational Leadership.[232]

[231] *SGPF Report,* p.7.
[232] K. Blanchard, *Leadership and the One Minute Manager* (Harper Thorson, 1985)

Once leadership has been grouped into functional and influential categories[233] and the two have been defined, the theological understanding of leadership that this report holds is revealed by how the two modes of leadership are studied. The report explains that it intends to focus only on the 'influential' expression of leadership, justifying this prioritisation by the fact that influential leadership is 'more prevalent and widespread'.[234] A result of this choice is an insight into the perceived value of the two modes of leadership and gives an element of imbalance to the second half of the SGPF report with functional leadership identified but then neglected. This leaves the reader questioning whether choosing to prioritise the study of influential leadership over other modes due to prevalence in the church is a statement on the value of that mode or whether it is simply pragmatic.

The prioritisation of influential leadership over functional leadership means that the report paints a picture of leadership that is primarily about influencing people relationally or charismatically rather than using any positional authority. This would be described by Gill, or by French and Raven, as a prioritising of referent power over legitimate power.[235]

4.4.2 Setting God's People Free, Leadership and Discipleship.

The SGPF report gives the reader both a result of discipleship (creating leaders) and a description of discipleship (to be a learner). It does not say that the *only* purpose of

[233] *SGPF Report,* p.7.
[234] *SGPF Report* p.8.
[235] J.P. French and B.H. Raven, 'The Bases of Social Power', in D. Cartwright and A. F. Zander (eds) *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory*, 3rd edition (Harper and Row, 2003).

discipleship is to create leaders, however other purposes are conspicuous by their absence as we will see further on.

The relationship between discipleship and leadership is an ongoing discussion throughout the report, and as with leadership, discipleship is a term that is not easy to define. Some people within the Church of England describe discipleship as the state of being a disciple or simply being part of the church whereas other areas of the Church of England see discipleship as the more intentional act of 'making disciples' through methods such as mentoring or apprenticeship. I will explore this distinction in more depth in later chapters. The SGPF report recognises these two descriptors on page seven, saying 'Whilst it may be broadly associated with notions of learning or apprenticeship, its Biblical usage also identifies the disciple as one who is a follower – of Christ, or the way of Christ'.[236] There are examples of both models in the *Setting God's People Free* report but it opens with the aforementioned quote that 'forming disciples is the foundation and enabler of lay leadership'[237] which suggests a prevalence of an intentional, teaching model of discipleship.

The report contends that leadership is in fact a 'sub-set' of discipleship.[238] By its own parameters it is focussed on leadership and so the examples the report gives of the callings into which laity might be released are all leadership roles, with very little reference to other elements of discipleship. Being a disciple is described as being a 'whole life matter' and we are given a number of 'cameos' to demonstrate what this may look like. These include people getting involved in catechesis, in sharing their faith at the school gate, in creating a more

[236] *SGPF Report,* p.7.
[237] *SGPF Report,* p.1.
[238] *SGPF Report,* p.8.

biblically influenced culture in their workplace and in creating paid lay ministry posts in their workplace. Whilst these are all positive stories, they could all sit under the description of 'leadership', so the reader is left with the question of what discipleship that is not leadership may look like. There are a number of points at which the report refers to discipleship in a paragraph heading but then only use leadership examples in the body of the text.[239]

The priority of 'leader making' is an agenda of the Renewal and Reform project[240] and therefore is a priority of the Church of England (the Renewal and Reform project is an programme of institutional reform backed by General Synod with a set target to 'reverse the decline of the Church of England so that we become a growing church.')[241] The SGPF report frequently reiterates the importance of discipleship or disciple-making as a priority for the Church of England, however the purpose of discipleship or making disciples, or even the practise of what disciple-making looks like is not given any context beyond what was described as 'leadership' earlier.[242] What this leads to in the report is an impression that 'leader-making' is actually more important than 'disciple-making'.

Overall, the *Setting God's People Free* report suggests that leadership is primarily about making disciples, and therefore leadership and discipleship are intrinsically linked.

4.4.3 Setting God's People Free, Leadership, Ministry and Task.

I will now explore the relationship between leadership and ministry in the report. Having initially listed ministry alongside leadership as separate entities, when listing how lay people

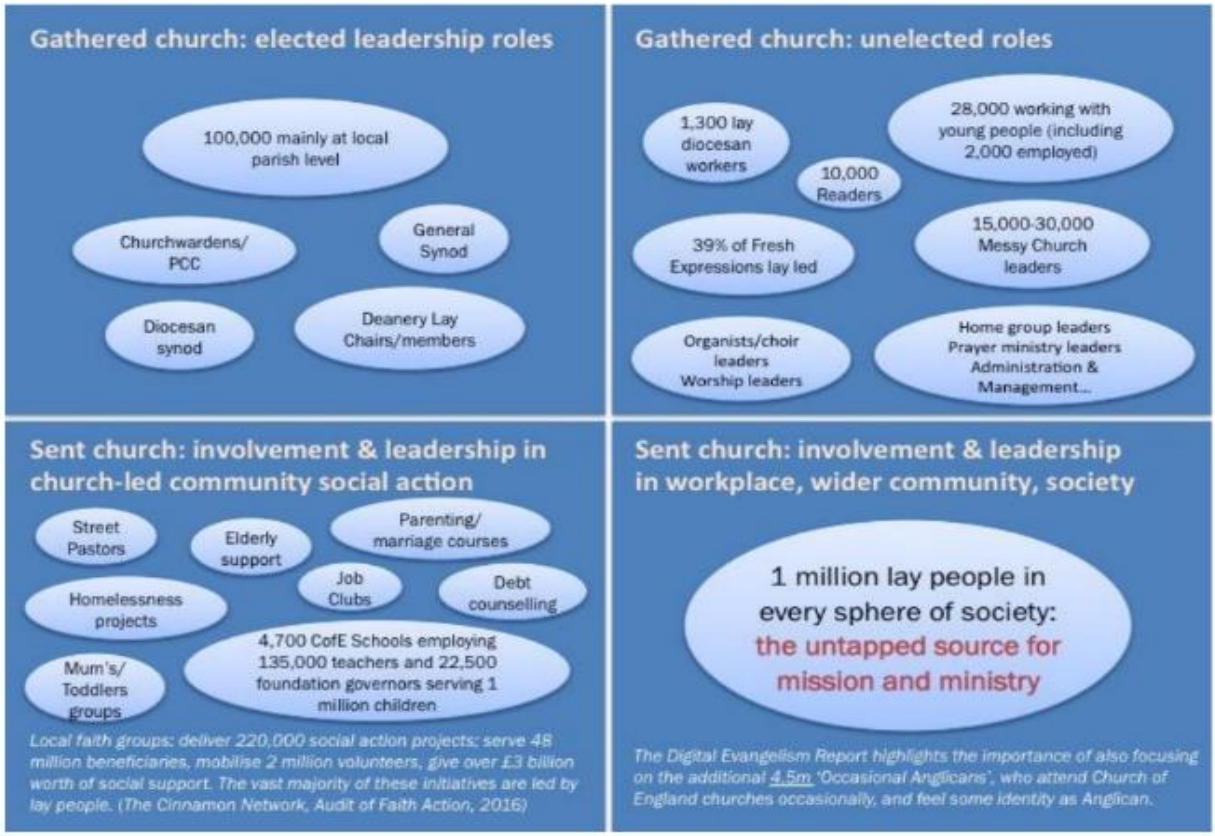
[239] *SGPF Report*, p.13 & p.20.
[240] *Renewal and Reform Report,* PDF https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/Renewal_Reform_final.pdf p.15.
[241] *Renewal and Reform Report,* p.3.
[242] *SGPF Report,* p.2.

minister within the church, the report groups ministry and influential leadership together in four different categories. They are;

1. Elected leadership roles in the 'gathered' church
2. Unelected roles in the 'gathered' church
3. Involvement and leadership in church-led projects within the 'sent' church

   This includes serving in church projects that are more concerned with social action than with worship such as elderly support or homelessness projects.
4. Involvement and leadership in wider society as the 'sent' church.

   This grouping includes all non-church activities that people are involved in, both in employed capacities and voluntary/recreational ones. Given the membership numbers of the Church of England, the report estimates that this group contains over a million people.[243]



These groupings create ambiguity concerning what the report is trying to say about leadership. The first group is explicitly about leadership, as it is entitled elected *leadership*

[243] *SGPF Report,* p.10.

roles. The elected nature of the roles however, and the list of roles included (including General Synod, deanery lay members, church wardens, diocesan synod) suggest that the leadership nature of these roles is more functional than it is inspirational/influential; i.e. there is an ascribed authority that comes with the position held. Of course within these roles there will still be an element of influential leadership demonstrated by the leader that may rely on personality, on power dynamics or on relational intelligence. Influential leadership may be required and exercised within these roles, however the criteria for categorising them is to do with the functional authority that the leader holds.

The SGPF report has already stated that it is going to focus on leadership in an influential capacity rather than a functional one so we can assume that it will be less concerned with this first group. The second group is concerned with 'unelected' (for which we can perhaps read influential rather than functional) roles, but the list includes leadership roles such as Messy Church leaders and Fresh Expression leaders which can be described as functional due to the nature of the roles and the tendency for churches to license them. The final two roles conflate 'involvement' and 'leadership' without any real analysis or explanation as to why. As the four subsections are described in the report, ministry and leadership are separated again, with the unelected roles said to include 'organisational leadership, ministry (both ecclesial and non-ecclesial), governance and administrative positions'.[244]

As the SGPF report considers what training is available for the laity, which is its primary objective, the understanding of leadership is alluded to again in how the word is positioned in sentences where it is listed *alongside* words such as 'ministry' or 'involvement'. Although the

[244] *SGPF Report,* p.11.

understanding of leadership has been confused at points in this section, it is clear that leadership is generally considered to be closely linked to ministry, whether that involves holding an authoritative position in a ministry or whether it is serving a ministry without any formal position. This creates an interesting conversation around how much of leadership is about doing a task, which is described as a 'ministry' in this report, and how much it is to do with *being* a leader or a person of influence, regardless of what a person is doing or not doing. The dichotomy between a leadership theory of task and a leadership theory of being leads onto how the SGPF report discusses ordination.

4.4.4 Setting God's People Free, Leadership and Ordination

Another theme that recurs through the SGPF report is the relationship between the laity and the clergy within the Church of England. This is a prevalent theme because one purpose of the report is to examine differences between the two.

The report promotes the baptismal mutuality of all members of the church using 1 Peter 2's 'royal priesthood' terminology to suggest that there is not only mutuality but also a shared office of priesthood that is held by both clergy and laity alike 'through baptism to a common vocation of divine blessing that originates in Jesus Christ'.[245] To build its theology of mutuality, *SGPF* references the 1946 Church of England report *Towards the Conversion of England* where it states 'The Christian laity should be recognised as the priesthood of the church in the working world, and as the church militant in action in the mission fields.'[246] The SGPF report

[245] *SGPF Report*, p.1.
[246] Church of England Commission on Evangelism, *Towards the Conversion of England*, (CHP, 1946), p.61.

argues firmly for an equality between the lay and the ordained, positing that it is not necessary to be ordained to have a vocation or calling, even a form of priestly calling.

The report also highlights the power dynamics between clergy and laity, stating that 'Lay people all too often feel underused and disenfranchised by clergy'.[247] This attributes a degree of power to the clergy in this relationship, setting up clergy as leaders in both a functional manner and an influential one. Clergy have a formal position and can use this to functionally release the laity into ministry or to withhold opportunities. The quote also alludes to the way that clergy can make the laity *feel*, which is more of an influential matter. This power, or agency to both affect what people can do (feeling underused) and how they feel (feeling disenfranchised) combines what is described as hard and soft power by Parkinson.[248]

In addition to the *Setting God's People Free* report's understanding of functional and influential leadership, Some attention is given to what can be described as *sacramental* leadership. Earlier in the chapter I explored the act of ordination and identified a spiritual change that is perceived to happen in a person when they are ordained. One part of this change is that the person acquires a level of authority and consequently a leadership responsibility.

This sacramental facet of leadership is explored in the SGPF report, which claims that this authority can be abusive and controlling. It claims that for some people there is a perception of clericalism in the way that ordained clergy exercise leadership.

[247] *SGPF Report,* p.16.
[248] I. Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership* (SCM, 2020) p.78.

> The sacramental authority, which is the distinctive feature of priesthood, has been conflated with ecclesial power to establish a potent, unyielding clericalism.[249]

This section in the report begins by highlighting that abusing sacramental authority can create barriers between clergy and laity, and that this is too common a story in the Church of England. The report describes some leadership exercised by clergy as 'unhealthy clergy leadership styles'[250] and describes attempts by clergy to 'break up' lay leadership and exhibit controlling behaviour. The disempowerment of laity, which the report blames on clericalism, appears to come from both a functional understanding of leadership and an influential one, held by both the leader and the led. Both using sacramental authority to create functional leadership and a dysfunctional relational style of leadership can mean that leadership becomes controlling and power-driven rather than releasing and equipping. The report claims that these issues arise from a conflation of sacramental authority with ecclesial power. This is another example of different facets, or modes of leadership that being held by the same people. The text demonstrates that incumbents hold a form of sacramental authority and also hold a functional one due to their position as the licensed vicar with authority to 'oversee alongside the bishop.'[251]

The SGPF report highlights examples of clergy using their ecclesial power to quash leadership opportunities for the laity and identify this as an abuse of the ecclesial power that they hold.

[249] *SGPF Report,* p.17.
[250] *SGPF Report,* p.17.
[251] *The Ordinal*

4.4.5 Theological Themes in Setting God's People Free

The SGPF report began as a project intending to release and equip lay leadership across the church of England. What the researchers discovered was that to increase leadership, the church needs to increase discipleship. This suggests that any theological discussion of what leadership is will therefore need to include theological reflection on discipleship. Having established that there is a theological perception of leadership that is functional and is concerned with hierarchical authority and a perception of leadership that is influential and is concerned with inspiring others to change, it becomes clear through the report that the Lay Leadership Task Group of General Synod have a few different understandings of leadership and that they are not all of equal standing.

Firstly, they recognise that leadership and discipleship, whilst being distinct, are closely related.

Secondly, they posit that functional, authoritative leadership exists within the Church of England, but they suggest that this is rarely a positive. There is a sense that there is a nuanced crossover between different modes of leadership and that anyone in a position of leadership will be navigating the interplay between them. There is also a projection that when clergy operate in a mode of functional authority, this has a negative effect on the discipleship, and consequently 'leader-making', of the laity. The report is positive in its observation of influential leadership, expressing recommendations that this should be demonstrated by both clergy and laity, and that the laity will be encouraged in it when the clergy have a healthy approach and practise of it.

Finally, there is much made of the human element of leadership in the *Setting God's People Free* report, but less detail on God's hand being involved in leaders growing or changing. The chapters concerned with the relationship between ordination and leadership give some thought to the flaws in clerical leadership due to human failings, and the lack of training that clergy have received, but very little mention is made of the development of leadership that is stepped into as part of the process of ordination either through training or through the spiritual act of ordination itself.

The Ordinal mentions that priests are 'ordained to lead God's people'[252] and, whilst it does not explicitly say that lay people do not share this calling, it does provide a normative theological voice within the Church of England saying that priests are called to lead. The SGPF report queries this assertion from The Ordinal with a rationale that is based on poor experience of clerical leadership and a broad understanding of priesthood.

4.5 The Faith and Order Commission's Report on Senior Church Leadership

Having identified the need to theologically reflect on leadership, in 2009 General Synod commissioned the Faith and Order Advisory Group (which later became the Faith and Order Commission, or FAOC) to produce a report 'bringing together existing material in the Church of England and the Anglican Communion relating to the exercise of senior leadership in the Church' and 'setting out biblical and theological perspectives to inform the Church's

[252] *The Ordinal, p.4.*

developing patterns of senior leadership.'[253] This report was released in 2015 and was entitled *Senior Church Leadership, A Resource for Reflection*.[254]

The FAOC report states that it aims to focus on senior leadership, which it defines as having oversight of, or responsibility for more than one parish. It also states that in producing this report the intention of FAOC is

> not to make recommendations about how the church should act with regard to specific issues. Nor is it to set out some kind of formal doctrinal position. It is certainly not to provide a leadership manual. Rather, we have understood our task as being to produce a "resource for reflection".[255]

Despite the focus on 'senior' leadership and the aim to avoid making a doctrinal statement, the report provides a valuable resource for trying to understand the meaning that the term 'leadership' has within the Church of England, because it was produced with this explicit aim. Although the report is primarily concerned with 'senior' leadership it also explores a more general understanding of leadership.

The FAOC report is also significant because it was formally accepted at Synod with the motion;

> That this Synod do take note of the report of the Faith and Order Commission, *Senior Church Leadership: a resource for reflection* … in the light of widespread misunderstanding and concern about the new arrangements for discerning and nurturing senior leaders that have recently been introduced, following the report from the Lord Green Steering Group.[256]

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[253] The Faith and Order Commission, *Senior Church Leadership, A Resource for Reflection,* https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/gs-1999b-private-members-motion-senior-leadership.pdf
[254] *FAOC Report*
[255] *FAOC Report,* p.15.
[256] Theology Welcomed in Debate about Leadership, *The Church Times* 17th July 2015, https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2015/17-july/news/uk/theology-welcomed-in-debate-about-leadership

General Synod choosing to take note of the report in light of the previous report from the Lord Green Steering Group[257] also highlights the contentious nature of discussing leadership and trying to adopt a normative position as an institution. The Green report, which had been released previously, had elicited some negative responses to its ideas about leadership, which were indicative of feelings held by many members of the Church of England.

The FAOC report identifies that there are both negative and positive attitudes towards the language and practice of leadership, offering to 'examine both the rise of leadership language in the life of the church and some of the criticisms that have been made of it.'[258] It acknowledges that the church rejecting leadership language as whole is not an option, writing that leadership language 'is not going away any time soon. It has simply become too prevalent and too deeply embedded, and we acknowledge that this is in part because it can name important needs in the church's life.'[259] Therefore the report offers to be sensitive to any reticence towards leadership and treat it with caution but acknowledges the importance of exploring the subject.

In order to present a theology of leadership, or at least a theological reflection on it, the FAOC report uses a framework of Scripture, tradition and reason through which to unpack the theology of leadership. The report defines a leader as

> someone who assists others in the performance of a collective practice. Such a leader is not necessarily one who himself or herself excels in the practice, though he or she certainly has to be competent in it. Rather, he or she will be

[257] Lord Green Steering Group, *Talent Management for Future Leaders*, (September, 2014) https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/gs-1982-discerning-and-nurturing-senior-leaders.pdf
[258] *FAOC Report*
[259] *FAOC Report*

> good at participating in that practice in such a way as to draw others deeper into it.[260]

This is a helpful indication that for the FAOC leadership is concerned with the relationship between a leader, a team and a collective practice. It is also interesting to note the use of the word 'assist', a word which has connotations of service or of being helpful rather than a word that suggests control or coercion.

The FAOC report identifies the growth of leadership language and leadership studies in both the church and the secular world as well as the complex relationship between the two. It states that the church began to use leadership language just after the second world war,[261] and then states that there was an 'explosion' of leadership language in the wider world following the publication of John Adair's *Training for Leadership* in 1968.[262] One point to observe here is that the FAOC report timeline could be read to suggest that the church was using language of leadership in the 1940s, but it did not 'explode' in the secular world until the late 1960s. This is interesting because one of criticisms of leadership language in the church is that it is a secular idea that is permeating the church, causing the church to be secularised which does not match the timeline of the FAOC report.

As part of the framework of scripture, tradition and reason the FAOC highlights the New English Bible's translation of 1 Timothy 3:1 in which the Greek word *episkopos* is translated as 'leader'[263] rather than the more traditional 'overseer' or 'bishop'. There is no critique of this translation, which suggests that FAOC see it as a legitimate understanding of the word. The

[260] *FAOC Report*, p.16.
[261] F*AOC Report*, p.8.
[262] *FAOC Report,* p.14.
[263] 1 Timothy 3:1, *NEB Translation* (1961)

NEB's selection of it demonstrates that leadership is both a biblical concept and also one that was prevalent in 1961. Later in the report however it goes on to say that a lot of leadership language has largely come from the secular world and is now used by the church. This highlights the complexity of the triangulation between understandings of leadership in the church and in the world.

When describing what leadership can look like, the FAOC report is careful to highlight the importance of integrity and character, as well as the gifts of leaders. It writes that the desire for leaders is that they will be able to inspire, encourage and animate. It also highlights the need for leaders who can teach compellingly and are gifted worship leaders. Perhaps one of the most revealing desires of leaders is held in the section that says 'A healthy account of leadership will focus first and most insistently on the nature of the collective practice concerned,'[264] which suggests that one measure of good Christian leadership is found in the fruitfulness and culture of the whole church, team or project being led.

The FAOC report lists New Testament examples of leadership, which it recognises are rare and nuanced. It identifies *hegoumenos* in Hebrews, Acts and Luke, *kuberneseis* in 1 Corinthians 12 and *proistemi* in Romans 12 as rare examples of what modern texts might recognise as leadership in a functional sense. These terms could describe positions of leadership which yield authority or power. However there are many more New Testament examples highlighted that fit into a picture of a household or a shepherding relationship with leaders described as fathers, nurses or stewards. The FAOC describe leadership as holding a '*refracted* authority' , seen through a triangular prism that resists the construction of top-down management

[264] *FAOC Report*, p.18.

structures.'[265] What they mean by this is that many of the New Testament images of leadership are used to 'used to distance the authority of the leader from any sense of ownership or mastery, and to deflect attention back to the Lord of the church, who is the real source of the leader's authority.'[266] This inversion of power and manifestation of leadership through relationship can be read as another example of the difference between functional and influential leadership that has surfaced in the texts previously explored in this chapter.

4.5.1 The Faith and Order Commission Report and Discipleship

In a similar vein to other texts explored, the FAOC report recognises that there is a relationship between leadership and discipleship. When describing New Testament leaders it writes that 'leaders share the fundamental vocation of all Christians to be disciples.'[267] Discipleship is described as; 'the longing "to be conformed to the image of God's Son"'[268] and also as a lifestyle of being; 'open to [both] a lifetime of *learning* and of *following* Christ on the way of the cross.'[269] Although the broad description of discipleship does include the word learning, disciples are described by the FAOC report as 'followers' rather than 'learners'.

The New Testament term for disciple is the Greek word *mathetes,* which translates as learner. It could therefore be read as a theological statement that the FAOC decide to use the word 'follower'. When exploring biblical themes of leadership in New Testament communities, the FAOC report lists a number of roles and links them with contemporary ones. It links the Greek term *presbyteros* with 'elder or senior', *Diakonos* with 'servant', *prostatis* with 'patron' and

[265] *FAOC Report,* p.34.
[266] *FAOC Report,* p.34.
[267] *FAOC Report*, p46.
[268] *FAOC Report*, p.46.
[269] *FAOC Report,* p.46.

episkopos' with 'overseer'. Yet in this same passage the FAOC report talks about a teacher and learner relationship but declines to refer to the Greek *mathetes.*

Later in the report is a section entitled 'Leadership and Discipleship.'[270] In this section discipleship is not mentioned other than in the title, however it does create a picture of the leaders' call to humility, holiness and spiritual discipline.[271] This mirrors the New Testament section in which The FAOC report writes that all disciples' spiritual lives are undergirded by daily routines of prayer, attentiveness and obedience and that this includes those in leadership.[272] However in the section entitled 'Leadership and Discipleship' there is not a clear definition of what 'discipleship' actually means. The opening paragraph says that leaders serve within a 'context of the whole people's common call to love and serve the Lord.'[273] This could be understood as discipleship but it is not explicitly described as such.

Overall the FAOC report gives the impression that discipleship is primarily about having a desire to pursue holiness, and a disciple is a follower rather than a learner. It also tells us that the vocation of all Christians is to be disciples. This vocation is shared by leaders but whilst all leaders are disciples, not all disciples are leaders.

This analysis demonstrates that the FAOC report understands discipleship to be more concerned with a broad sense of a person's spirituality and personal holiness than with a teacher/learner relationship. This is different to other texts studied in this thesis and shows that discipleship, like leadership, is a term which holds a multiplicity of meanings.

[270] *FAOC Report*, p.77.
[271] *FAOC Report*, pp. 83-84.
[272] *FAOC Report*, p.49.
[273] *FAOC Report*, p.77.

In addition to the multiplicity of meanings of discipleship, I will use the following chapter to explore the relationship between discipleship and disciples, and in turn how these terms relate to leadership.

4.5.2 The Faith and Order Commission Report and Ordination

The FAOC report focuses on senior leadership and does not provide a lot of clarification on what ordination has to do with local church leadership. It does however provide helpful insights into ordained leadership through its history of the role of bishops.

The report spends a significant amount of time developing the biblical picture of the threefold order of overseers, presbyters and servers, and traces their development into what we now recognise as bishops, priests and deacons. This mirrors the work of Steven Croft which was explored in chapter two.[274] The FAOC report also mirrors the challenge of the SGPF report, writing that the ministries of the church are 'not the preserve of an ordained ministry or a leadership elite but are the responsibility of the whole church.'[275]It builds on this argument, stating that 'many of the tasks that we now associate with church leaders (worship, word and work) were, in the Pauline churches, regarded as the responsibility of the whole church.'[276]

Having established that leadership and ministry are to be shared across the church and not held by an elite ordained element, it also maintains that leadership is still a ministry which some are called to, and some are not. The report says that;

[274] S. Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions, Ordination and Leadership in the Local Church 2nd ed*. (Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008)
[275] *FAOC Report*, p.35.
[276] *FAOC Report,* p.42.

> all leaders are ministers, but not all ministers are leaders. Leadership is a gift of the Spirit, but not all those with spiritual gifts are leaders. Thus, in Paul's vision of the spiritually gifted church, 'leadership' is one ministry among many.[277]

It also identifies early acts of ordination in saying that

> the apostles ask the assembled body of believers to choose suitable candidates 'filled with the Spirit'. The apostles' laying on of hands, *with prayer*, is both a commissioning and a way of invoking the divine agency over this new ministry.[278]

These quotes describe an understanding of leadership as a gift that some Christians are called to minister, and a ministry which someone can be prayerfully blessed into in a similar manner to the sacrament of ordination described earlier in this chapter.

There is interesting comment on the how the three fold ordained roles developed through history, culminating with questions about what authority or power bishops are left with in the 19th century following a 'democratic, reforming tide that swept aside the old Anglican constitutional hegemony [and] also eroded traditional assumptions about social hierarchy.'[279] The FAOC report argues that Bishops had previously held significant power in society due to their political position but in order to yield any power now they are forced to 'argue, persuade and above all lead by example'.[280] This not only highlights the interplay between ordination and leadership once again, but it also demonstrates a history of functional leadership that has evolved into an influential form of leadership.

The history of the bishopric outlined in the report demonstrates how bishops operated in different eras, sometimes being central to society and sometimes trying to escape it. It also

[277] *FAOC Report*, p.41.
[278] *FAOC Report*, p.41.
[279] *FAOC Report*, p.68.
[280] *FAOC Report*, p.67.

explains that bishops operated differently in different expressions of church. For example Celtic missionary bishops were more evangelistically engaged and more mobile than the institutional bishops of the English establishment who would operate as members of the governing class and interact with royalty. This exemplifies situational leadership, once again demonstrating that ordained leadership is not a single panacean model.

Although this thesis is primarily focused on priests who are ministering as local incumbents, the FAOC senior leadership report's observations on bishops are relevant. The FAOC report contends that there is a right and proper place for ordained leadership in the church, however leadership is not limited to the ordained.

4.6 Summary, Questions and Themes Emerging from the Texts

In this chapter I have demonstrated a multiplicity of understandings of the term 'leadership' in normative texts of the Church of England. At times these different meanings can simply mean that different modes of leadership are required at different circumstances, but at times the understandings can appear to directly contradict each other.

There are three primary themes that have regularly appeared in the texts, and they leave three questions to explore in this thesis.

The first question is concerned with how much of leadership is a functional role and how much it is an influential one. The texts of both this chapter and of chapter two often talk about the task of leadership as being one of holding authority via a position that the leader finds themselves in and then using this position to influence people or organisations. This functional model of leadership is lauded as the primary model in many texts, particularly secular ones,

but receives criticisms in others. The alternative to functional leadership is what is labelled influential leadership.[281] Influential leadership is concerned with using relationship, culture and soft power to elicit change in those around the leader. The mode of leadership being used will affect the actions and understanding in any given situation, some examples are in the table that I have devised below.

Manifestations of Functional Leadership vs Influential leadership

		Functional leadership would utilize…	Influential leadership would utilize…
Collaborative leadership is to do with…		Structure	Culture
Heroic/individual leadership looks like…		Instruction	Inspiration
Tasks are completed via…		Management	Strategy
Power is manifested as…		Hard Power	Soft Power
Sacramental leadership is understood as…		Acts of worship	Ontology

The first question asks; Is the understanding of leadership in the church of England primarily one of functional leadership or influential leadership?

The second question which has been prevalent in the texts asks is this: What is the relationship between ordination and leadership? It is unclear whether someone who is ordained is automatically a leader or whether leadership comes with specific roles or tasks. It is also unclear whether an automatic link between ordination and leadership, if indeed one existed, is a positive thing or a negative one. There are both theological and pragmatic rationales for ordination to equate to leadership, however clericalism and controlling leadership models

[281] Jude Padfield provides a compelling argument that leadership is about influence, not position" and that "authority is rooted in character, faith, and vision rather than hierarchy in his text *Hopeful Influence, A Theology of Christian Leadership* (SCM Press, 2019)

have caused some to question this automatic connection. In this thesis I study the local church and how ordination relates to the leadership function of incumbency. There are however many different roles inhabited by priests. The findings of this thesis will, I believe, bring helpful reflections on leadership in a wider range of priestly ministry having reflected through a lens of leadership in parish incumbency.

The third question raised in this chapter is this: What is the relationship between discipleship and leadership? The two terms are used in a number of ways across normative texts of the Church of England, a notable discrepancy arising between a definition of discipleship which is to simply belong to a church and a definition which is more concerned with the intentional habit of being a learner, or of teaching others.

These questions will form the structure of the next chapter as I present the data from my empirical research. Although these questions create helpful starting points, I will also be looking at the gathered data to see if it brings in any new or fresh perspectives on leadership that are not covered in the core texts described in this chapter.

There are also two themes that have emerged in the texts. One theme is the idea of *task.* This is connected to the idea of ministry in the SGPF report. There are differing views presented by the texts concerning whether someone is a leader because of what they do, or whether it is simply something that they 'are' by merit of a calling or anointing. The second theme is the concept of *power,* which is threaded through all three of the questions that arise.

Bringing together the textual analysis of this chapter and the operant theology presented in the next chapter will create a fascinating conversation. I will analyse this conversation as I ask

the question ‘How is leadership theologically understood and practised across the Church of England?’

Chapter Five: Presentation of Research

5.1 Introduction

To investigate how leadership is understood and practised in the Church of England I have conducted research exploring the understanding of leadership held by local incumbents and their respective wardens. In this chapter I will analyse the data that I curated seeking to answer four questions that have arisen during the process. Each question will form a section of this chapter.

Initially the textual analysis of institutional texts of the Church of England created three questions that I was seeking to answer. The first question asked whether leadership in the church of England is primarily viewed through a functional understanding of leadership or an influential one. The second question asked what role ordination plays in leadership and the third question asked what the relationship is between leadership and discipleship. In this chapter a fourth question emerges as I analyse the data and identify recurring themes. This question is concerned with what the relationship is between management and leadership. I have used these questions to separate the data analysis into sections.

The first question that arose from the textual analysis is concerned with the difference between functional and influential understandings of leadership. Examples of both functional leadership and influential leadership are ascribed value by key texts of the Church of England including The Ordinal which identifies activities and qualities of priests that demonstrate

elements of both of them.[282] Examples that evidence these two forms of leadership are also found in the framework of qualities that priests in the Church of England are expected to inhabit[283] and in General Synod reports, notably the influential *Setting God's People Free* report which labels these two modes of leadership and reflects on them in some detail. What I am looking for in the interviewees' reflections is evidence of whether they speak in functional or influential terms or a mixture of the two when they talk about leadership.

The second question asked how the interviewees understood the relationship between ordination and leadership. For the purposes of this research I focus on ordination to the priesthood rather than ordination to the diaconate or the consecration of a bishop. There are three reasons for this: firstly because it is the ordination to priesthood that allows clergy to take on an incumbency, secondly because I had asked church wardens about the specific role of a priest and thirdly because when interviewees referenced ordination they generally meant the ordination to priesthood. This became clear in the interview data as participants made links between ordination and both eucharistic ministry and being licenced as an incumbent.

The relationship between leadership and ordination is an important theme in this research and so I included questions on it in the interviews. I asked incumbents whether the concept of leadership had any influence on them pursuing ordination and how aware they were of the contents of The Ordinal and the selection criteria[284] during their discernment process. I also asked the church wardens if they had any awareness of the contents of The Ordinal or the

[282] *The Ordinal,* https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/ministry/common-worship-ordination-0
[283] *Formation Framework for Ordained Priestly Ministry* https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/ime-1-priest-qualities-and-evidence-from-autumn-2022.pdf
[284] I referred to selection criteria rather than the qualities framework in the interviews because this was the system used to assess the interviewees discernment process.

selection criteria and if they saw a relationship between the role of a priest and the task of leading a church.

When assessing how interviewees perceived the relationship between leadership and ordination I will look to answer several questions. Firstly, I want to explore whether there is any connection between how the interviewees spoke of leadership and how they spoke of ordination. I want to assess whether the data demonstrates that participants spoke differently about the leadership of ordained and lay people and if they had different expectations of the two groups in the manner that had been suggested in the *Setting God's People Free* report. I will also assess whether lay and ordained people spoke about leadership in a similar or different manner.

The third question that I am seeking answers to is concerned with discipleship, I will ask what the role of discipleship is and what its relationship is to leadership. Discipleship is a term that occurs in many of the texts that were studied in chapter three and clearly has a relationship with leadership. The *Setting God's People Free* report says that

> The Lay Leadership Task Group was originally asked to review lay leadership …To do so, it became clear that they needed to broaden their focus to encompass lay discipleship. We [the Lay Leadership Task Group] maintain that the creation of a culture of forming disciples is the foundation and enabler of lay leadership. For this reason, the report maintains this broader focus – on lay discipleship – throughout.[285]

As explained in chapter four however, 'discipleship' is a term with a meaning that can change not just from text to text but within texts themselves. This is particularly noticeable in the

[285] *Setting God's People Free,* https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/gs-2056-setting-gods-people-free.pdf, p.6.

SGPF report, despite it assigning a full page to defining the two terms.[286] I will use this chapter to explore whether there is similar confusion regarding the meaning of discipleship held by those involved in leadership or whether there is a shared definition. I aim to discover whether the interviewees feel that leadership and discipleship are intertwined or whether they can be separated. Where participants feel that they are related, I will analyse the relationship between them.

The fourth question is concerned with the relationship between leadership and management. I began to write this chapter with three questions in mind but I added a fourth at this stage because what I heard from the interviewees affected the research. I had decided on the initial three questions prior to the interview process; therefore they provided a framework for thinking about leadership that influenced some of the questions used in the interviews and also some of my follow up questions. I did not want my research to be limited by the findings of the textual research however. I wanted to ensure that I was receptive to discoveries that were uniquely evident in the interview data. To facilitate this, I structured the interviews to create space for an interpretative phenomenological (IPA) approach as described in chapter three, to allow me to engage with the phenomenology of the interview candidates.[287] The advantage of utilising an interpretative phenomenological analysis as a method to analyse this data was that it allowed results to arise from the lived experience of the candidates and avoid merely looking to align the empirical research results with theories expounded from texts. This interpretative phenomenological approach also allowed participants to use the interview

[286] *SGPF* Report; p.7, p.17, p.21.
[287] See Appendix B for interview structure

process to theologically reflect on their lived experience and attach meanings to their responses.[288]

I will use the fourth section to investigate what people mean when they use the term 'management' in a leadership discussion because although management was not a term that had featured heavily in the textual research, it proved to be a prevalent theme in the interviews. I will look for what positive and negative connotations are held by the participants on the concept of management and investigate whether management is a central concept to the understandings of leadership given its prevalence in the interview responses.

In addition to the four questions, there are three themes that emerge. I will refer to these themes throughout this chapter and in later analysis because they are often relevant to more than one of the questions.

The first theme is the theme of *task.* I want to use the interview data to discover how peoples' understanding of leadership is linked to individual tasks and how much is concerned more with an ethos or culture that is created. I will also use this chapter to explore a theoretical parallel between the contrast between task-focussed leadership versus culture-focussed leadership and the contrast between functional leadership versus influential leadership.

A second understanding of task emerged during interviews as participants reflected on their experiences of either being led or of leading others. This second understanding was based on whether they assigned merit to a leader according to what they *did* or to who they *were.*

[288] J. A Smith and N. Osborn, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* in J. A. Smith, *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Methods* (Sage Publications, 2003) p.78.

There were some responses that linked good leadership with effectiveness of tasks completed whereas some were more interested in the character and leadership qualities of the leader, whether that was themselves or someone else. I will draw out more reflections on this as the chapter develops.

The second theme that I will consider will be that of *power.* There are several references to power and authority in the qualities framework for priests to inhabit and this theme surfaced regularly in the interviews.

Earlier chapters have demonstrated that different types of power exist, as do different ways in which power is wielded. Power is described by Gill as the ability to influence the thoughts and actions of another person or group of people.[289] It therefore has a natural interplay with people's understanding and experience of leadership. However it manifests in different ways in both individuals and institutions, many of which are described by the interview participants. I am grateful for the work of Gill[290] and the historic research of John French and Bertram Raven[291] explored earlier in identifying some of the different types of power and the ways in which they are used by leaders and managers. Although many forms of power have been documented, there are a few that I will be looking for in this data. Legitimate power is associated with authority and comes from a person's position. There are parallels between legitimate power and a functional understanding of leadership. Legitimate power has a shadow side however, which French and Raven label coercive power. This is where a leader or manager uses a position of authority to bring unpleasant outcomes for those who do not

[289] R. Gill, *Theory and Practice of Leadership* (Sage, 2006) p.245.
[290] Gill, *Theory and Practice of Leadership,* p.245.
[291] J. P French, and B. H Raven, *The Bases of Social Power* in D. Cartwright and A. F. Zander (eds) *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory, 3rd edition* (New York: Harper and Row, 2003)

comply with them. This coercive power also corresponds to some experiences of leadership that were shared by some interview participants. There is also a form of power that is labelled personal power. This is where a leader uses non-formal means such as charisma, charm or psychology to influence others. There is an interplay between functional and influential leadership alongside legitimate and personal power that I will look for signs of as I analyse the research data.

The third theme that I will trace through the different sections explores the merit that the interviewees placed on the concept of leadership itself. As with management, this theme became more prevalent in the empirical research having not featured much in the textual study. It became apparent that people had a complex relationship with the idea of leadership, this had been influenced by their past experiences and by what they had read or discussed with others.

All the participants were happy to discuss leadership, but they held varying opinions on whether leadership was a good or a bad thing in itself. Many of the texts that I analysed presented leadership, in both its forms, as an assumed aspect of church life and ordained ministry, including a minority of authors who expressed negative views of this fact. There is cynicism and criticism of leadership studies within the church that were referenced in chapter two, and I will see if and where this theme occurs in the data gathered from the interviews and analyse the findings.

After analysing the data, I will conclude this chapter with a summary of the key findings. In addressing the central question, *'How is leadership theologically understood and practised across the Church of England?'*, my aim is to identify whether particular theological

understandings of leadership are shared across the diverse churchmanships and traditions of the Church of England, and to discern what broader patterns of understanding emerge. These findings will then be brought into dialogue in Chapter Six, where I will explore points of confusion or conflict within the espoused and operant theological voices of practising incumbents, interpreted in the light of the discussions developed in Chapters Two and Three.

5.2 Interviews Overview

The data analysed in this chapter was derived from interviews with twenty candidates across the diocese of Sheffield. As explained more expansively in chapter three, I conducted this research within the diocese of Sheffield in part due to the practicality of access and established connections, but primarily due to the diversity that is demonstrated in the diocese. The Diocese of Sheffield provides a microcosm of the national picture of the Church of England.

I used a similar semi-structured interview plan for both incumbents and church wardens which meant that I used follow up questions reflexively, led by the participant. Influenced by Bryman who wrote that it 'is possible to collect observations in a manner that is not influenced by pre-existing theories,'[292] semi-structured interviews allowed the phenomenology of the participants to emerge. It was through utilizing this process that I uncovered the fourth question in this chapter.

My methodological intention was that using similar sets of questions for the incumbents and the church wardens[293] would lead respective wardens and incumbents to reflect on

[292] A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods,* (Oxford University Press, 2008) p.15.
[293] See Appendix B for the interview questions

corresponding events and situations. I anticipated that wardens and incumbents would highlight differing perspectives on corresponding events which would highlight differing value judgements on the leadership responses to these events. I will highlight later in this chapter that this was not the case and suggest an explanation for why this happened.

I found that the issues regarding researcher bias[294] and awareness of power dynamics that had been assessed in the methodology were largely allayed by the plans that I had put in place. Self-awareness and generosity were beneficial approaches and holding the interviews in spaces where the respondents felt safe was a productive approach.

The data that was gathered during the interview process was rich in theology and there was much to be reflected on, however extracting the theological reflections from the words and themes used by the participants was a process that required intentionality. Rowan Williams speaks of 'informal theology,' which is the theology held by lay people but not expressed using theological terms.[295] The task of this chapter is to interpret the 'informal theology' that has been expressed. Swinton and Mowat describe the process of extracting theology from raw data as one of 'theological exegesis',[296] and that situations described should be 'explored, understood, evaluated, critiqued and reconsidered'[297] in order to fully analyse them. This is what I do in the following sections.

The incumbents' interviews were considerably longer than the wardens', sometimes even doubling the word count, despite them answering the same number of questions. Despite this

[294] U. Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (Sage Publications, 2010) p.17.
[295] Williams, R., interviewed by MacMath, T., 'Interview: Rowan Williams, theologian, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge' *The Church Times* 18 March 2016,
[296] J. Swinton & H. Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (SCM, 2006), p.165.
[297] Swinton & Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, p.12.

the answers that the incumbents gave were in some ways more cohesive and considered than those of the wardens. There was no clear correlation between the use of academic language and the educational level of the respondents either with the incumbents or with the wardens. That is to say that church wardens that were educated to a doctoral level were still using simpler language and the incumbents that held undergraduate degrees used largely similar language to those that had taken part in further education. What became apparent very early in the process was that the church wardens were considerably less experienced at reflecting theologically. Therefore it took the wardens a while to express their answers to questions and sometimes they would process their answers externally, often meandering through reflections on the question before settling on what their thoughts or responses were. This suggested that the subject of the question was not something that they had considered before. Not only were the wardens' answers more diverse and less obviously reflected upon but they were also considerably shorter. In preparation for further theological reflection on these responses later in the chapter it is worth noting at this stage that the incumbents used much more theological or academic language in their answers.

Incumbent C answered a question with 'well it's just Philippians 2 right? Kenosis!' with a natural assumption that I would know what this meant, whilst Incumbent B responded to a question with 'My understanding of priestly ministry … well, let's just say that I prefer the term "Presbyterian ministry"'. Incumbent H told me that leadership is 'about a generous demarcation of some parameters that a community can form together'. The incumbents' interviews also elicited phrases such as 'misappropriation of power',[298] 'a paradigm shift in

[298] Incumbent A

our ecclesiology'[299] and 'a mixed economy of traditions'.[300] Phrases such as these demonstrate that either elements of theological reflection had already taken place on the given subjects or that the participants were able to theologically reflect intuitively and would naturally use theological language. This is not to say that there was more theological content in the incumbents' answers than in the wardens', merely that the extraction of the theology from the wardens' answers requires a little more work.

There are a number of factors that may have caused the differing styles of response between incumbents and wardens. All the incumbents had undertaken theological education, which for most included training in theological reflection. The character of their roles may also have contributed, since incumbents routinely engage in reflection and in conversations about leadership and theology as part of their ordinary work. Whatever the underlying reason, this meant that drawing out explicit theological analysis was more straightforward in the incumbents' responses, whereas it required more interpretive work in the wardens' responses.

5.3 Question 1, Is Leadership Primarily Functional or Influential?

The first question which arose from the textual data asked whether leadership was primarily viewed through a functional lens or an influential lens. A functional model of leadership focuses on a leader's agency and ability to make things happen by virtue of their position and the authority that they hold, whereas influential leadership occurs when the leader can make

[299] Incumbent G
[300] Incumbent D

things happen or can affect change by persuasion or ‘influence’ on those around them without any formal authority.

I spend a lot of time analysing participants' understanding of functional and influential leadership because it is foundational to an understanding of leadership itself. One of the first things that becomes evident however is that the distinction between the two is not as binary as many texts suggest. Although the participants did not tend to use the specific terms *functional* or *influential* there were several indications of many of them not only holding these understandings of leadership but also recognising the difference between the two.

After exploring the two forms of leadership I will first explore how respondents related them to the theme of ‘task’, which turns up in their descriptions of the role of the incumbent and of when they had observed good or bad leadership in incumbency. Following this I will explore functional and influential leadership in light of the theme of power by exploring how wardens saw their own roles. This structure works because responses regarding incumbency were largely concerned with tasks of leadership whereas the role of the warden demonstrates how power can exist in both the functional and the influential. Dividing this section between reflections on task and on power was formed by the responses that I received when I opened the interviews with a set of questions that invited incumbents and church wardens to reflect on how they would describe their roles and what they entailed, rather than to provide a job title or an office that they held. The answers to this were revealing because they highlighted what the participants valued about their role in the church or what areas they felt pressure to succeed in. I used the question ‘how would you describe your role?’ as I felt that this would allow the participants to reflect on what they thought their own role in the church was and

what they were trying to achieve with it rather than default to a formal job description or simply list what they were licensed to do.

5.3.1 Functional and Influential leadership in the Data

Functional leadership usually manifests as a 'top down' model of leadership, where the leader will exercise authority over those who are 'below' them in order to tell them what to do. Whilst there was plenty of evidence of a functional understanding of leadership in the interview data, there were rarely examples of its existing separately from influential leadership. The two were often intertwined. For example, Incumbent A said that when they first began training 'leadership was about being very directive. It was about setting out or enforcing the vision. It was about, in my mind, leadership is about moving people, encouraging people to give in to my agenda.' This quote demonstrates an observation of functional leadership in the use of the terms 'directive' and 'enforcing' whilst terms such as 'moving' or 'encouraging' could suggest a more persuasive, or influential model of leadership. This suggests a nuanced relationship between the two where both are demonstrated. In a similar manner, Incumbent F said 'I think one positive leadership step that I've taken here is to have that trust and have that authority to say "this is what we are going to do, this is the plan for this particular season, are you with me on this?"' and went on to say 'I feel like very much that there is a necessity for leadership, for decision making, and that authority that goes with it.' Again there are examples of functional leadership demonstrated here with the understanding that it is a leaders' role to set out a plan and to lean into their authority for decision making, but asking the question 'are you with me?' and looking for trust from those being led suggests that there is an influential dimension alongside the functional one. This demonstrates that

whilst functional and influential leadership models exist, they usually co-exist with one another with elements of cross-over demonstrated in a leaders' behaviour.

Warden A identified the functional element of leadership and was critical of it saying 'leadership can just end up being the person who's in charge and that's not good leadership. And obviously, there can be a danger that leadership just means you get to tell people what to do, because you're in charge.' Over-realised functional leadership featured regularly when participants shared negative experiences of leadership. Warden A said that 'If you try and micromanage and do a "command and control" thing (then) firstly, it disempowers people because everybody is waiting to be told what to do so it doesn't grow them.' The use of the phrase 'command and control' is particularly interesting because this phrase is repeatedly used by Roger Gill[301] to name a form of leadership that is outdated and it also echoes Simon Western's 'controller discourse'[302] and Laloux's criticisms of a 'command and authority'[303] mode of leadership. Warden H said 'you can't be a leader if you're just coming in with an authoritarian attitude, because that's power-seeking - that's a self-seeking or self-serving kind of motivation, so you've got to really check your motivation.'

Although these examples demonstrate predominantly functional understandings of leadership with elements of influential leadership operating alongside them, there were also examples of influential leadership being preferred, although these too would contain elements of both models. Church A appeared to be a church that had given a lot of thought to leadership as both its incumbent and warden held quite developed opinions. Having

[301] R. Gill, *The Theory and Practice of leadership 1st ed* (SAGE, 2006), p.28, p.317 for example
[302] S. Western, *Leadership: A Critical Text* (Sage, 2019).
[303] F. Laloux *Reinventing Organizations: A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness* (Nelson Parker, 2014) p.76.

observed a functional understanding of leadership being taught when they first started training, Incumbent A said that 'the way that I've been taught to understand it, is that leadership is primarily about influence.' Warden F spoke about how they believed that leadership is about influencing others through example, saying 'Leadership is often about personalities as well … and just showing how, in the way you act, how you would expect other people to behave, to consider them.' Incumbent C said that 'real leadership is actually more about embodying values and resting in them, than about pursuing agenda.'

The relationship demonstrated between understandings of functional and influential leadership is nuanced and the two functions can often both be modelled by the same leader. One pattern that emerges is that when people speak negatively of leadership or share bad leadership experiences they are more likely to be referring to functional leadership than to influential leadership. Similarly, even when interview respondents speak positively of functional leadership there are elements of influential leadership woven into those examples.

5.3.2 Functional/Influential Leadership and Task

When interview candidates reflected on incumbents' leadership the responses were heavily weighted towards reflections on the tasks that leadership involves. I am using the term task to describe an activity which has an endpoint, or something that can be completed or measured as opposed to more general, open-ended elements of ministry. It would be an oversimplification to suggest that functional leadership is purely concerned with completing shorter term tasks and influential leadership with culture because in practice the two modes of leadership intersect. Functional leadership will sometimes impact culture and influential

leadership can lead to short term tasks being completed. However, I identified a general level of correlation between functional leadership and task, and between influential leadership and culture in the interviewee's responses.

There were a range of responses when incumbents were asked what their role, or what the purpose of their role was. The way that the incumbents spoke of their role suggested that most of them felt that their primary responsibility was one of making a demonstrable change or completing measurable tasks rather than contributing to longer term culture changes. Interestingly there were no specific references to any of the tasks outlined in The Ordinal, either short-term tasks such as leading worship or taking occasional offices or long-term roles such as nurturing faith. However, at times these functions could be assumed to be part of some of the situations that were described.

Incumbent A said that 'As the leader, it's your job to move people from one place to another', whilst Incumbent C described the leader as 'The person who says "Right, we're doing this, who's with me?"' Incumbent B said; 'It [leadership]'s about giving direction, making things happen, helping people and the church to move forwards in ways that will be fruitful and lead to growth' which was the closest role description to a longer term culture influence but still contained the push to 'move forwards'.

When the incumbents were asked to think of examples of when they had demonstrated good leadership, again most of the participants responded with examples of tasks that they had achieved rather than cultures that they had created. Incumbent A remembered a time when they had ended a lot of ministries, showing some 'courageous decisions and[…] closed a lot of stuff down', Incumbent B was pleased with a toddler group that they had helped set up, and

Incumbent G felt that they had led well when they had merged two churches into a multi-parish benefice. Incumbents I and K felt that they had demonstrated leadership well when they had administrated well, with Incumbent B suggesting that when they started congregational email communications during the pandemic that they had led well and Incumbent K referencing when they had established a rota for preaching and leading. Both examples of the administrative leadership were in reference to solving problems efficiently and in a way that communicated well with people.

There was one example of culture-creation rather than specific task being used as an instance of good leadership. Incumbent H responded to the question of when they had led well with 'one way that I do that is by trying to shape culture' and went on to explain that they could deem this successful because members of the team were making ministry decisions that reflected the culture that Incumbent H was trying to establish.

When Incumbent F was asked the same question, they responded with 'One of the main leadership roles I see [I've done well with] is showing interest and concern in people and gaining trust in order to exercise authority'. This was within the context of wanting to implement change in the church. This demonstrates the complexity of relationship between influential leadership and functional leadership. For Incumbent F, when they wanted to make changes and needed to exert functional authority in the church, they had to first demonstrate influential leadership by gaining trust through demonstrating interest and concern. For Incumbent F, it appeared that the purpose of creating the culture of trust was to be able to exercise authority in order to complete the task of implementing the changes they felt were needed.

Some of the roles of priestly ministry described in The Ordinal are demonstrably concerned with singular tasks with a beginning and an end, such as leading an act of worship or performing a baptism. Some of the tasks however could be described as ongoing, such as being 'a pattern and example to Christ's people'[304] or 'nurturing others in their faith.'[305] Of course there may be singular events where incumbents feel that they have contributed to these roles but they are not tasks that can be ticked off a list or considered 'completed'. This demonstrates that The Ordinal gives examples of individual tasks and of ongoing roles that are both expectations of priests. These will involve both functional and influential modes of leadership and I anticipated a link between functional leadership and task, and between influential leadership and culture in the interview responses, as demonstrated by incumbent C earlier in this chapter stating that the task of leadership should prioritise embodying values over pursuing agenda.

The picture that emerges is that when incumbents were asked to describe what they felt their role was, or when they had demonstrated good leadership, the majority of them spoke about shorter term tasks that had been achieved or ministries that had grown, with only one of them speaking about culture that had been improved. One incumbent spoke of gaining trust as a route to being able to exert more authority. This default to reflecting on task demonstrated by the incumbents is striking considering the work on functional leadership in earlier chapters. As stated earlier, it is however an oversimplification to limit functional leadership to just being concerned with implementing short term tasks. In any given task that requires leadership, there will be elements of influential leadership and functional leadership involved. Within all

[304] *The Ordinal*, p.15.
[305] *The Ordinal*

examples of church leaders being pleased with tasks that have been implemented they will have influenced the people that they are leading. However, there is an implicit link between the functional mentality of a leader implementing something with a defined end or goal, or making others implement that agenda, and a leader investing in, or *influencing*, those around them to allow a church or organisation to develop organically and culturally in an intentional direction but without a defined end point.

One feature of the interview responses is that whilst incumbents' default answers for when they had demonstrated good leadership were heavily weighted towards times when they had made something measurable happen, wardens' positive examples of leadership were noticeably more concerned with how incumbents had made the congregation feel. Examples of this include Warden B saying that 'Rev. B is an exceptional leader - he does take us with him' and Warden F's positive example was 'Even when [they] want to introduce new things, they respect the heritage from where we've come from'.

When wardens reflected on incumbents' leadership there were identifiable trends when it came to assigning value to particular leadership traits or examples of good leadership. In some ways the perspective on when incumbents had demonstrated good leadership were more straightforward when coming from the wardens because when incumbents reflected on themselves, they were often naturally self-effacing and were reticent to speak well of themselves. Garnering positive self-reflection took some coaxing from them whereas the wardens were quicker to share positive examples of how the incumbents had led. The recurring themes in the wardens' perspective on their incumbents' leadership when asked about positive examples is how the incumbents are perceived to make the church feel, or

whether the church as a whole are 'on board' with them. This demonstrates ascribing positive value to the influential mode of leadership and also suggests that incumbents can wield a degree of power as well as authority. Warden A appreciated the vulnerability demonstrated by their incumbent, saying 'they are very open and seek to be collaborative, and is not unwilling to be vulnerable, that's their strength as a leader'. When asked for negative experiences of leadership the wardens again prioritised how the congregation felt rather than what was being done. Warden I said, 'I mean, [it was] a very successful, on the face of it, church. But the vicar was mostly making people unhappy, by the way he did things on a regular basis' and Warden F felt that the worst example of leadership was when the incumbent 'lacked empathy for the congregation'.

Although the wardens' positive reflections on leadership are indicative of prioritising influential leadership, when asked about negative experiences of incumbents' leadership many wardens drew on examples of controlling, authoritative behaviours. Abuse of power and control were regularly referred to with Warden A saying 'If you do a command and control thing then it just disempowers people'; Warden F said that their previous incumbent had simply been too driven by their own agenda, Warden I described the negative impact of their incumbent 'being too dominant' and Warden H said that their criticism of 'vicar practices is when it becomes a power-seeking "inner circle," just telling everyone else what to do'.

One significant discrepancy between the textual descriptions of leadership and the interview data is that there are examples given in texts suggesting that one of the most common complaints that congregations have about incumbents is that they change too much, that they change things too quickly, or that they do not give enough consideration to congregations'

opinions.[306] This however is not represented in the interview data. Although there were three references to the importance of keeping the congregation 'on board' and several more with maintaining congregational unity, there were no examples given by the wardens of negative attitudes towards change in and of itself, regardless of speed or scale. This again demonstrates that the relationship between leadership and implementing tasks is not a straightforward one because there is an anecdotal idea that Anglican congregations are generally resistant to change[307] and that this causes conflict because implementing change in a church is an assumed factor of church leadership.[308] John Wimber wrote that the church leaders' primary role was that of change management[309] and this teaching has heavily influenced large sections of the Church of England; this Wimber reference is regularly quoted in leadership training sessions in the diocese of Sheffield.[310] However the interview data suggests that the traditional view of a priest trying to implement or enforce change on a congregation that are resistant to it is not the reality of the situations that current incumbents are facing.

5.3.3 Functional/Influential Leadership and Power

The theme of power (and its interplay with agency and authority) becomes more prevalent in the wardens' responses to questions concerning their own roles and their understanding concerning leadership than it was in the incumbents' responses. This is because the relationship between power and authority is demonstrated by the way in which they are

[306] Parkinson, *Understanding Leadership,* p.219. is one example amongst many of this.
[307] M. Percy, *The Future Shapes of Anglicanism*, (Routledge, 2017) p.78
[308] Parkinson, *Understanding,* p.219.
[309] J. Weaver., *Technology, Change and the Evangelical Church* (McFarland, 2020) p.71.
[310] Sheffield Diocese ministerial training programme, *Leading well conference* 2021 and 2022

wielded by church wardens. It therefore becomes important at this stage to investigate how the role of church warden is perceived by interview participants.

When asked about their roles, the responses from the wardens were much more varied than those elicited from incumbents and provided fascinating insights into how power, authority and holding office can interrelate within held concepts of leadership.

In a parish context, a position of functional authority is generally a formal one involving a licensing. Both wardens and incumbents are licensed to their role and so both hold a form of functional leadership and therefore, in theory, power. Roger Gill distinguishes the two by saying that authority refers to being in a position to give commands but power refers to the ability to influence others and make changes.[311] Therefore, in understanding the interplay between the roles of wardens and incumbents I am looking to see where the power lies as well as the authority.

There were a wide range of ways that the wardens functioned in their roles and how they saw themselves and the power dynamics between themselves and their incumbents. Some wardens saw themselves as leaders[312] but many of them did not. Warden D commented 'I think, yeah, I think church warden, this is a position of leadership, it's a position of support and enabling', [313] which suggests that 'support' and 'enabling' were viewed as elements of leadership. There were other examples of wardens that saw themselves in leadership roles; Warden H described the role of the warden as 'being there for the people as a sort of overseer'

[311] R. Gill, *Theory and Practice of Leadership,* (Sage, 2006) p.245.
[312] Warden H used the term 'overseer'
[313] Warden C

and Warden F reflected that they had 'taken on the role of the vicar in the vacancy [interregnum]'.

As well as the wardens that saw themselves in leadership roles, there were some who saw their roles as primarily practical, with Warden B saying 'it's a very physical role, because we're responsible for setting the church up', Warden G saying that their responsibility is the 'fabrics and contents of the church' and Warden J saying that their job was a 'meet and greet for the masses' whilst their assistant warden's job was to do 'all the legal stuff, you know … send the forms to the diocese and safeguarding'. There were some who felt that their role was to act as a bridge between the incumbent, the PCC and the congregation.[314] There also emerged a significant theme of the warden holding a pastoral role for the church, sometimes this was to pastor the congregation, sometimes to pastor the incumbent and sometimes both. Warden C said;

> I do find with the incumbent, well, you know, it [Church warden] seems to be a position being of a person that [incumbent C] can talk to almost like, you know, if he just wants to let off steam, he can talk to me in the other church. And, you know, if he's trying to make a decision, you know, we'll make a decision together.[315]

They went on to say 'It's sort of also just trying to keep the parishioners happy and listening to them and knowing what their concerns are.' Warden H described their role as 'being there pastorally for people and being, if you like, a retainer for the peace'. Warden J was more explicit, describing themselves as 'an intermediary between the PCC, the incumbent and the congregation.' As explained in chapter three, there is an important relationship between pastoring, or what is described as shepherding in some Church of England texts,[316] and

[314] Warden B, Warden J, Warden F
[315] Warden C
[316] See *The Ordinal* and *The Qualities Framework*.

leadership. Pastoral ministry is a key element of leadership and is a designated part of ordained ministry, it is therefore interesting that this is one element of leadership that is shared with church wardens.

Whilst some wardens expressed a belief that their role entails leadership and some spoke of leadership roles that they held whilst not recognising them as such, there were also some who were very clear that their role did not involve any leadership; Warden A said 'You have a vicar to lead you, to set vision, that's not the wardens' job, our job is the operational detail' and Warden G said a very similar phrase.

It is fair to assume that many members of church congregations would hold an understanding that their wardens are in leadership positions in the church due to the formal nature of the role. Church wardens are elected and licensed and are the representatives between the bishop and the parish. An additional dynamic is that during an interregnum, church wardens will take on many of the tasks that are normally the domain of an incumbent. When church wardens are licenced, the liturgy of the service describes the role as follows:

> The Church wardens are the Bishop's lay officers in the parish, responsible directly to him for the life and work of the Church within the community. They are admitted to their office by the Archdeacon (on behalf of the Bishop) to whom they are particularly responsible for the care of the church building, its fabric, and its contents. The Church wardens are called to cooperate with the incumbent and the Parochial Church Council in the pastoral, evangelistic, financial and worshipping life of the parish church.[317]

[317] Archdeacon's visitation service, Sheffield Cathedral, June 21st 2023

There is no mention of leadership in this role description, nor is the word mentioned at any other point in the service, however there are tasks and responsibilities described here which align with understandings of leadership that have been explored in this thesis.

There are several examples in the interview texts that demonstrate members of church congregations viewing their church wardens as leaders in that community. Warden D said 'Well they (the church) look to me if they want something to happen', and Warden H said 'I've got to be there pastorally as I'm the retainer of the peace!'. We now have church wardens who do not see themselves as holding a position of leadership, and who hold licences that describe formal roles without attributing functional leadership to them, yet are seen as leaders by members of their congregation[318] due to the power that they hold, even if they do not have the authority of incumbents. Wardens have agency in their congregations due to their pastoral (shepherding) role, their support and relationship with incumbents, the responsibilities that they assume in the absence of an incumbent, their bishop's licence and even their relational capital held within the congregation.

In this section we have seen examples of functional leadership, sometimes described as authoritative leadership, which wardens have perceived to have had a detrimental impact on their churches and congregations. These negative examples of functional leadership are important because throughout the interviews there are no instances of functional leadership being used by a warden as a positive example of leadership. Of course, in practice, leadership would never be entirely functional or influential; there will be elements of both at play in any given situation. It appears to be the case that in some examples of controlling leadership the

[318] Warden G, Warden F

incumbents have had the power to *influence* their congregations in a negative way and create negative culture through the use of functional leadership. This could be assessed as a negative example of influential leadership if we were to stretch the meaning of the term. It is clear however that when wardens have experienced controlling behaviour by incumbents that utilise their authority unhelpfully, they are left with a negative view of what we would define as functional leadership. Of course, this is not to say that all influential leadership is good and all functional leadership is bad, nor is it saying that wardens' have never experienced good examples of functional leadership or bad examples of influential leadership, it is merely representing the evidence of the data, that most of the wardens' positive examples of leadership would be broadly defined as influential and most of their negative examples would be broadly defined as functional.

This elicits questions of power dynamics and leadership responsibility in the working relationship between incumbents and wardens. Incumbents have an authority that is recognised by themselves and by their respective wardens and they usually have the power and the agency to exercise leadership in the manner that they choose. Thay also usually hold the power to be able to exert influence on others either due to this authority or due to the trust of others. Wardens generally do not feel that they hold the same authority as incumbents, but they still hold power within their churches. The power that wardens hold is a much softer power than that of incumbents as the wardens have less functional authority. This could be seen as an example of the difference between legitimate power and personal power.

There is now a clear pattern established that negative experiences of leadership are generally perceived to manifest in what we now identify as functional modes of leadership, although positive elements of functional leadership are also identified. When incumbents reflect on their own successes or failures as a leader they usually default to assessing tasks that they have achieved and tasks have an intrinsic link to functional leadership. Wardens appear to have different priorities and when asked to reflect on the leadership of their incumbents they tend to view them through an influential one.

In this section I have demonstrated that both functional and influential leadership are demonstrated by parish incumbents. Although neither the incumbents nor the wardens used the terms 'functional' or 'influential' when describing leadership they both recognised elements of them in their understandings of leadership. Both sets of interview answers recognised the difference between using a position of authority to implement plans versus using softer relational power to influence others. The power that a leader wields to influence their congregation, whether influentially or functionally, is recognised by all the interviewees, who all ascribed success or failure of the church to the leadership of the incumbents. Although it is neither explicit nor comprehensive, there is in intrinsic link made between the understanding of incumbents' roles and the 'tasks' of leadership. The roles of wardens have a much more nuanced relationship with leadership, and they are primarily more concerned with the culture of the church, or how people 'feel' than what tasks are being completed.

5.4 Question 2, Ordained to Lead?

Having explored the ordination liturgy and the qualities and criteria that potential ordinands are assessed on, the question of how ordination relates to leadership has become central to this thesis. In the interview plans, there were two questions towards the end of the interviews that were intended to allow candidates to explore this theme. However, the interviewees instinctively spent a lot of time referencing it before we reached those questions.

For many candidates, there was an intuitive link made between ordination and leadership which was hard for them to articulate. There were several reflections that linked leadership to ordination however when I asked a follow up question the link would become more complex. Warden G responded 'I suppose you could turn around and say, you could be a small group leader, but then for me that's just facilitating. But when I look at a member of the clergy, that's someone that is managing – a lot of clergy don't have no leadership experience and that's obvious' and Warden B was even more specific, after initially stating that being a vicar was a leadership role, they followed with 'there is a lot of difference between being a leader and being a priest. The priest is … it's an entirely different role to being the leader of the church'.

Moments of clarity emerged whilst candidates wrestled with a crossover between priestly ministry and leadership and recognised that the roles do converge. Incumbent A said

> For me, a priest is a leader, but for some of my catholic brothers this was really difficult, I remember one of them saying "I'm a priest, I'm not a leader" whereas for me I just wanted to say "But you're obviously a leader if you're a priest!"[319]

[319] Incumbent A

Warden J also reflected on the convergence of the roles, saying "I think the parish priest is more like a leader in the Gospel, and the teachings of the bible, But I think it overlaps, it overlaps with leadership skills, you know?' Incumbent F was more explicit; 'obviously I do see leadership as an important part of priestly ministry … I think that in being a priest you have been given a role of authority, whether you like it or not', whereas Incumbent H took a while to believe it whilst training but now says that 'the image of both leadership and priesthood are definitely where I've come to land'. Incumbent J lamented that the leadership role that priests can hold in the community was being lost: 'what's sad is how few priests see themselves as community leaders'.

A point that was explored in chapter three was also identified by several of the candidates at interview. This was the contention concerning how much leadership was displayed in sacramental ministry, or how much sacramental ministry was an example of leadership. The language of The Ordinal suggests that sacramental ministry is a significant leadership role of incumbency, but there was a variety of interpretations of this relationship. Incumbent J labelled themselves an anglo-catholic, and so their response could have been anticipated: 'leadership is centred around the idea of being an *alter Christus*, that the priest takes the place of Christ amongst the community that he serves'. Incumbent A and Warden A belong to a large charismatic evangelical church, and both found it interesting to reflect on the relationship between leadership, ordination and the significance of sacramental ministry. They both initially separated ordained ministry and leadership. Incumbent A said

> as I went for ordination, as I went to BAP (the Bishop's Advisory Panel) and things like that, it became very clear to me that the in the Anglican Church, the understanding of priesthood and the understanding of leadership were seen as slightly incongruous. That seems to have shifted since because at that time it

> was 2005 and things have shifted now. But it seemed in those days that that was complicated. It's a complicated relationship between those two understandings with one being very much about serving, and one less so.[320]

Warden A also answered;

> for me, a priest is a formal role with authority, you have been ordained and then you've been appointed. You are the priest but you know, lots of people can be church leaders, I was a church leader without any of that.[321]

On further reflection though, both Incumbent A and Warden A began to contradict their initial opinions and suggest that there is an amount of leadership involved in sacramental ministry. Warden A said that they did not believe that the eucharist could simply be administered by anyone, saying; 'it would be inappropriate to have somebody … you know a six-year-old or something doing communion' and when asked why not they answered because it had to be led in a 'genuine and reflective way'. They did go on to say that people ministering communion should be leaders in the church but that they did not think that they should necessarily be ordained. Warden C answered with a similar journey, initially doubting the leadership role of sacramental ministry but then talking themselves round;

> Communion doesn't feel like leadership, it just feels like you're reading from a script and you're doing a certain set of functions. But also, I think there's much more to it than that, you know, you are … this is an important part of celebrating our identity as Christians and so surely the person who leads that, well that is a leader actually.[322]

One relationship between ordination and leadership which was referenced by a few of the candidates and articulated well by Incumbent C is the way that a parish priest holds a leadership role in the way that they represent the gathered community.

> For me, priestliness derives from the priesthood of all believers, and in the Anglican context, that derives from the fact that we are imported to a

[320] Incumbent A
[321] Warden A
[322] Warden C

> presidential office. So we preside at the table. And so just like, the ideal being, just like a bishop embodies the unity of the church, in that moment, my presiding [at the eucharist] is a reflection of my holding together this community and therefore I am embodying the priestliness of the entire body, if it makes sense. So it [their role] is a representational point of view. And therefore, so therefore, I'm expressing the agency of the collective in this moment. That makes sense? Yeah. And there are times when I, there are other types of, do that. So it's not just communion, that's an obvious example. But there are times when I act on behalf of the church, I'm exercising that priestly role and that is being a leader.[323]

The concept of the eucharistic table as a unifying element of a community implicitly suggests that the person ministering that sacrament would hold a form of leadership as the head, or leader of this act. The Ordinal combines 'presiding at the Lord's table' and 'leading people in worship' in one sentence and this is indicative of the relationship between the two.[324] As explored earlier, one of the vows that ordinands make when they are ordained priest is that they will 'faithfully minister the doctrine and sacraments of Christ as the Church of England has received them, so that people will[...] flourish in the faith'.[325]

The *Setting God's People Free* report refers to clergy holding 'sacramental authority'[326] which can sometimes be conflated with ecclesial power, and it identifies that this power, when poorly handled, can lead to an authoritarian clericalism imposed by clergy. The interviews yielded several examples where clergy leadership styles had disempowered and hurt members of the laity and so there was some baggage being carried by both clergy and wardens when they reflected on the relationship between leadership and ordination.

[323] Incumbent C
[324] *The Ordinal*
[325] *The Ordinal*
[326] *SGPF Report*, p.21.

In addition to sacramental leadership, another form of leadership arose when discussing ordination, that of example-setting. What arose from the data was a consistent belief that those that are ordained should be living a life that is a positive example of the Christian faith and that models to others how to grow in their own relationship with God. This is stated in The Ordinal and echoes the 'influential' understanding of leadership. Both incumbents and wardens identified a particular responsibility to lead by example that came with ordination. When asked what it meant to be a leader, Incumbent J replied,

> But there is that idea that, you know, we [priests] take Calvary, and place it, as a reality, in our parish and in our churches and upon our altars and so that connection, that deep and abiding connection. Actually representing of that, is at the centre of our understanding of leadership both at the altar, but also then with what we go out to do, both in the world with the non-churched community, but also with the church family, that we're sent to be amongst them, to guide them and to lead, that sort of idea of incarnational ministry that we become one.[327]

One candidate, Warden I, became agitated when I asked about the roles of priesthood and leadership being conflated, they responded animatedly with;

> Well I think they [leadership and priesthood] should be… it should be different. Again, because, you know, a leader could be, you know, someone that's representing, not saying it is, but could be representing more modern culture. Whereas a priest with their training might not be trained in a different way to see the longer, you know and give, give guidance in, in a longer run, you know?[328]

This response was in the context of leadership being perceived as a modern idea, one that had no place in the church. There is a held understanding here that leadership is a modern idea but that priestly ordination is ancient and therefore more valid. There is also a suggestion within the quote that general leadership is concerned with short term impact whereas priestly

[327] Incumbent J
[328] Warden I

ministry is more concerned with the long term. This takes on more meaning when held in the light of the earlier section in this chapter that suggests that functional leadership has a close relationship with short term tasks. Warden G also became animated when asked about where leadership and priestly ministry cross over. They excitedly recalled a Godly Play session where they had been putting different characters in a model church and they had felt challenged because a child had put a lay person behind the altar. This led to quite a monologue culminating with;

> they turned around and said, 'Well, does it does it need to be an ordained person which spreads the word of the Lord?' anybody can do with that and so I suppose that's, that's one drum I've been banging with [Incumbent G] over late, you know, and I go back to our SDF funding. We've got no lay ministers and come two and half years' time when potentially our associates have gone and there's only [Incumbent G] again. You know, he can't be in lots of places all at once. So, for me, we need to start looking at our lay ministers if that's the case, or our readers or anything like that, so no, a leader could be anybody within the church which is leading, Yes![329]

The significance here is that leadership is currently held by the parish clergy but this warden is keen that leadership is shared with the laity, not least because they are expecting clergy numbers to be reduced soon and sharing leadership with the laity is a pragmatic ministerial solution. There is also an important reference here where the warden identifies the task needing to be completed is to 'spread the word of the lord'. This could refer to holding worship services or sacramental ministry but in the interview I got the sense that they were referring to evangelism and outreach.

Elements of the clericalism and power struggles outlined in the *Setting God's People Free* report surfaced now and again in the interviews. Quotes referencing unhealthy power

[329] Warden G

dynamics and clericalism included, but were not limited to, 'he was so defensive and angry that it kind of left me with a feeling that challenging the vicar was a bad idea. And I think that's poor leadership,'[330] 'It was just a bit command and control and I think that that wasn't a very healthy way,'[331] 'practically it would look like controlling behaviours, where you are finding ways to manipulate, to coerce people into doing what you want to do. Whether that be simple stuff, or more complex ways, using a variety of different ways, which probably did not create psychological safety, but actually are harmful for people. That's what I've witnessed'[332] and 'the vicar was mostly making people unhappy, by the way he did things on a regular basis, you know, being too dominant, putting it politely. And yeah, that's obviously made, you know, his team unhappy.'[333] All of these quotes were referencing historic relationships with clergy rather than current incumbents. There were a number of references to the sacramental authority held by priests, but these were not all perceived to be negative.

In addition to sacramental leadership and example-setting leadership, a third element of ordained leadership was articulated, this third element surrounded an awareness of positional power that came with being the ordained person in a church. When asked about their reasons for pursuing ordination, none of the incumbents mentioned sacramental ministry, which I found surprising, but most of them recognised that clergy had power to institute change in the church and this was a reason for getting ordained. Incumbent H described their journey to ordination as 'when I was 15, and first thinking that I might want to get ordained it was because I was sitting in church services thinking, "I think I would do it like that" and "why don't

[330] Incumbent I
[331] Warden A
[332] Incumbent A
[333] Warden I

they do it like this?" and 'if I wanted to communicate with people in a way that was meaningful, I think I would start here', and Incumbent D saying

> I was in that church with that vicar. I was so angry. I was married at the time and my husband said, "you need to get involved, you know, you need to be ordained." And I said, "I don't like the church enough to be ordained." He said, "if you want to see change in a church, that's the way you'll see it." And my dad was a vicar, his dad was a vicar, we both knew the joys and sorrows of being clergy. But I absolutely intentionally went forward because I thought the church needed to look different. So, I think that's leadership.[334]

There were several similar responses in the data, which is interesting because it indicates that ordination is perceived as a route to gaining influence, and perhaps power, in the church. Although none of the incumbents explicitly discussed the power that they hold through being ordained, knowledge of this is evidenced by the rationale of pursuing ordination due to the belief that ordination was the route to holding the power to change things. This was rooted in a belief that the incumbents that they had experienced in the past had held power or agency, but had not wielded it correctly. The reasons given for pursuing ordination were not always to do with the pursuit of power, one incumbent gave a very thoughtful answer to the question, saying;

> I'd say that the influence of positive leadership in my life had a major impact on coming to that decision [pursuing ordination]. Having good role models, good leaders of faith. Obviously, I do see leadership as an important part of priestly ministry. It's often ploughing a lonely path that you hope people might follow or will come alongside on that journey. I often feel that it's about taking difficult decisions, I feel that's an important part of priestly ministry. And the other thing that comes to mind is the whole idea of preaching the Word in and out of season, I see that as that as being a major part in the ordination service, which has reference to leadership actually.[335]

[334] Incumbent D
[335] Incumbent F

This is the kind of answer which I was expecting to this question, one that speaks of leadership and priestly ministry as being a positive example that preaches and serves following a positive role model. This answer was the exception, however, not the rule.

This section has demonstrated that there is both an explicit and an implicit link between ordination and leadership, but also between ordination and power. The interview responses exhibit an understanding and at times even a manifestation of the sacramental authority, or clerical authority which is described by the texts studied in chapter four. This sacramental authority is recognised, although not necessarily articulated as such, by both clergy and laity and there are both positive and negative viewpoints of it. The fact that power can be associated with ordained ministry is referenced in the FAOC senior leadership report which warns that

> They [church leaders] are not "above" others, even if their calling often requires them (literally and metaphorically) to stand up in front of others. Any of our language and practices that embed attitudes of superiority need to be resisted, as do ways of living that tend to separate those with leadership responsibilities from the shared experience of the 'ordinary' church.[336]

This tension between perceived power, manifested power, and even desired power, can lead to an association between ordination and control, which can eventually manifest as clericalism.

Ordained ministers can hold both legitimate power and personal power, and there is an undefined crossover between them. This makes the relationship between incumbents and those that they lead vulnerable to complicated power dynamics. There was a universal recognition of the damage that can be done by leaders who are seeking too much power and

[336] *FAOC report* p.77.

control. Warden H said 'you can't be a leader if you're just coming in with an authoritarian attitude, because that's power-seeking – that's a self-seeking or self-serving kind of motivation; you've really got to check your motivation'. This quote was representative of a number of responses in which people felt that they had been hurt or unsupported by controlling leaders who had used their position of authority in a negative way. These experiences were shared by both wardens and by incumbents who had experienced detrimental relationships with training incumbents or previous leaders. When asked about negative experiences of leadership, Rev. A said

> So I think practically it would look like controlling behaviours, where you are finding ways to manipulate, to coerce people into doing what you want to do. Whether that be simple stuff, or more complex ways, using a variety of different ways, which probably did not create psychological safety, but actually are harmful for people. That's what I've witnessed.[337]

Experiences of church members feeling controlled by leaders were expressed emotionally during the interviews and came across as a painful lived experience for those who shared about it. This must be held in the light of those incumbents who expressed that they felt called to ordination, in part, because they wanted to have some control over how church was run and what did or did not happen in church. The word 'agency' appeared frequently in the interviews when people reflected on what leadership was, they expressed that it is both held by leaders but it is also a leaders' role to give agency and to empower others. When people felt that their agency was taken away it was seen as a negative model of leadership and one which was too frequently demonstrated by incumbents both past and present and is seen to be empowered by ordination. The conflation of authority and priesthood was explained well by Incumbent F who said

[337] Incumbent A

> I think in being a priest, you have been given a role of authority, whether you like it or not. Therefore, naturally, there is a leadership role within that because people, for a start people look to you, people trust you, people expect you to make decisions, whether they might agree with them or not. So I think leadership is a major aspect [of ordained ministry].[338]

There is a further power dynamic which I do not have enough space to explore here, in the hierarchical relationship between church leadership and episcopal oversight. Both incumbents and wardens referenced their relationships with their bishops and the pressure that they feel from them. The Ordinal states that priests 'share with the bishop, the oversight of the church'[339] and that 'with the bishop they are to sustain the community of the faithful'.[340] This idea that episcopal authority is shared with the priest can at its worst perpetuate an unhelpful power dynamic as it manifests a 'top down' functional pyramid of leadership which can leave the laity feeling disempowered.

I have identified in this section that interview respondents described a perceived link between ordination and leadership that manifests in a number of different ways. Priests 'lead' acts of worship including sacramental worship such as communion. In doing so they are 'leading' people into the presence of God via the flow of the service but for some people they are also 'leading' by being a representation of Christ as they stand at the altar. Priests are also expected to lead by example in their general day to day life; this is stated in The Ordinal but is also espoused by members of their congregations. The third way that priests lead is in the formal oversight of their parish, in implementing change and in overseeing the direction and culture of the church that they are licensed to lead. These three elements of leadership create a complicated power dynamic between priests and congregation with both legitimate and

[338] Incumbent F
[339] *The Ordinal*
[340] *The Ordinal*

personal power becoming intertwined. With the wrong approach or even unintentional human error it is possible for this power to be abused and for people to be hurt and feel unsafe. There are also however, positive understandings and experiences of ordained leadership in sacramental, example-setting and in positions of legitimate power.

5.5 Question 3, Discipleship or Leadership?

The third question concerning leadership that arose in the textual study asks how the interplay between discipleship and leadership works. The texts that were studied in earlier chapters made regular references to the importance of discipleship and its relationship to leadership however the meaning of the term was relatively fluid. The term 'discipleship' covers both the concept of being a disciple and the act of making disciples, or being discipled.

When incumbents were asked about good models of leadership that they had observed, discipleship was a term that often appeared. They regularly talked about times when they had been discipled and what they meant by this was that they have been mentored or trained well by another leader.

The Faith and Order Commission's report on leadership describes discipleship as 'God's work in drawing us deeper into holiness'[341] whilst the *Setting God's People Free* report describes it by saying that 'a disciple is someone who is learning the way of Jesus in their context at this moment. Discipleship is the process by which this happens.'[342]

[341] *FAOC Report* p.78.
[342] *SGPF* Report, p.7.

Both of these reports are primarily concerned with leadership in the sections quoted here but recognise the importance of discipleship in relationship to leadership and the necessity to define the term. Following its definition of discipleship, The SGPF Report goes on to describe leadership as a 'sub-set of the broader theme of discipleship.'[343] This description is difficult to understand in the context of the report however because having suggested that there are other elements of discipleship that are not leadership, it does not give any examples of these.

The SGPF report identifies some manifestations of leadership and describes these whilst recognising that there are broader descriptions elsewhere. Whilst the distinction between discipleship and leadership is useful and sets up the report well, the only examples of discipleship that the report references from that point onwards are also examples of leadership, and without examples of discipleship that are not leadership it is easy for the two terms to continue being confused

When used in the New Testament, the word 'disciple' is *mathetes* which is traditionally translated as 'learner', and one understanding of discipleship is concerned with causing other Christians to grow or *learn* in their faith. There is some interplay to be considered between the terms disciple, discipling and discipleship. In chapter six I will theologically reflect on different understandings of the term discipleship but at this stage I will present it as it is espoused in the interview data. Many of the respondents used the word 'discipleship', and as I analysed the data I contacted each of them with a follow up question of 'how would you define the term discipleship?'. The data yielded from this question presented an almost universal understanding of the term. The interview respondents all seemed to use the term

[343] *SGPF Report*, p.8.

discipleship to reference the act of 'discipling' or being 'discipled', an element of discipleship which may also be called something like mentoring, teaching or apprenticeship. The interview results demonstrated a conflation of the terms discipleship and discipling amongst many of those in leadership positions, who intuitively link the terms with *mathetes* and consequently look to create discipling relationships which involve teaching and learning.

A conflation of disciple, discipling and discipleship is not universally accepted though. Despite serving on the team that produced the *Setting God's People Free* report, Bishop Philip North wrote that using the word disciple as a verb causes his skin to crawl,[344] and Martin Percy is also critical of contemporary understandings of discipleship, describing discipleship itself as a modern concept, designed to service people's desires for meaning and self-fulfilment.[345]

Interview participants regularly referenced discipleship when they were talking about leadership, and the references can broadly be divided into three engagements with discipleship; Discipling individuals, discipling congregations and being discipled as leaders.

5.5.1 Discipling Individuals

Much of the chapter to this point has focussed on how leaders lead congregations or groups, however there is also an element of leadership that is concerned with leading individuals. The first understanding of discipleship that is uncovered in the data occurs when leaders felt that

[344] This quote is from a tweet which was then deleted, I emailed +North for some clarification and in his reply he wrote; 'I can't abide the use of the word 'disciple' as a verb and find it sinister' and gave me permission to quote that email.
[345] M Percy, *Anglicanism, Confidence, Commitment and Communion,* (Routledge, 2013) p.125.

they were ‘discipling’ other people in one-to-one relationships. This understanding of discipleship can be conflated with terms like mentoring or apprenticeship, and although they have distinct meanings, the terms were used interchangeably by the interviewees. For example, when asked about leadership Warden I said, ‘So leading, by example, leading informally, in terms of you know, seeking out people in your life or in the church, who could do with sort of mentoring or support in some way’. Both discipleship and mentoring manifest in various ways in different candidates’ experiences. At times discipleship is described as an intentional, structured activity where one person will spend time with another person to encourage and challenge them regarding various specific elements of their lifestyle and spirituality. Warden C said that leadership is ‘you know, seeking people out who could do with mentoring or support’ and Incumbent A said that ‘good leadership is discipling others, drawing alongside someone with a desire to empower them, not to shape them, or in a sense coerce them or control them’.

5.5.2 Discipling Congregations

The second frame of reference occurs when participants spoke of ‘discipling’ larger groups, including whole congregations. This form of discipleship could include teaching didactically, but the interview data suggests that it also includes example-setting. When asked what Christian leadership is, Incumbent B responded

> ‘I would want to talk more about the kind of purpose of where we're going. So I guess it's helping folks grow in Christ, and enabling a community to form? That is, that is both growing in discipleship and bringing others into discipleship.’[346]

[346] Incumbent B

This suggests that for incumbent B, modelling Christian behaviour or spirituality is a form of discipleship. Incumbent F said 'there's the leadership of lifestyle, of discipleship, of prayer and worship, I think priests are called to that, the role of almost being like lead worshipers or lead pray-ers.' The idea of example-setting is another example of discipleship and leadership being intertwined as concepts, Warden C said '[leadership is] about leading people, leading projects, but also leading by example.' Warden F said that 'leadership is about personalities as well, just showing how, in the way you act, how you expect others to behave', and Incumbent J said that

> it's not that leadership is somehow about being separated from the people of God, or from the people of the parish, who we're trying to encourage into a relationship with Jesus Christ. It's about becoming one of them, you know, discipleship, it's becoming, it's about living with them and amongst them, and being that guide from within.[347]

There is clear crossover here with question two and the leadership role of ordained priests as 'example-setter' but I have included these responses here because they were not used in the context of discussing the ordained element of leadership. However, there is a connecting thread of example-setting being a role of leadership because in setting an example there is a suggestion that the leader occupies a space into which others have an opportunity to 'follow' them. The idea that congregations, or groups of people, are discipled via teaching or example-setting are not only expansions of the roles of priests set out in The Ordinal, they are also ways in which discipleship can exist separately from mentoring or apprenticeship, which both involve a greater element of relationship with either an individual being discipled or a small group or cohort.

[347] Incumbent J

5.5.3 Being Discipled as Leaders.

The third way in which discipleship was referenced was when the participants spoke of being 'discipled' themselves, this was particularly prevalent within the context of participants speaking of being 'discipled *as* leaders.'

Both discipleship and mentoring feature regularly when incumbents were reflecting on where they had received positive experiences of leadership training or when they felt that they had developed their leadership the most. Incumbent A said that 'apprenticeship was the most useful training I've had in any of the [training] contexts' and went on to say 'I've done lots of courses, kind of IME (Initial Ministerial Education) stuff but where I've [really] learnt leadership has been through apprenticeships and being apprenticed.' Revisiting an earlier quote from incumbent F is interesting in this light, they said that the most informative input that they received on leadership was what they called a 'pre-curacy', which entailed shadowing an incumbent and being mentored by them, they continued on and said that it was following the example of leaders that led to their decision to pursue ordination,

> I'd say that the influence of positive leadership in my life had a major impact on coming to that decision. Having good role models, good leaders of faith and that sense of being discipled by them. Obviously, I do see leadership as an important part of priestly ministry.[348]

This discipleship, or mentoring model is also called coaching or apprenticeship by different candidates and it was recognised by nine out of the ten incumbents as the best leadership training or input that they received. Incumbent C said

> I feel like I've had good examples of leadership and training actually along the way. So one of the major things was working alongside another leader. For three years I worked with a church and a vicar, he invited me to get involved in what he was doing and discipled me in that.[349]

[348] Incumbent F
[349] Incumbent C

This prevalence of a 'discipleship' model of training is particularly relevant when held in the light of the assessment of leadership training that incumbents felt that they had received at theological college, which was almost universally felt to be poor. Quotes that reflected incumbents opinions on their leadership training at theological college include 'I only had six weeks of training in my theological college, it was pitiful,'[350] 'I have not experienced any formal training that has helped develop me as a leader,'[351] 'I don't remember, if I'm honest, any formal input on leadership,'[352] 'I was just so dispirited by the lack of imagination in the materials that were available for teaching on leadership'[353] and 'I went to [*X]* Theological college, and I don't think they particularly liked the idea of leadership, so I don't remember being taught anything about leadership'.[354] What this demonstrates is that incumbents consistently identified that the best way of learning how to lead well is to be mentored, or discipled in leadership in relationship with somebody who is more experienced. This was more beneficial to them than the formal training that they had received. This distinctive model of training is recognised in Christian Selvaratnam's book *The Craft of Church Planting,* in which he specifies apprenticeship as a pedagogical model[355] and contends for its superiority over a traditional didactic model in some situations. He also points out that the strength of relationship and the level of trust and vulnerability between the discipler and the disciple is an important element of a discipling relationship which is concerned with training others in any role, but particularly church leadership.

[350] Incumbent A
[351] Incumbent C
[352] Incumbent G
[353] Incumbent H
[354] Incumbent I
[355]C. Selvaratnam, *The Craft of Church Planting: Exploring the Lost Wisdom of Apprenticeship* (SPCK, 2020) p.26.

When training, or apprenticing somebody in church leadership, particularly within an Anglican curacy model, the trainee can find themselves in a vulnerable position where their faith, their job, their Christian community, their housing and often their family are all intertwined within their role. Therefore, the training incumbent that is investing in them during that period has a lot of responsibility to ensure that this is a safe place. However when this works well, it is an excellent place for discipleship, as described by Incumbent C, who when asked about a positive experience of leadership training said

> a major aspect has been trust, a releasing and trusting [of] me with different roles, responsibilities. In the curacy, as well, there was the dual aspects of all the practical things of being giving tasks to do but alongside that there was opportunity to reflect on what I was learning, what I was getting right, what I was getting wrong, and discipling, as well so there's discipleship at the heart of that. We met on a weekly basis and had that opportunity to reflect on my own discipleship and faith within that particular role.[356]

Discipleship is lauded by several key Church of England texts as a primary way of developing leaders and the overall picture that emerges from the interviews is that the people that are in positions of leadership in the parish church echo this sentiment. They feel that the best way that they have been invested in as leaders has been through discipleship, and this discipleship model has been more beneficial than the formal leadership training that has been provided as part of their preparation for ordination.

The perceived lack of formal training in leadership is an important element of this chapter because part of this research has involved the effectiveness and quality of incumbents' leadership being critically assessed by both themselves and their wardens. It is therefore significant to note how equipped or trained in leadership incumbents felt themselves to be for this task. There are several examples of incumbents explicitly stating that they received no

[356] Incumbent C

leadership training as part of their formation, and so it is unfair to be overly critical when assessing their leadership. This process should not be seen as a critique of the incumbents as leaders, but as one of the system within which they are being expected to lead. The antidote offered by the interview participants is that those who did feel that they have been well equipped for leadership describe this as happening in an apprenticeship or mentoring relationship and the term that is often used is that they described themselves as being 'discipled.'

Due to the range of understandings of the term 'discipleship', in this chapter I have allowed the interview data to define the term to an extent. As demonstrated earlier in the chapter, when asked about discipleship, several participants' initial responses were to reflect on how they personally had been 'discipled' both in their personal faiths and in their development as leaders. General Synod's *Setting God's People Free* report claimed that leadership is a 'sub-set' of discipleship, which suggests that all leadership is a form of discipleship but that not all discipleship is leadership. This became problematic when trying to find elements of discipleship that were not leadership in the report. The data that has come from the interviews suggest that this may be the other way round, that discipleship is one element of leadership, but that there are several elements of leadership which are not perceived by the interviewees as being about making disciples. Further reflection in the following chapter highlights that despite this being espoused in some interview responses, the clarification may not be this simple. According to interview respondents, leadership elements that are not discipleship may include elements such as management, strategic decision making and administration. This will be an important contrast to explore in the following chapter when I compare the interview results with the analysis of the Church of England texts because there

is a growing conflict between leadership being a sub-set of discipleship and discipleship being a sub-set of leadership.

5.6 Question 4, The Question of Management

The fourth question of this chapter asks to what extent perceived ideas of leadership cross over with perceived ideas of management. Management was not a theme that arose through the textual analysis in the key Church of England texts but was referenced regularly during the interview process by both clergy and wardens and so I will give it some attention in this chapter.

Whilst some of the elements of management, which might include tasks such as organisation or communication, are not too contentious a topic, the word 'management' has become emotionally loaded in the church in recent decades. All incumbents and wardens agreed on the importance of governance, of good safeguarding systems, and of building maintenance, all of which could be considered elements of church management. However, these things were not highlighted as leadership activities in any of the interview responses.

In chapter two I explored the reticence that some writers have about the Church of England becoming too concerned with the managerial side of leadership, being particularly wary of managerialism.[357] This nervousness was represented in responses in the interviews. Incumbent A expressed that his 'fear is that in the church of England there is a Godly leadership deficit and I fear that we are replacing that with people who have MBAs in

[357] M. Percy, *The Future Shapes of Anglicanism,* (Routledge, 2017), p.226.

management, that's my fear'.[358] Incumbent J also felt that the term management had negative connotations. They said 'When I hear the word management, I feel like it's something that's being "done to" people when you are being managed, or if you are a manager, whereas I think that leadership has a far more incarnational … sort of context really'.[359] None of the incumbents or clergy felt that management was an optional extra to leadership, and certainly not to church leadership, but there was some variety regarding the positive or negative light in which management was viewed.

Incumbent B had given a lot of thought to the role of management prior to the interview. They felt that church leadership had three main elements which were: having good character, preaching the gospel, and managing the household, by which they meant the church family. When pressed on what it meant to manage the household, they explained that they meant good communication, good organisation and good pastoral care, all of which will take a large amount of managing if they are to operate well. Warden G identified that there is a difference between being a leader and being a manager. When they spoke about two of their incumbents, they said they were

> …fantastic leaders, don't get me wrong, in what they're doing as clergy because yeah, ultimately that's what you are, you're managers, you're leading the PCC, chairing PCCs. You know, there's, there's management and business decisions that need to be made on that.[360]

Warden H however saw a difference between management and leadership, they said that management is

> …very much about working within a structure, working within a system of processes, procedures, protocols, working within compliances ... working within a framework. Leadership to me, is something that brings, that connects equal

[358] Incumbent A
[359] Incumbent J
[360] Warden G

> sides of the heart to the brain. So, leadership for me is about making sure that you are then holistically using the management elements.[361]

The picture that is painted is that management is one part of leadership, however it is a significant and unavoidable element of it. This is important because there is no reference to the management element of leadership in the core Church of England texts that were studied, and yet people who are involved in leadership at parish level are finding it central to the role of church leadership.

5.6.1 Frustrations with Being Overwhelmed with Management

Whilst incumbents recognised the importance of the tasks of management within their roles there was a universal frustration with the amount of time that it consumed. Incumbent K said

> if it is not thought carefully, you end up with management engulfing … taking over the priesthood, what you were really called for, and what your skills are … not everybody, you know, can manage and be on top of everything, sometimes it, it can be quite conflicting.[362]

The lack of training and experience in management combined with the amount of administration and the significance of the task seemed to weigh heavily on incumbents and there was a good degree of sympathy from their wardens. Incumbent J became quite dispirited when they began to list the tasks that they had on their 'to-do' list: 'management of church finances, management of church buildings, communications, management of people are all part of leading the community'. There is a general sense of frustration that management takes a lot of hours up, and that this does not leave enough time for priests to perform tasks that they might feel are more central to their role as per The Ordinal which

[361] Warden H
[362] Incumbent K

instructs them to 'proclaim the word of the Lord and to watch for the signs of God's new creation, to be messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord, to teach and to admonish, to feed and provide for his family, [or] to search for his children in the wilderness'.[363]

5.6.2 The Value of Management, is it a Secular Concept?

The interplay between leadership, management and spirituality was also a struggle for many of the interviewees. Many of them shared Martin Percy's view[364] that whilst leadership and priesthood are spiritual exercises, management is purely secular. Warden H said that 'in leadership, we need to really be acutely aware of recognising and knowing when we hear God so that we can respond and guide. In management you're working within a man-made structure'. There is also a nervousness that the management element of church leadership is becoming managerialism, in which the bureaucracy and organisation of the church becomes the priority for leaders over what is perceived to be more 'spiritual' elements of leadership, that the cart can begin to push the horse. Warden F said that 'management is just task orientated, making sure that people get things done. It's identifying what needs to be done and making sure that you've got the resources to do it.' Management was certainly seen as different to leadership by Incumbent A who said 'So I think that management is the organisation of making stuff happen. But leadership is the internal thing that is just with us, it's a gift that God gives us'. John Kotter's work is helpful when reflecting on this data, Kotter

[363] *The Ordinal*.
[364] M. Percy, *The Future Shapes of Anglicanism,* (Routledge, 2017), p.226.

says, amongst other things, that management is about coping with complexity whilst leadership is about coping with change.[365]

The second fear of managerialism is that if it increases in the church then it causes the church to become more secular in its values. Incumbent K commented on the creeping secularism of managerialism when they said 'in terms of a priesthood, so, we come, we go to a parish as one who serves, right? And the manager is, you have the secular idea of management is the one who has the power, the changes, the vision and so forth, and in that there is a conflict.' There is a recurring theme that the interview respondents believe management to be a 'secular' element of leadership but have not reflected on why they believe this.

5.6.3 Lack of Management Training

All the interview participants are involved in leadership in practice and they nearly all said that management was a key element of their role, whether they appreciated that or not. However, the lack of reference to management in the Church of England texts is reflected by a perceived lack of training in or experience of management in incumbents. There was an identifiable theme of frustration in responses from both wardens and clergy in the lack of management training that clergy were given compared to the amount of management that the role entailed, Warden G said 'if I look at a member of clergy, for me, that's someone which is managing, for me, and when I look across and specifically, a lot of clergy don't have no

[365] J. Kotter, *Leading Change,* (Harvard Business School Press, 1996), p.25.

leadership or management experience, and that's quite obvious'. In addition to this, Incumbent K said

> you have the secular idea of management…. So as church leaders we trained to be priests, obviously to lead, but managing sometimes can be very, very complicated, because most of us are not trained in management as such.[366]

Some wardens, when reflecting on their incumbents, felt that they were put in an unfair position due to the need for management skills in their roles. Warden I compared an incumbent to a headteacher who had been an excellent classroom teacher but was unprepared for the management elements of oversight. They then went on to say it was like a quantity surveyor being made into a managing director. Warden G went even further, comparing it to a trolley pusher at Asda being asked to start managing the store. There is a regular theme in the data that whilst management is an important element of leadership, most clergy are unprepared and inexperienced in it. This view was shared by both clergy and wardens.

There is important theological point to extract here, which is that management is generally seen as secular, and whilst most of the interview respondents identify that clergy are not trained in it, this is not seen as an issue or something to be challenged, but is merely accepted as a norm. This is interesting because there was a general frustration in the lack of overall leadership training offered at theological college yet this frustration is not extended to the lack of management training. There was no suggestion or even mention that management training should be provided as part of theological training, which suggests that the clergy and the wardens that were interviewed not only hold the premise that management is a secondary function of leadership compared with something like discipleship, but also that this is not a

[366] Incumbent K

premise that needs to be investigated or challenged. Incumbent A said 'I do think that we need management in church leadership, speaking as someone who is not a very good manager, I think that we need it.' This attitude that suggests that it is necessary but that it is not anybody's responsibility to grow in it or to embrace it was shared by a number of the respondents.

What becomes clear in this section is that management is an under-analysed element of leadership in the Church of England and there is very little reference to it in any formal or normative literature, particularly in any authoritative Church of England texts. Understandings of the term management and of the management expectations of incumbents are varied and are informed by a wide range of sources. There are also basic miscommunications across the church as people hold differing and confusing understandings of the terms 'leadership', 'management' and 'managerialism'. This is all held in a culture of suspicion of others' views and wariness of encroaching secularism. Despite the misunderstanding and negativity, management is perceived by those involved in parish ministry to form a large part of the role and I will use the following chapter to explore this and theologically reflect on the relationship between management and leadership.

5.7 Additional Reflections on Gender

Before summarising this chapter I will briefly reflect on gender. On issues of power imbalance and approaches to leadership it is important to reference gender as a factor in interviewees' responses. It is an interesting power dynamic to be a male interviewing a female while they discuss the imbalance of masculine leadership, but I felt that they were able to be honest and to share valuable reflections.

Although I did not have a question explicitly about gender, all the female members of clergy brought it up in the process. None of the male members mentioned it which is theologically interesting. In my methodology I referenced Gadamer's 'forestructure'[367] guidance on qualitative research, which challenges the researcher to be aware of any lived experience or prior work which could frame the way in which data is viewed. For this reason, I want to be particularly careful in hearing female voices in the research. There is little mention of gender in the normative texts studied. The *Setting God's People Free* report does not use the word 'gender' at all and it only appears once in the FAOC report on senior leadership. This is interesting because the FAOC report was specifically focused on senior leadership in the Church of England and was published in January 2015, a few months after the first female bishop was consecrated in the Church of England so the report would have been researched and produced at a time when this was a live conversation in the church. There was a shared view by all the female incumbents that gender was a significant component in any conversation about leadership but that it was not noticed by a large, generally male proportion of the church. It could be argued that this was reflected in the normative texts that have been used in this thesis.

The three female clergy believed that the idea of leadership, or leadership language, is an inherently male concept that discriminates against women, leaving them feeling disempowered. Incumbent D said that

> Oh gender. So I think all these images I had of priests were male. And leadership, for me, feels like a very masculine or patriarchal concept. It isn't, which is why I've kind of had to do loads and loads of translating. Women often lead their families. They often cook the meal, they often set the tone, they often welcome the guest, they often support their husband, whatever it is',[368]

[367] H-G Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* (Crossroad, 1989) p.266.
[368] Incumbent D

Incumbent H said that she 'found it really, really hard to model myself as a leader on many of the leaders that I have seen because the models of leadership that I've been exposed to, particularly in our line of work are just so inherently male' and incumbent I said

> 'leadership language comes from an inherently masculine place, and I don't mean that it's coming from men - there are plenty of women who speak from the patriarchy or speak masculine language. Things such as church-planting or church-grafting are very, in my opinion very colonial'.[369]

Although the female clergy all shared a negative opinion of the masculinity of leadership language and concepts, they all also shared a belief that there were feminine models of leadership that were different to masculine ones but of equal inherent value. Incumbent H said that 'women do lead differently, but you know, men lead brilliantly and women lead brilliantly, but different.' Incumbent K said that;

> because of the way our society is shaped, our male colleagues, a lot of men feel quite... they don't feel encouraged to share their brokenness, their vulnerability, because they're men. So [they're] always happy to be needed, to be in charge all the time, and needed to have all the answers all the time, and the women aren't. So I think we tend to share more [of] our vulnerability to be more honest with our feelings rather than male, I think.[370]

Two of the respondents believed that collaborative leadership is a feminine style of leadership and is not ministered as much by men. Incumbent K said that 'as a woman, so I think because... I don't know, I think the way how we were brought up, we were educated, and we tended to be a little more collaborative' and incumbent I said 'I think women... The way I see it we will always, I think we tend to be far more collaborative.' This link between the theme of collaborative leadership and the theme of gender was only identified by female interviewees and not male ones.

[369] Incumbent I
[370] Incumbent K

An interesting point to note is that the three female incumbents all stated that being in a position of authority, with power to make change was one of their reasons for pursuing ordination. This motive was not articulated by any of the male incumbents but this does not mean that it was not shared by them either subconsciously or secretly.

I will consider the power dynamic of gender when I analyse these results in the following chapter, I will also use it as an opportunity to re-visit the language used in The Ordinal and view it through the lens of patriarchal or masculine language.

A final theme to mention before summarising this chapter is the theme of servant leadership. Servant leadership featured heavily in the leadership overview and literature review that I began this thesis with, and I anticipated it also featuring heavily in the interview data. Whilst several interview participants did mention servant leadership, there was little context for what this might look like or why it was important. Incumbent C felt that servant leadership meant not chasing people to do things and Incumbent F said that it was for leaders that 'didn't want to stand at the front' but beyond this it was merely mentioned without rationale. This mirrors the theory of Chloe Lynch[371] who suggests that servant leadership can lack theological depth. Although there is much that could be said of servant leadership, it was not represented in the data gathered and so I will not explore it here.

[371] Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership*, p.182.

5.8 Summary

I have chosen to write a chapter summary at this point and not a conclusion, as the following chapter will work towards a conclusion using this chapters' findings in conversation with previous chapters. There are four primary questions that have arisen in this chapter.

The first question demonstrates that, as with the institutional texts, there is a duality of lenses through which leadership is viewed. There is both a functional and an influential understanding of leadership. Most people will identify and value elements of both these modes of leadership, and the balance of which is valued more will change from person to person. It is also true that very few people speak purely in terms of functional or influential leadership; there are usually elements of both in all examples. A pattern emerged in the data that suggests that negative experiences of leadership tend to happen when the mode of leadership being used is more functional. People have complex relationships with the concept of power and the interplay between task and culture which influence the way that they both value and evaluate leadership. There is some correlation between a functional understanding of leadership with a prioritising of shorter term tasks and an influential understanding of leadership with a prioritising of culture or relationships.

The second question demonstrates that the role that ordination plays in peoples' understanding of leadership is also complex and has both positive and negative associations. There is an intuitive link made between ordination and leadership which was hard for participants to articulate. There are also examples of participants having negative experiences of clericalism due, in part, to the undefined relationship between them. In addition to this there are differing understandings of the leadership roles of church wardens, often due to the

formal, licensed nature of the role compared with the way in which they hold power. These complexities and undefined relationships can lead to unhelpful power dynamics and painful experiences if they are not managed well. This is often due to the difference between hard and soft power, and between power and authority.

The third question highlights that most respondents identified a link between discipleship and leadership, but these links can vary from person to person. There was also a multiplicity of understandings of the term discipleship itself, despite it being used in several important Church of England texts. Discipleship was observed to have happened at both individual and congregational levels and both of these were perceived to be examples of leadership. When leaders reflected on where they themselves were discipled they saw this through a lens of being trained as leaders more than in their Christianity more generally. Some of the texts explored earlier presented a broad understanding of discipleship that is concerned with pursuing holiness in a persons Christian walk. Most of the interview participants' understanding of the term reflected a teacher/learner relationship which is an element that also featured in some of the texts studied, at times alongside the broader definition.

The fourth question highlighted the burden of management felt by most people in church leadership. It demonstrated that church leaders felt under prepared for the management element of their role both theologically and practically. Being underprepared was not the only frustration, there was also a fear that management was a secular concept that should not be part of the church. Part of the confusion here arose due to the fact that when respondents described this issue they used the word management to describe what normative texts might label managerialism. Church wardens shared this frustration, some were frustrated with their

incumbents for their lack of management skills whilst some were empathetic for the position that their incumbents had been put in without management experience or training. There is a perceived lack of understanding from the normative centre of the Church of England concerning the management elements of leadership. The fact that management was an element of leadership was an assumption that was universally accepted although not universally appreciated.

This chapter demonstrates that when people think about leadership, their judgments about its value and success are affected by underlying ideas about what leadership is. This data creates an interesting foundation for chapter six. I will use the following chapter to theologically diagnose the data presented here, and to hold a conversation between the results of this empirical research and the findings of the textual analysis in earlier chapters.

Chapter 6: Reflective Diagnosis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is primarily a reflective diagnosis of complexities that have been exposed by this research. So far, I have heard from two theological 'voices' of the Church of England that speak about leadership. Chapter four expounded some of the influential Church of England texts that create a form of normative[372] theology of leadership. In chapter five I presented the findings from my empirical research, yielding a form of operant[373] theology that I developed by listening to and analysing the words of those involved in leadership in parish churches. The process of the research has exposed a problem, that there is a significant amount of confusion regarding understandings of leadership across the Church of England.

In this chapter I am going to explore some of the areas of confusion regarding understandings of leadership. These range from confusions about terminology to deeper confusions concerning theological understandings of leadership itself. The effect of this complexity is that it is currently all but impossible to have a good conversation about leadership in the Church of England, as the church does not hold the basic elements of shared categories, language or experience necessary for such a conversation. I will therefore use this chapter to diagnose this complexity by holding a conversation between the two sets of data from chapters four and five.

[372] H. Cameron and C. Duce, *Researching Practice in Mission and Ministry: A Companion,* (SCM Press, 2013) p.165.
[373] Cameron and Duce, *Researching Practice,* p.165.

The research process has revealed several questions with which I structured the previous data presentation chapter. I will also use these questions to structure this chapter; however I will approach them in a different order. This is because as I reflected on the questions raised, the order in which they are engaged with in this chapter enables me to journey from the diagnosis of relatively simple issues to the diagnosis of deeper confusions.

The first of these questions asks how discipleship and leadership relate, querying whether leadership is a subset of discipleship or whether discipleship is a route to leadership. The second question asks how much leadership is understood to differ from management in the Church of England. Much work has been done on this distinction by leadership theorists however this is not always reflected in either the texts of the Church of England or the voices of those involved in leadership in praxis. The third question asks whether leadership in the church of England is primarily understood to be functional or influential, and what the relationship is between the two. The fourth question asks what people understand the relationship between ordination and leadership to be.

Three themes have also emerged in the research process. These are the themes of task, power and the merit of leadership itself. I will look to identify and theologically reflect on these three themes as I work through the sections.

6.1.1 Use of Scripture

In order to reflect on the theology of leadership I will at times draw on scripture to provide a theological perspective. Scripture is important to engage with not only because it is an authoritative text for the Church of England, but also because it was referred to by every interview participant both lay and ordained. Nevertheless, whilst I cannot neglect scripture,

there is not enough scope in this research for more than a modest level of scriptural engagement, therefore this will not be a normative or comprehensive study of a scriptural view of leadership. In this chapter I will demonstrate that many of the various confusions I explore have scriptural roots, connections or parallels. I will indicate some of the scriptural resources that could be drawn on to unravel the church's confusions about leadership. Scripture does not, however, provide any easy way out of those confusions and at times it may lead to more divergent understandings instead of more clarity.

Any scriptural engagement brings a hermeneutical challenge when trying to bridge the gap between the context of the New Testament church and modernity. The New Testament church's Greco-Roman and Jewish leadership roles such as apostles or overseers do not map easily onto contemporary ecclesial structures, and the cultural and political landscape in which they were formed is radically different to the world of today. New Testament texts provide ethical and pastoral guidance shaping early Christian communities and there are still some insights into what leadership may have looked like within this context. It is difficult, however, to extract any normative leadership principles from these texts and there is criticism that efforts to do so can oversimplify or distort the aims of original authors. There is also legitimate criticism of leadership studies that selectively 'cherry-pick' biblical texts in order to validate a particular position or principle whilst neglecting the impression of the wider biblical corpus. I will therefore use elements of biblical exegesis in an illustrative manner, to highlight areas where further work could be done.

At times I will refer to passages from the New Testament which demonstrate an understanding or an example of leadership. I will also reference specific words that have been translated as

'leader' or are referred to as 'biblical' models of leadership in texts that I have studied.[374] Appendix D provides a table of the different words that are sometimes translated as 'leader' or 'leadership' in the New Testament.[375] The words *hegoumenos, kuberneseis, proistamenos* and *episkopos* have all been used to describe leadership at different points yet all have subtly different meanings. I am particularly interested in the fact that whilst today we have one 'catch-all' phrase to describe leadership, behind this are various biblical words that individually carried different meanings. I will spend some time looking at the differing understandings of these terms and how the multiplicity of meanings of the term leadership in New Testament texts informs the discussion in church today.

6.2 Is Discipleship Leadership?

In this section I will explore the first confusion that this research has shown to be affecting the discussion of leadership in the church, the question concerning whether discipleship is leadership. Whilst in both the textual analysis and the empirical research the relationship between discipleship and leadership is complex, much of the confusion is primarily one of terminology. This is caused in part by failures to recognise that key terms are being used in incompatible ways across the church. Exploring the confusion around this terminology forms a good foundation from which to build the rest of the chapter.

Christian leadership is distinct from other models of leadership because Christian leadership is not simply about people following a leader, but it is ultimately about the leader helping people to follow Jesus Christ. This distinction is particularly prevalent when considering

[374] The Faith and Order Commission, *Senior Church Leadership, A Resource for Reflection,* https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/gs-1999b-private-members-motion-senior-leadership.pdf p.34.
[375] Appendix D

discipleship because Christians are disciples of Jesus and not of each other, therefore any understanding of discipleship in this chapter should be viewed from a Christological perspective.

6.2.1 Discipleship, Two Schools of Thought

As with leadership, there is no single definition for the term 'discipleship', but the data studied suggests that the various understandings can be grouped into two schools. The word 'discipleship' is sometimes used to speak about *being* a disciple, and sometimes about *making* disciples. The difference in understandings of what the term 'discipleship' meant was in part revealed by how the word was used by interview participants or by the texts. At times the word was used as a noun, i.e. 'to be a disciple' and at times it was used as a verb, i.e. 'to disciple someone'. The use of the word disciple as a verb, as Percy[376] and North[377] state, has become increasingly popular since the 1990s. This is notable because the word 'disciple' appears in the bible two hundred and sixty-one times; however, only four times is it a verb;[378] the remaining two hundred and fifty-seven occurrences are nouns.

The New Testament does not provide a simple description of the word 'discipleship'. In fact the word 'discipleship' does not appear in the New Testament at all which affirms Percy's argument that discipleship itself is a relatively modern term.[379] The New Testament does

[376] M. Percy, *Anglicanism, Confidence, Commitment and Communion,* (Routledge, 2013) p.125.
[377] +Philip North's since deleted tweet stated that seeing the word disciple used as a verb causes his 'skin to crawl', https://x.com/BpBlackburn
[378] Matthew 13:52, Matthew 27:57, Matthew 28:19, and Acts 14:21
[379]M. Percy, *Anglicanism, Confidence, Commitment and Communion,* (Routledge, 2013) p.125.

however contain the word *mathéteuó*, a verb which is translated as making or teaching disciples and the word *mathetes*, a noun which is translated as disciple.

This is not a simple dichotomy however, as there is crossover between the use of the verb or the noun and they can even become interchangeable when translated. This is demonstrated in Matthew 28:19, which is perhaps one of the most well-known verses to use the word. It is almost universally translated as 'therefore go and make disciples of all nations.'[380] Interestingly the word 'disciple[s]' here is the verb *mathēteusate*, which means that the verse translates literally as 'therefore go and disciple the nations'. The great commission itself contains the verb 'to disciple' but over time this has become the noun 'disciple.' It began as something to do but became something to be.

Historically, theologians such as Stanley Hauerwas or Deitrich Bonhoeffer have described discipleship as something intentional and active. Hauerwas describes discipleship as 'the production of people who more closely resemble, in their lifestyle, beliefs, and values, disciples of Jesus'.[381] Hauerwas, along with Willimon in this text, links discipleship with the process of learning. The context of this quote is Hauerwas stating that discipleship is related to catechesis as part of a confirmation process. Dietrich Bonhoeffer similarly believes that discipleship exists in action and in applied lifestyle change, writing that 'You can only know and think about it [discipleship] by actually doing it.[382] He also writes that 'The response of the disciples is an act of obedience, not a confession of faith in Jesus'.[383]

[380] Matthew 28:19
[381] S. Hauerwas and W. H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony (Expanded 25th Anniversary Edition)*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014) p.104.
[382] D. Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, (SCM Press, 2015) p.86.
[383] Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship,* p.61.

The *Setting God's People Free* report's definition of discipleship combines the relational aspect, the intentional aspect and the learning aspect with the description: 'a disciple is someone who is learning the way of Jesus in their context at this moment, discipleship is the process by which this happens.'[384] Martin Percy, who is generally critical of an intentional/active understanding of discipleship as simply a modern idea designed to service people's desires for meaning and self-fulfilment[385] does goes on in the same text to say that 'learning is part of the life and journey of all disciples, and lasts throughout our discipleship'.[386] Whilst learning and understanding are parts of discipleship, Bonhoeffer is particularly scathing in his critique of any form of discipleship that is reduced to an academic concept or an idea without action, and is forceful in his inference that discipleship is primarily to do with an intentional relationship with Christ;

> discipleship means adherence to Christ, and, because Christ is the object of that adherence, it must take the form of discipleship. An abstract Christology, a doctrinal system, a general religious knowledge on the subject of grace or on the forgiveness of sins, render discipleship superfluous, and in fact they positively exclude any idea of discipleship whatever, and are essentially inimical to the whole concept of following Christ. With an abstract idea, it is possible to enter into a relation of formal knowledge, to become enthusiastic about it, and perhaps even put it into practice but it can never be followed in personal obedience. Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ[387]

Over time the two concepts of making disciples and of being disciples appear to have merged to become what is currently known as 'discipleship.' This term is often used to describe the state of being a Christian (e.g. one might say "my discipleship" and mean "my Christianity").

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[384] *Setting God's People Free,* https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/gs-2056-setting-gods-people-free.pdf, p.7.
[385] M. Percy, *Anglicanism, Confidence, Commitment and Communion* (Routledge, 2013), p.125.
[386] Percy, *Anglicanism,* p.140.
[387] Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, p.44.

It is also the case that the word Christian and the word disciple are used interchangeably in some of the texts studied, or are merged to create the term 'Christian Disciple'.[388]

6.2.2 Discipleship in the Data

Discipleship is referenced consistently when leadership is discussed in both data sets, with understandings of the word both as a noun and a verb evidenced regularly. Some texts suggest that the term discipleship refers simply to church attendance, or perhaps to a sense of belonging to a church without even attending it.[389] This can create a passive understanding of discipleship which we can call 'being' a disciple. Other texts describe an understanding of discipleship that is more concerned with active engagement with teaching and learning alongside intentional lifestyle changes. This second, more active understanding of discipleship is primarily concerned with the act of 'making disciples' or 'discipling'.

The Faith and Order Commission's senior leadership report contains a broader description of discipleship. It does contain reference to learning and to the concept of being a follower, but it is one of the few texts studied which also describes elements of discipleship as sometimes being individual acts of spiritual discipline. For the Faith and Order Commission, Christian leadership is linked to discipleship because all leaders are disciples;

> Leaders share the fundamental vocation of all Christians to discipleship. The first qualification for being a leader in the church is to be a follower. All leaders (lay and ordained) are those who have heard the call of Christ, who take seriously – however imperfectly – the transformative lifestyle of the Sermon on the Mount. They are open to a lifetime of learning, and committed to following Christ on the way of the cross. As with all disciples, their spiritual life

[388] This is demonstrated in A. McGrath, *Christian Theology,* (Blackwell, 2001), D. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding; An introduction to Christian Theology* (Eerdmans, 1991) and S. Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and Leadership in the Local Church* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1999) amongst others.
[389] M. Percy, *The Origin of the Species* (T & T Clarke, 1998), p.34. See also A. Milbank, *For The Parish* (SCM, 2017), pp.28-14.

> is undergirded by the daily disciplines of prayer, attentiveness and obedience. As figures in the public eye, their personal commitment to probity (holiness) and the imitation of Christ has to be rooted in humility and integrity. Discipleship – the longing 'to be conformed to the image of God's Son' – is the undergirding aspiration that reaches out past the demands of a particular office through a lifetime and beyond (Philippians 3.9–14).[390]

This broad understanding of discipleship which covers much of the life of a Christian suggests that all leaders are disciples, but that not all disciples are necessarily leaders.

The confusing relationship between discipleship and leadership becomes a little clearer when the responses of interview participants are held in the light of the texts studied. The texts display a broad understanding of discipleship which could include a passive church membership but could also be an intentional learner/teacher relationship or community. After reflecting on the duality of understandings I followed up my interviews with a further question to the incumbents, asking if they could explain what they meant by the term 'discipleship'. Data presented in the previous chapter demonstrated that all interview participants held the second, more active understanding of the term.[391] Not all the participants responded to my follow up questions but the ones that did used phrases like 'helping each other becoming like Jesus,'[392] 'the intentional patterning of your life after the life and person of Jesus Christ, done relationally and in community'[393] and 'Christians helping each other to learn from and become like the master.'[394] These responses came from leaders representing a wide range of church traditions and styles. The answers confirmed the theory that those involved in church leadership in practice held a narrower understanding of discipleship than the normative or

[390] The Faith and Order Commission, *A Senior Church Leadership, A Resource for Reflection,* https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/gs-1999b-private-members-motion-senior-leadership.pdf p.46.
[391] See Incumbents B, F, G, J.
[392] Incumbent A.
[393] Incumbent I.
[394] Incumbent J.

academic one. For the interview respondents, regardless of their church tradition, discipleship consistently meant an intentional mentoring or teaching relationship with another Christian in their pursuit of following the person of Jesus Christ.

The texts studied presented a broad description of discipleship. We have just revisited the *FAOC* Report's description which includes 'the longing to be conformed to the image of God's Son'[395] and the *SGPF* report describes leadership as a subset of discipleship.[396] In practice however, research participants provided more specific descriptions of discipleship which usually involved some form of mentoring or teaching relationship. These could be broadly categorised into three groups: discipling individuals, discipling congregations and being discipled specifically in leadership.

Whilst there may be inconsistencies in the understandings of discipleship in its practical manifestation, there is a consistent element in the definition of discipleship in its existence within relationship with others. The normative theology of discipleship appears to have moved away from the New Testament idea of a disciple being a pupil or a learner, however the operant and espoused theology held by individuals appears to have circled back to this original meaning.

[395] *FAOC report*, p.46.
[396] *SGPF Report*.

6.2.3 Discipleship and Leadership

When interview participants were asked about positive experiences of leadership, some spoke of leaders that had 'discipled them well'[397] or had been 'good at discipleship'.[398] This demonstrates another intrinsic link between discipleship and leadership. If we take discipleship to mean the intentional teaching or training of others, or of intentionally causing change in others, then this elicits themes of power, influence and agency which I have established are elements of leadership.

In chapter four I suggested that although *Setting God's People Free* writes that leadership is a subset of discipleship, in practice discipleship can be seen as a subset of leadership. The reason that these things can both be true is explained by the two understandings of discipleship. If we understand discipleship to mean an individual's whole faith journey and membership of the church, then leadership can be a subset of this. However, if we take the meaning of discipleship to be an intentional relationship between a learner and a teacher, then discipleship must be a subset of leadership because it is one element of leadership amongst others.

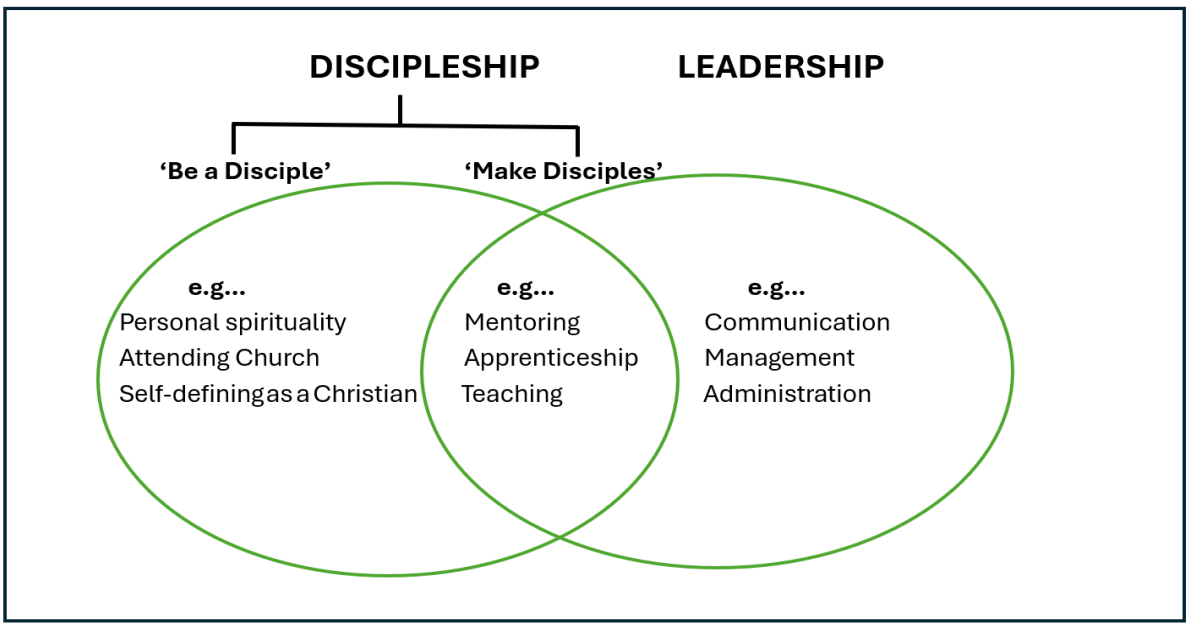
Regardless of the theological understanding of discipleship, all interview respondents felt that there was a leadership role to be played by an incumbent, even if this role differs according to the understanding of the term. The discipleship element of incumbency can manifest in different ways but each of these elements could all be described as discipleship by different sources. This mirrors the section in chapter four on ordained leadership, which The Ordinal

[397] Incumbent C.
[398] Incumbent F.

states can be demonstrated through example-setting, positional or worship leading and performing any single one is still ministering ordained leadership.

Whilst discipleship can either be understood to mean a general sense of belonging to the Christian faith, or an intentional process of catechesis, both understandings suggest that a person in a position of incumbency has a role to play in the discipleship of his or her congregation. This could be through providing a structure in which people belong, through intentionally discipling individuals or groups or through creating a culture and framework whereby people are discipled by each other.

A further thought is that perhaps the word 'subset' is unhelpful. The *Setting God's People Free* report suggests that leadership is a subset of discipleship and I have argued here that perhaps discipleship is a subset of leadership. The flaw with these arguments is the assumption that either discipleship is one element of leadership amongst others, or that leadership is one element of discipleship amongst others. This leads to a belief that either all leadership is a form of discipleship, or that all discipleship is a form of leadership. Whilst there is significant intersect between the two terms, a third option may be that there are elements of leadership that are not discipleship and vice versa, that instead of thinking in terms of subsets we should perhaps be thinking of a Venn approach like this.



In the above image, I display that the two understandings of discipleship can be mapped in different ways. The more passive 'being a disciple' understanding is a binary understanding of whether one counts themselves as a Christian or not, this has very little connection with leadership. The alternative, more active understanding is concerned with either being discipled or discipling others and is a trajectory that a person is on as their faith grows. They may see themselves as being discipled by others, as discipling others or both. It is important to remember that Christians are primarily disciples of Jesus Christ, and that the function of discipleship is to cause people to grow in the calling that He has for them.[399] This second understanding of discipleship does have a connection with leadership, because it is concerned with influence that people have over other people. There are however elements of leadership that are not considered discipleship such as administration or communication.

A traditional understanding of discipleship tends to emphasise the 'being' element of discipleship, or the idea that discipleship is concerned with identifying as belonging to the Christian church and this is evidenced in normative texts. However, this research has revealed that the espoused and operant understanding of discipleship held by those involved in parish leadership is an understanding which emphasises the 'making' of disciples. It can therefore be argued that whilst the *Setting God's People Free* report contends that leadership is a subset of discipleship, it is simultaneously true that discipleship is also a subset of leadership.

In conclusion, over time both the terms 'disciple' (*mathetes)* and 'making disciples' or 'discipling' (*mathéteuó*) have amalgamated to become the phrase 'discipleship'. Whilst there are mixed understandings of the term discipleship, across the church there is a shared

[399] 1 Corinthians 11 for example, "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ".

agreement that a Christian is ultimately a disciple of Jesus and not of another person. Their following, or learning from, a human leader should be entirely in service of their following, or learning, from Jesus. This means that the task of an individual that is engaging in one or more of these discipleship activities is to point the person being discipled to Jesus rather than to the human discipler. The discipler's job is to lead people deeper into following Jesus, and most of the church would agree that this is good leadership.

A final element shared by all the different understandings of discipleship is the necessity of relationship or community, which establishes the premise that discipleship cannot exist in a single isolated person. This is another feature which is shared with leadership

I have demonstrated confusions in the Church of England about the relationship between discipleship and leadership that involves two dichotomies. There is a substantive one concerned with whether discipleship is passive or active, which at one level, is a disagreement about what it means to be a follower of Jesus which could involve differing visions of the Christian life. The second confusion is a terminological disagreement about the meaning of the word 'discipleship' and its reference to either being a disciple or making disciples. In addition to this, for some people *making* disciples is coterminous with leadership, and for others it is not. This in turn means that the relationship between discipleship and leadership will differ depending on how the word is understood, but it also means that it is hard to discuss the initial, more substantive disagreement well. The result of this is that instead of a constructive conversation, or even a clear disagreement, we are left with confusion.

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6.3 The Management Question

The second question to address in this chapter is on the theme of management, this was not in the research brief that arose from the textual analysis or the original methodology, however its prevalence as a recurring theme in the empirical research and therefore its relationship with theological understandings of leadership has caused it to become a question that I will reflect on.

I have approached this question at this stage because in a similar manner to the question of discipleship, the question of management reveals multiple confusions that are both terminological and theological. A primary confusion is about the distinction between management and leadership. A further confusion concerns the difference between management and managerialism. These words are at times used interchangeably, as are the understandings of them.

Fundamentally however, the different theological understandings of management and how it relates to leadership appear to lie behind a good deal of the general disagreement about leadership in the Church of England. It is also apparent that without clarity about these terms, it is often difficult to discern what people around the church are actually disagreeing about when they appear to disagree about leadership more generally.

In a similar manner to the discipleship conversation, I found that much of the disparity across the church is rooted in misunderstanding of terminology. I will use this section to reflect on this crossover between leadership and management and diagnose where some of the confusion arises. To structure this section, I have separated the conversation into three

elements of leadership and management to reflect on; these are administration, oversight and secularism.

6.3.1 Management and Administration

The first example of leadership and management relating to each other is what we can call the administrative task, or simply the act of 'getting things done'. Earlier in the chapter I introduced the New Testament word *proistemi* which is sometimes translated as 'to lead'[400] or 'to rule',[401] but is more commonly translated as 'to manage',[402] or 'to take care of'.[403] This word is used to instruct church leaders to 'manage' both the churches that they have oversight of[404] and their households.[405] Both the Oxford English Dictionary[406] and the Cambridge English Dictionary[407] define the term 'management' as being concerned with organisation and control. These definitions highlight that in both the early church and in the present day there is a close relationship between leadership and management because of these twin elements of organisation and control. There are several examples in the New Testament where leadership has involved an element of administration, or 'getting things done/organised' such as Acts chapter 6, which describes the task of distributing food to widows and delegating different tasks amongst a team. Theologically, when discussing administration we could also consider the term 'stewardship'. The term *proistemi* holds a resonance of having

[400] Romans 12:7-8.
[401] 1 Thessalonians 5:12 (KJV translation).
[402] 1 Timothy 3:4.
[403] Titus 3:8.
[404] 1 Thessalonians 5:12 'Those who are over you in the Lord' (ESV translation).
[405] 1 Timothy 3:4 (...must manage his household well).
[406] OED online, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/management_n?tab=meaning_and_use.
[407] CED online, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/management.

responsibility, or of stewarding things well. We can infer from this that the administration element of management holds theological significance.

Throughout this thesis there has been a recurring theme of control, which at times has manifested as power, but up until this point there has been less focus on its relationship with organisation, which is where the word *proistemi* and the role of administration become significant. When discussing management, administration was a term that featured heavily in the interview responses from incumbents and usually with negative associations. The interview data revealed that most, if not all, incumbents felt that the management element of leadership carried an administrative burden which took up a disproportionately large amount of their capacity and for which they were underprepared and undertrained. The ability to communicate and to organise well was observed and appreciated by church wardens and there were several examples of poor communication being given as examples of poor leadership. This highlights the necessity of stewardship being an element of leadership. The organisation and control of households and of churches involves somebody, or a team, having the responsibility for ensuring that things are running smoothly.

Despite the biblical and experiential evidence, there is anecdotal evidence of a tendency to think that administrative management is not theologically important, and this research demonstrates that this is a mistake. It is theologically untrue to say that the administrative element of leadership does not hold spiritual significance. The word *proistemi* is used when

Paul lists spiritual gifts in Romans 12 where he writes that the one who has the spiritual gift of leadership should lead 'in diligence.'[408]

Having established that both scripture and this research evidence a significance of managerial administration, a discrepancy arises because neither The Ordinal nor the Qualities Framework mention the significance of administration. The Qualities Framework is broken down into 127 examples of how the qualities may be displayed and only three of these mention the word management. These three examples are; that candidates should be able to manage expectations, manage the care of children and vulnerable adults, and manage relationships. None of these are necessarily administrative management. There is one mention of administration in the 127 examples which states that a successful candidate 'can demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to fulfil the legal and administrative responsibilities that required by incumbent level responsibility'.[409] This shows that the textual description of the role of the incumbent underplays both the amount of and the significance of the administrative element of leadership compared to the lived experience of those in incumbency positions. Yet the biblical description of church leadership not only profiles management as an element of leadership but also lists diligence in leadership as a spiritual gift. This highlights a mistaken tendency in the church to think that management and administration are not theologically important, which can lead to a neglection of engagement with them. It could also be suggested that this is neglected in the normative voice of leadership theology in the Church of England.

[408] Romans 12:8.
[409] Qualities Framework (demonstrating Trustworthiness in the context of Church) p.27.

6.3.2 Management and Oversight

Although not all responses reflected this, management is not limited to administrative and operational tasks. The definition of management is that it is concerned with both organisation and with control. Management is also related to leadership due to its oversight elements, and a theological term for this might be 'accountability'. When some respondents used the term manage or management, they did not mean an administrative role of 'getting things done', they meant a position of power and functional oversight. The term 'oversight' will also be explored later in an episcopal understanding, but with regards to management, it appeared to have a more practical meaning in the interview responses.

Many of the interview responses suggested that the term 'manager' or 'management' could be seen as a position of authority, in what would be described as a functional position of power. For example one incumbent said '…and the manager is, you have the secular idea of management, is the one who has the power, the changes, the vision and so forth.'[410] This respondent articulated a view that was shared by other wardens and incumbents, that whilst leadership is concerned with serving, example-setting and spiritual direction, management was primarily to do with functional oversight and holding a position of authority. It is an interesting point that having established that management and administration are both theologically and spiritually significant, it is not uncommon to find that, of all the words that have been linked to oversight, the management and oversight connection is at times perceived as being the most secular. Hebrews 13 states that the church should 'Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you

[410] Incumbent K.

as those who must give an account'[411] and the word for leader here is *hegoumenos* which is associated with oversight.[412] This passage highlights a form of pressure that leaders may be under to lead correctly, as they will be called to give an account of their leadership.

Although leadership and management both hold elements of oversight, This does not mean that the words mean the same thing, however the words were used in some interview responses interchangeably. Similarly, the experiences that people shared of incumbents implementing what they perceived to be management roles were not universally good or bad but were spread across a spectrum. In the relationship between management and leadership there is a resonance with positional, or functional power.

There is more of an oversight element of management involved in contemporary incumbency than there has been in the past due to the changing nature of the role. The incumbent, along with the PCC now has to ensure that churches are compliant with national systems to facilitate appropriate practice with regards to things like safeguarding, GDPR and health and safety. This means that the incumbent will at times have to exert power, from a position of oversight, that they would not historically have needed to. This does give the incumbent a new authoritative role because at times they will have to say 'no' to people who want to carry out activities and this can feel oppressive or controlling to people who are used to church leadership having less of a management function.

Despite a sense from some areas that oversight is a more secular element of leadership, there is an important theological element to oversight when considered in the light of

[411] Hebrews 13:17.
[412] I. Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership,* (SCM, 2021) p.85.

accountability. A leader who holds oversight of something, a church in this case, will be responsible for that thing. In a similar manner a leader that leads a team will be responsible for that team and for their output. In an ecclesial sense The Ordinal dictates that a priest may also be responsible for the pastoral wellbeing of their team. The incumbent's oversight and stewardship of their church's legal responsibilities, line management responsibilities and organisational responsibilities are an important part of the role. This echoes the passage from Hebrews 13 which states that leaders will be held to account. The Qualities Framework for priesthood also identifies this element even though it is understated in the text. There is a sense that the incumbent is accountable for carrying out the oversight element of the task with diligence[413]and the accountability for their responsibilities is a burden of responsibility that a leader carries.

6.3.3 Management and Secularism

A primary criticism of leadership as a concept that has surfaced in both the texts and the interview data is a suspicion that it is a secular concept. This is particularly prevalent when the management element of leadership is discussed. There is a fear that management is a secular concept that has crept surreptitiously into the psyche of the Church of England and is now causing the Church of England to become secularised as an institution. Whilst there are examples of leadership in the New Testament and in many historic Church of England texts, it is a popular accusation to suggest that management is a secular concept that has snuck in under the banner of leadership. Percy writes of 'creeping managerialism'[414] which is a term

[413] Romans 12:8.
[414] M. Percy, *Engaging with Contemporary Culture: Christianity, Theology and the Concrete Church,* (Routledge, 2005), p.267.

that is used in modern criticism of the Church of England, whilst bishop Philip North writes that

> The language of 'leadership' strikes many as unbiblical, compared with words such as vocation, service, or priesthood. The term 'discipleship' doesn't mean a great deal to people who would rather speak of growth in holiness or Christian formation. Many worry about a creeping managerialism or a tendency to centralism, which has always been a threat to fringe movements within the Church.[415]

As with much of this thesis, the findings are not as binary as initial observations suggest. The idea that good management is distinct from good pastoral care is simply untrue, because effective implementation of oversight enables church members and team members to feel safe and looked after. There were several examples in the data of people feeling neglected or hurt that could have been avoided if better systems of oversight and pastoral care had been implemented. A theological theme here could be the error of separating good management from good pastoral care due to oversimplification and a terminological theme might be the rejection of management under the guise of rejecting managerialism. Croft writes that 'There is much good that the church can learn from good practice developed over many years in the commercial world or public sector'[416] and it would be detrimental to the church to write off all good management practice due to a fear of managerialism.

The added confusion in this conversation is that in much of the criticism of the dangers of secularisation, the words leadership, management and managerialism are used interchangeably despite having different meanings. Having established earlier that management is concerned with organisation and control, it is worth defining managerialism

[415] P. North quoted in M. Davies, 'Catholics Seek to Embrace Mission if not Jargon, *The Church Times* 3 March 2017, https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2017/3-march/news/uk/catholics-seek-to-embrace-mission-if-not-jargon.
[416] S. Croft, *The Gift of Leadership,* p.36.

at this point. Managerialism is a culture which promotes the value of those things which can be measured and controlled to an imbalanced extreme, often at the expense of other intrinsic values. Managerialism is also generally considered to exist in a culture which has an unnecessary amount of bureaucracy and an excessive amount of jargon.

There are many authors in the body of literature on this subject that are wary of a secular managerialist culture. I have already referenced Lynch, Percy and Croft who make this argument. Lyndon Shakespeare also makes a case for a wariness of managerialism affecting church culture. In his 2016 text *Being the Body of Christ in an Age of Management*[417]he compares a 'managerialist economy' with a 'sacramental economy'. Shakespeare draws on Thomas Aquinas' teaching on the church to describe a theological economy as one which understands the church as the body of Christ. He writes;

> Accounts of the church that adopt the logic of managerialism reflect a conceptual problem… all that a managerial-inspired ecclesiology can sustain is a machine-like body that requires the manipulation by techniques for it to appear to be alive … Whereas a vision like that of Aquinas promises a fully human account of life with God, all that a managerial-inspired ecclesiology can sustain is a dim picture of a machine-like body that requires the manipulation by techniques for it to appear to be alive[418]

Shakespeare describes a church as a sacramental community oriented toward divine life and joy and in a similar manner to Lynch, he contrasts this telos with a telos of management. Shakespeare's criticism of a managerial understanding of church is that managerialism offers too reductive a view of bodies and organisations to fully engage with the sacramental purpose of the church.[419]

[417] L. Shakespeare, *Being the Body of Christ in an Age of Management,* (Wipf and Stock, 2016).
[418] Shakespeare, *Being the Body of Christ,* p180.
[419] Shakespeare, *Being the Body of Christ,* p181.

I have now established that there is a significant body of authors that are critical of a managerialist approach to leadership which includes Lynch, Shakespeare, Padfield, Croft and Percy. One difficulty in this body is that at times the criticism is reduced to a dichotomy between 'management vs theology' as well as 'management vs leadership'. I have established in this paper that there is theological merit within management and also that management has a close, but not simple, relationship with leadership.

When analysing the findings of this study, the criticism of management and/or managerialism as 'creeping secularism' can be analysed in two parts; language and values.

Secular language

A recurring criticism of Church of England's relationship with leadership is that the terms and language used have become too worldly. There was a time when even the word 'leader' itself was considered a secular word. The Faith and Order Commission recognises that there is a risk of being drawn into this world via language used;

> It is not only the word 'leader' that has been borrowed but a whole vocabulary for describing the leader's task and goals. We speak of targets, key performance indicators, behavioural competencies, competition, entrepreneurship, risk management, effectiveness, growth and success. We can sound all but indistinguishable from our secular counterparts, at least from a distance, even to the point, at times, of echoing the high-octane glitz that accompanies some secular visions of the powerful leader.[420]

Given this risk, we can identify an element of this occurring in the 2022 guidance notes on what qualities potential incumbents are expected to inhabit, which includes phrases such as;

- Have capacity to adapt a leadership style to the context.
- See the big picture, cast a vision with others and develop strategy for growth which takes people with them.
- Show initiative, drive and creativity in implementing growth so as to promote and release others.

[420] *FAOC Report* p.14.

- Hold the ring in terms of decision making when the buck stops with them.
- Show nuanced skills in negotiation and problem solving so as to manage change effectively[421]

These are all phrases used in the newer Church of England guidance document but if they were read with a cynical approach then they could be criticised as examples of 'secular management speak' creeping into the church. The Faith and Order Commission does go on to point out, however, that;

> Our tradition has always been in the business of assimilating and transforming material from the world around it. Ultimately, *all* the language we use about leadership – whether we say "bishop" or "leader", "shepherd" or "counsellor", "servant leader" or "deacon", "prince" or "priest" or "elder" – is language that has been borrowed, assimilated and transformed.[422]

Arguing here that language used in the church has always been 'borrowed or assimilated' from the world and the import of management language is not new. This church practice can be dated back to Jesus using shepherding or agricultural terms to describe how to follow him and examples in the Old Testament eve predate the church itself. Whilst language that is used in any institution will shape the culture and expectations of that organisation, the supra-cultural[423] nature of the Christian church means that it will always incorporate language from the surrounding culture. This in turn means that the church in the west will use language that the secular world is also using.

[421] *Formation Framework IME 2 for Ordained Priestly Ministry Document* 1: Qualities and Evidence, https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/ime-2-priest-qualities-and-evidence-from-autumn-2022.pdf.
[422] *FAOC Report,* p.66.
[423] L. Sanneh, *Translating the Message* (Orbis, 1989) p.200.

Secular values

A more serious allegation than the importation of management language, but perhaps a closely linked one, is the importation of secular management values. Alison Milbank writes that 'Managerialism infecting and corrupting church policy is one example of an institution's losing touch with its practices'[424] and this is an underlying fear that has resurfaced several times in this research. Lynch is also critical of encroaching managerialism. She recognises that the telos, or purpose of managerialism can be contradictory to that of Christian leadership writing that 'leaders become less concerned with where they end up rather than whether they got there efficiently.'[425]

Several authors share the concerns that secular leadership values may not align with Christian leadership. A combination of managerial priorities and a secular understanding of success may involve more wealth, power or status which are all things that the New Testament instructs Christians to resist the lure of. Managerial success in the secular working world will also often mean a promotion for the individual which is in opposition to Jesus' description of the kingdom of God in Matthew 19 where 'the first shall be the last'.[426] Percy,[427] and Parkinson[428] question the merit of Christian leaders pursuing worldly success and suggest that this is an unbiblical and even unchristian model.

If Christian leaders are able to shun personal accolades or glory however, seeking success in ministry is not necessarily negative. Incumbents would be right to look positively on things

[424] A Milbank, Management and mission: the Church of England is not a machine in *The Church Times*, 27 October 2023.
[425] C. Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership as Friendship* (Routledge, 2019) p.22.
[426] Matthew 19.
[427] M. Percy, *Clergy, The Origin of the Species,* (T & T Clarke, 1998).
[428] Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership,* p.95.

like numerical growth, an increase in baptisms or a broadening in age demographics in their congregation and these would all be successes that are not about individual recognition but instead successfully fulfilling elements of Jesus' calling to the church. Therefore there is a difficult balance for incumbents to hold as they try and do an effective job of the ministry that they are called to whilst trying to avoid the pitfall of pursuing success according to what would be perceived as secular values. The FAOC report provides a helpful summary of the risk of losing sight of the purpose of church leadership in a world of management;

> A healthy account of senior leadership in the church will keep these matters [of the function of leadership] at its heart: they are the forms of leadership specific to the church and its collective task of ministry and mission. Other, more generic tasks of leadership and management may well be necessary to allow the whole collective practice to function well, and they may at times be of very great importance, but those further tasks should always be oriented toward the practice of ministry and mission, and we should take care not to let them become ends in themselves. Management in the church exists only for the sake of ministry and mission, and it must not get in their way. This is precisely why it is crucial to understand leadership as a form of 'stewardship', equipping and resourcing the saints for their work of ministry in the world.[429]

This challenge from the FAOC is a helpful articulation of some of the doubts over management that were raised by the interview participants and normative texts. What the FAOC describe as leadership here would often be reduced to management by wardens and incumbents.

Whilst there were some who question whether those involved in church leadership should be managers at all, this approach generally came from a misunderstanding of, or over emphasis on what the terms meant. I have demonstrated that a particular confusion that has caused tension in this discussion has been the tendency to merge the concepts of

[429] *FAOC Report*, p.82.

management and managerialism, or more specifically to use the term management in a disparaging way whilst actually referring to managerialism. There were however some thoughtful, theologically reflective answers that held a genuine concern that the management element of leadership in the Church of England had become so central that it had ceased to be a tool to complete a task and had become the task itself. Martin Percy speaks of this risk, writing that 'The changing world calls for a new style of leadership – but one that is rather closer to that of Acts than is the style of leadership which predominates in British churches'.[430]

The question of whether leadership language is a sign of secularism creeping into the church is a central one to the research question of how leadership is theologically understood and practised across the Church of England. It is theologically understood in a number of different ways and perhaps the conflict between the view that it is a secular concept creeping into the church will not reconcile with the view that it is a fruitful way of ensuring that ministry is effective until management and leadership are disentangled. What has become clear is that the relationship between leadership and management is one that is misunderstood. John Adair described separating leadership from management in a binary way as the 'Zaleznik error… the making of a false dichotomy between "leaders" and "managers."'[431] It seems that the conversation between Kotter and Zaleznik's theories of separation and Adair's criticism is a discussion that the church is somewhat behind the times with.

[430] M. Percy and G. Evans (Eds), *Managing the Church? Order and Organization in a Secular Age* (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) p.84.
[431] J. Adair, *How to Grow Leaders, The Seven Key Principles of Effective Leadership Development* (Kogan Page, 2005) p.46.

6.4 Is an Anglican Understanding of Leadership Primarily Functional or Influential?

Sections 6.2 and 6.3 have demonstrated a multiplicity of terminological understandings of both discipleship and management. Analysing this has facilitated a new understanding of the Church of England's difficulties in sustaining a clear and coherent conversation about leadership. This creates a good foundation from which to explore the theme of this section and the following one.

The textual analysis of core Anglican texts recognised the difference between a functional understanding of leadership and an influential understanding of leadership. The question of how these two modes of leadership relate to each other has been central to this thesis and I will reflect on it further here.

Functional and influential modes of leadership could be found in all the texts studied but were explicitly identified and defined in the *Setting God's People Free* report.[432] The report claimed that influential leadership was more prevalent in the Church of England and highlighted some negative experiences of over-realised functional leadership. The report created a relatively clear distinction between functional and influential leadership whilst in other texts evidence of the two was more intertwined; this was particularly evident in the Ordinal. The nuance in the relationship between functional and influential leadership then became increasingly evident in the data displayed in the empirical research. Whilst most participants in the research could identify the two different modes of leadership despite not using that specific

[432] *SGPF Report,* p.6.

language, the interview data evidenced that most leaders utilised both methods of leadership rather than exclusively operating in one mode or the other. Leaders frequently switched between or combined the two approaches. Whilst the terms 'functional' and 'influential' were beneficial for an academic analysis of leadership, in practice it became difficult and at times impossible to separate the two. The idea posited by texts that some leaders and some leadership situations were *either* functional or influential did not turn out to be the lived reality in praxis.

The theme of negative experiences of leadership generally being found when leaders were operating in a functional mode was however continued from the textual research results into the empirical research results. Despite this there were also several positive experiences of functional leadership and when leaders reflected on their own practice and were asked to give examples of when they felt that they had led well, most of these examples could be described as more functional than influential.

The New Testament contains several references to a functional understanding of leadership. 1 Peter 5:2 describes pastoral leadership as 'taking oversight'[433] using the Greek *episkopeo* and Hebrews 13 instructs the readers to 'obey your leaders and submit to them'.[434] 2 Thessalonians 3 also contains this instruction from Paul; 'Take note of those who do not obey what we say in this letter; have nothing to do with them, so that they may be ashamed'.[435] The word obey, or *hypakouei*, has a strong functional resonance; it is the same word that is used for how the earthly elements relate to God in Mark 4 when Jesus calms the storm. These

[433] 1 Peter 5: 2.
[434] Hebrews 13.7.
[435] 2 Thessalonians 3:14.

New Testament texts are all examples which demonstrate that a functional manifestation of leadership can have a positive role to play in the life of the church.

Although the New Testament does evidence positive examples of functional leadership, it also offers a different manifestation of it. Jesus inverts a functional understanding of leadership in Matthew 20 saying 'whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the son of man came not to be served but to serve'.[436] This is an interesting point of note because Jesus does not condemn the desire to 'be great' as a concept, but instead critiques the cultural understanding of greatness. In contrasting the 'greatness' that comes from being a servant with the 'greatness' that the rulers of the gentiles exercise, Jesus is perhaps demonstrating that there is a functional authority that can exist without being dictatorial. The word ruler here is the Greek *archontes,* a formal position of authority which is not used in any of the descriptions of leadership in New Testament churches in the biblical texts.

As well as functional examples there are also examples of influential leadership in the New Testament in practice, such as when Paul is instructing Timothy how to lead the church in Crete. He writes 'set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.'[437] I will explore later in this chapter why example-setting is an influential form of leadership.

One primary difference between a functional understanding of leadership and an influential one is the role that 'permission' plays in the relationship between the leader and the led.

[436] Matthew 20.
[437] 1 Timothy 4:11.

Functional leadership will generally rely on the leader having agency due to their role or their position. This means that the person being 'led' by them does not necessarily have a choice about how much power the leader holds, at least not without relinquishing their own position within the organisation. In a thriving and healthy organisation, a leader with positional authority will have healthy relationships with those they lead; however, this was not the lived reality of all the interview participants. This is a different form of relationship between the leader and the led to when the leader is operating in an influential mode of leadership. This can be because the person or people that are being led have more agency when it comes to the amount of power or permission the leader holds. This is an example of referent power.[438] Although influence can still be gained through coercion or manipulation, the general expectation in an influential leadership model is a positive one where relationship is built by the leader and permission is given, at times subconsciously, by the led for them to be influenced. The Faith and Order Commission's report articulates this dynamic with the following quote:

> Do the relationships that leaders are currently being called to pursue conflict with the more basic patterns of relationship that the church is called to embody: patterns of gracious gift and reception among all God's people? 'Leader' is a relational term, but it is not always clear that the relationship envisaged between the leader and the led is the kind of relationship between members of the same body that Paul envisages in 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. How well do our descriptions of leadership cohere with our traditions of thinking (and arguing) about the nature of relationships in the body of Christ?[439]

[438] J. P. French and B. H. Raven, 'The Bases of Social Power' in Cartwright, D. and Zander, A.F. (eds), *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory*, 3rd edn (Harper and Row, 2003).
[439] *FAOC report,* p.17.

What is evidenced in both the research data and in New Testament references to leadership is that the dichotomy between functional and influential leadership is not simply one of good leadership versus bad leadership, or even that the two modes exist mutually exclusively. Despite the responses of some interview participants, it is an oversimplification to state that a functional understanding of leadership is inherently bad. There are however, several examples of functional leadership not being demonstrated well.

One recurring theme in both the texts studied and the interview data is that the majority of negative experiences of leadership occurred when the leader was operating with a functional model of leadership. Roger Gill writes;

> Power may be misused. Many senior executives are highly competent at planning, organizing, directing and controlling. But some are "command-and-control freaks'. And some are bullies. They get things done, but by using coercive power, through fear or threat of sanctions.[440]

This controlling, manipulative use of power was exemplified in the research. It was often demonstrated in an over-exertion of authority, in controlling behaviours and in the worst of cases, spiritual abuse. There was a reticence towards functional leadership in some interview respondents that was rooted in experience of controlling, abusive leaders.

This is not to suggest that spiritual abuse perpetrated by leaders only exists in functional leadership. There are many examples of winsome leaders using referent power to control and manipulate others, and this can be equally subversive and toxic, perhaps even more so at times due to the deception involved. However spiritual abuse via influential leadership was

[440] R. Gill, *The Theory and Practice of Leadership,* (SAGE, 2009) p.250.

not articulated in the research data, nor was it feared by interview participants to the same extent as it was with functional leadership.

It is worth considering at this point why a misappropriated functional form of leadership can lead to spiritual abuse or to controlling behaviours whilst also being the mode that leaders are more likely to have been utilising when they considered themselves to have demonstrated their best examples of leadership. As evidenced in chapter four, there is an underlying understanding that ordained and licenced incumbents are spiritual leaders as well as administrative organisers. Therefore if someone who is led feels uncomfortable with how their leader is behaving there is potential for them to downplay or to deny these feelings in order to stay aligned with 'what God wants.'[441] This experience can also operate from the alternative perspective. The research demonstrated[442] that leaders are sometime convinced that they are operating in 'God's authority' in their role and this can cause them to act in a way that is controlling or abusive of others without stopping to consider whether their behaviour is appropriate or not. (There is of course the potential of a third scenario in which a leader is knowingly acting in an abusive or controlling manner and using their position of spiritual authority to consciously behave this way under a pretence of following God's leading. There was little reference to this in the research results and so I will not cover that behaviour in any depth here.)

A further example of the complexity of functional leadership can be found in another scenario. It may be that the leader that holds authority and operates in a functional way has a perspective and vision which is not grasped by the led and yet is still the correct way to

[441] Incumbent F.
[442] Incumbents C, D.

operate. What happens here is that the leader takes the people or an organisation in a direction that is the correct one but does not have universal acceptance. If relational dynamics are healthy then this can be a positive experience, but if there is a feeling of enforcement, control or coercion then this can be abusive.

A contrast has now been developed between a good model of functional authority and a bad one. Good functional leadership is reliant on an authority that is not forced onto the led and is not controlling or coercive. According to the research data, bad functional leadership is often experienced by an over exertion of forced power facilitated by a position of authority. However, when permission to be led is given, there is a place for a leader to be in a position of authority that is functional. In this situation there is a healthy relationship between the leader and the led, where permission is given to be led despite the fact the permission is not formally required. This demonstrates referent and legitimate power operating in tandem, where once again we see influential and functional leadership coexisting rather than being binary options.

So far in this chapter I have demonstrated that both functional and influential forms of leadership are present within normative church texts as well as in scripture, and that the empirical evidence suggests individuals can hold favourable views of each. Difficulty emerges when leadership is exercised by fallible humans, resulting in distortions that can cause harm both to congregants and to the wider community of faith. We can therefore say that both functional and influential leadership have a valid role, while the misuse of functional authority can adversely affect both people and mission. Moreover, the analysis highlights that

leadership, particularly in its influential form, depends significantly on the willingness of others to grant permission to be led.

Mining deeper into the empirical research data reveals an interesting difference between the leadership priorities of church wardens and those of incumbents.

When church wardens were asked to reflect on examples of their incumbents' demonstrating good leadership, most responses were examples of leadership that were more influential than functional. The Ordinal describes influential modes of leadership with examples such as 'being a pattern and example to Christ's people'[443] or 'nurturing others in their faith'[444] whereas Church wardens' perspective on positive aspects of leadership often reflected a high value placed on 'avoiding conflict'[445] and 'keeping as many congregation members as happy as possible'.[446] When asked to give examples of when their incumbents had demonstrated good leadership, all ten of the wardens interviewed elected to speak about how the congregation had been made to feel rather than a specific action that the leader had performed. This suggests that wardens, as people who hold a licensed office within the church but do not hold the incumbency, prioritise the leader's responsibility for the culture of the church and the feelings of its members over the responsibility to implement any change or to move the church in a direction that may cause members to feel uncomfortable.

The difference between the theological reflections of wardens and those of incumbents is notable with wardens having a strong preference for a model of leadership which is relational and primarily concerned with culture. Whilst responses from both the incumbents and the

[443] *The Ordinal,* p.15.
[444] *The Ordinal,* p.15.
[445] Warden D.
[446] Warden F.

wardens showed a wariness of a functional mode of leadership, the incumbents usually gave examples of either functional or task driven leadership when asked when they felt they had led well. This is particularly prevalent having established the importance of choice and of relationship in order for a functional mode of leadership to operate healthily.

This is interesting because the selection criteria against which all the interviewed incumbents were assessed contained the note that

> A basic ability required of leaders is to identify where the group or community stands and what it should aim to achieve. Leaders should then be able to set out the means to obtain the objectives, drawing the group or community towards the aim and motivating its members towards the goal.[447]

Since this was published, the Selection Criteria have been replaced by the Qualities Framework, but the text does hold together both the functional leadership which is generally valued by the incumbents (setting objectives, identifying aims) and also the influential leadership that is generally valued by church wardens (drawing the group together, motivating members etc).

In addition to the feelings of a congregation, wardens also usually held a preference for the culture that a leader created when assessing leadership merits whilst incumbents usually looked to tasks as a measurement for success. Whilst the dichotomy between task and culture is not directly related to the one between influential and functional leadership, it was demonstrated in the previous chapter that there is an implicit relationship between the theological values and priorities held by those who prefer an influential mode of leadership and those who would prioritise investing in a culture over a task and vice versa.

[447] Advisory Board of Ministry, *The Report of a Working Party on Criteria for Selection for Ministry in the Church of England*, Policy Paper 3A (London: Central Board of Finance of the Church of England, 1993).

The evidence from the empirical data once again demonstrates that the primary difference between the textual, or normative, dichotomy between functional leadership and influential leadership and the data that emerged from the research is that at times the texts, particularly the *SGPF Report*,[448] suggested that these were binary modes of leadership. When data from the empirical research was analysed, there were clear examples of both functional understandings of leadership and of influential understandings of leadership, however they were often demonstrated in the same situations by the same leaders.

What this demonstrates is that the Anglican understanding of leadership, and the language used to describe it are both complex and nuanced. This in turn means that whilst the term 'leadership' may be used by several people in one conversation, they may have different understandings of the term and be miscommunicating with one another. It is possible for one person to assume that 'leadership' is what an incumbent does at the front of church, and when they are 'setting direction for a community' as described by the selection criteria, they do this by dictating direction and enforcing it using legitimate power. A second person, when looking for a leader to 'set a direction' may assume that their incumbent should set out a vision from the front but then persuade and cajole people to buy into it with a more referent use of power. A third person may believe that 'leadership' refers to the work of getting alongside people, listening to them, and facilitating a process by which a shared vision emerges. This pattern of each individual having a different understanding of leadership can continue *ad infinitum,* and therefore may be as many different expectations of a leader as there are people in a congregation.

[448] *SGPF Report* p.18, 23.

The entanglement between the tendency for some people to take leadership to mean exclusively or predominantly functional leadership whilst others may see functional leadership as bad and to focus on influential has several facets. One of these is that the two functions do not appear to exist in isolation from each other, despite a normative assumption that leadership is a binary option between the two. A second complication that there is a lack of clarity about the distinction between power and authority in both the sets of data and these words may be misunderstood in any conversation as they hold different meanings to different people. A third complexity is that these conversations can be bridled with baggage that sometimes comes from poor experiences, misunderstanding terms or even church traditions and cultures.

The functional and influential dimensions of leadership are deeply intersected; both are important forms of leadership and there are good biblical and theological reasons to expect them to both be utilised in church leadership. There are dangers associated with bad leadership and this research demonstrates that these dangers can be facilitated either by poor use of functional position or influential possibilities that are afforded through functional position. Due to these complications, an ability to be able to talk about these differences and to provide adequate training in understanding and implementing different modes of leadership is sorely needed in the church.

6.5 Ordination and Leadership

Given the confusion and disagreement concerning leadership explained in the chapter thus far, it is unsurprising that there is no clear answer as to how leadership is understood to relate

to ordination. In a similar manner to the previous section on influential and functional leadership, the relationship between ordination and leadership was not clear in either the normative texts or the research data, and so the conversation between the two requires some analysis. The data did yield evidence that being ordained in the Church of England gives a person a significant level of influence and of power, both of which are elements of leadership. Whilst this study has primarily focused on how ordained leadership manifests in parish incumbency, the reflections on leadership found within that ministry will have resonances with all roles held by priests. This is particularly true for how priests are perceived to be leaders by those who they work with or those for whom they hold a form of pastoral responsibility.

Ordained ministry involves the making of disciples, although this relationship is complicated. Parish incumbency, which requires ordination, also involves a large amount of management, even if it need not involve managerialism. Ordained ministry also brings with it functional position and influential possibilities which are both alluded to in The Ordinal. Therefore, building on the evidence demonstrated in this thesis, ordination is intrinsically related to leadership within the Church of England.

The theological understandings of the link between ordination and leadership are varied across the church and the texts that can be seen as normative hold a multiplicity of explanations. However, the unifying theme across the texts and the empirical research is that there are leadership roles and tasks that the ordained are expected to hold. These task include but are not limited to: leading by example, leading by a perception of holiness, leading by servanthood, leading acts of worship, leading by managing the church, leading by being in a

position of power, leading by connecting people to God and leading by organising administratively.

I will select three of these to structure this section and explore how ordination relates to leadership. I will first explore how power and ordination intersect in parish ministry, secondly how sacramental leadership is manifested through ordained ministry, and finally how example-setting is a leadership function of the ordained.

6.5.1 Ordained to a Position of Power

Having explored earlier the relationship between administration and management I want to consider how ordination can be a route into positions of influence and agency within the organisational structure of the Church of England. Power is defined by Gill as 'the ability to change the behaviour of others.'[449] There are some ways in which an ordained person can change the behaviour of others that are facilitated by ordination itself, both positionally and influentially. There are clear parallels between accessing a position of power and a functional understanding of leadership which are worth exploring at this point.

The description of ordained ministry in The Ordinal could suggest that ordained leadership is largely concerned with leading acts of worship or leading through example, but the analysis of the SGPF report contends that ordination is a route to power and authority. It gives examples of clergy wielding power in an unhealthy way which is controlling and oppressive. This complex relationship is mirrored in the rationales given when some incumbents explained

[449] R. Gill and J. Hodges, *Sustaining Change in Organisations, (*Sage, 2014) p.333.

their reasons for pursuing ordination, with some recognising it as a route to being able to implement change that they felt was necessary, which is a form of power, and some pursing ordination as a route to being able to lead people closer to God through example-setting or to being able to lead worship sacramentally.

The role of inhabiting positions that can only be held by the ordained was more prevalent than I expected in some peoples' perspectives when considering the relationship between ordination and leadership. Three of the ordained interview participants described wanting to inhabit a position where they could implement change and have more power and influence in the church as a primary reason for pursuing ordination.[450] This is evidence that it is not only the forms of leadership exemplified in The Ordinal that influenced the discernment process but also the leadership positions which become accessible to individuals once they are ordained. The three candidates that described wanting to be able to access more agency to influence change as a reason to pursue ordination were the three female candidates that were interviewed. The sense of wanting to access that influence was not mentioned by any of the male incumbents, this does not mean that it was not their reason for pursuing ordination however, it may exist as a subconscious rationale or perhaps even a rationale which they did not feel comfortable sharing at interview. The fact that this was articulated by all three women could highlight a sense of frustration with how power was perceived to be held patriarchally.

The power held by the ordained was identified by several interview respondents, but this was not always held in a positive light. The empirical research displayed several examples of nervousness both of leaders that were looking to over-exert functional power and of priests

[450] Incumbents H, I, K.

that had 'wrong' motivations or priorities for wanting positions of leadership.[451] This aligns with Western[452] and Parkinson's[453] arguments that modern understandings of leadership are based on a secular understanding of success and individual achievement.

One of the words that describes leadership in the New Testament is *episkopos* which is sometimes translated as 'overseer' or 'bishop.' In Titus this word is used when Paul writes 'a bishop (*episkopos)*, as God's steward [of the church]'.[454] The NIV translates this as 'An overseer manages God's household'.[455] Both steward and manage are words which indicate that at this period in church history, an 'overseer' has an authoritative role in leading a church.

Although *episkopos* is translated as bishop rather than priest, it still provides an impression of one New Testament understanding of leadership. This is because the 'oversight' element of leadership is not restricted to the episcopate. The Faith and Order Commission's report on leadership uses the word *episkope* to describe leadership at all levels.[456] Croft argues that the terms *episkopos* and *presbyteros* are interchangeable in the way they are used in the Bible.[457] Croft goes on in this text to describe the person exercising episcope as being firstly `a focus for the unity of the people of God', secondly a person whose call is `that of enabling, developing and sustaining the ministry of others, and thirdly someone who has `the ability to keep watch: over one's own ministry, over the lives and ministries of others, and over the whole congregation'.[458] The Ordinal also states that priests are to *share oversight* of the

[451] Warden B, Warden F.
[452] S. Western, S., *Leadership, A Critical Text* (SAGE, 2019) p.276.
[453] I. Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership* (SCM, 2020) p.36.
[454] Titus 1: 7 (NRSV Translation).
[455] Titus 1:7 (NIV Translation).
[456] *FAOC Report*.
[457] S. Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions (Darton, Longman and Todd,* 1999) p.67.
[458] Croft, *Ministry,* pp.154-164.

church with the bishop.[459] In Sheffield Diocese, from which the empirical data was gathered, parish incumbents are often given the job title 'Oversight Minister,' which is described as 'semi-episcopal' in their Statement of Particulars. Regardless of whether the role of *episkope* is inhabited by a bishop or a priest, the definition of 'overseeing' and 'stewarding' or 'managing' suggests that there are certain roles within the church that are restricted to those who hold the office of overseer and this is mirrored in the way that the Church of England has roles which are restricted to the ordained.

The role of overseer has several interpretations and manifestations, many of which are concerned with example-setting or holding spiritual authority. It is also true that ordination affords more tangible power to an incumbent. The licensed and authorised nature of incumbency dictates that ordination is a route to holding a position of power which is unavailable to others. Incumbency, which is usually only available to the ordained, provides an opportunity to chair the PCC, to interpret and teach theology within the church, and to appoint or withhold roles within the church amongst other responsibilities. These can all be opportunities to operate in a functional model of leadership. This means that aside from the soft power and influential leadership that is held by the spiritual or discipleship elements of being an incumbent, there are measurable elements of power that come with ordination.

6.5.2 Ordained to Lead Sacramentally

This thesis has demonstrated that ordained leadership is not only concerned with functional or positional leadership. Some examples of The Ordinal using the word 'lead' are when it states that priests are 'to lead God's people in worship', in 'praise' and in 'proclaiming Christ's

[459] *The Ordinal*, p.8.

Gospel'.[460] It was apparent that for some interview participants the role of connecting people to God through worship was the primary function of a priest and that for them this is understood to be a form of leadership.[461]

One notable quote from an incumbent that was interviewed was 'leadership is centred around the idea of being an *alter Christus*, that the priest takes the place of Christ amongst the community that he serves'.[462] This understanding of leadership, that the priest or leader takes the place of Christ for those that they lead[463] was a shared by other respondents[464] who recognised that part of ordained leadership was concerned with representing Jesus to those being led, although an evangelical Christian may not use the phrase 'taking the place of Christ' in the way that *alter Christus* is understood to an Anglo-Catholic Christian. The responsibility placed on an ordained leader for integrity and right motive becomes heightened due to the fact that the congregation or parish that they are leading can see them as a representative of Christ. Whilst The Ordinal instructs priests to lead in worship and in example, one understanding of priesthood is that a priests' role is to connect people to the divine. One result of this can be that a failure of leadership or an abuse of power by an ordained priest can lead to a breakdown in trust that people have in both the Church and in God and in some cases even a broken connection between them and God.

The power wielded in a sacramental understanding of leadership cannot be underestimated. Gill adds a number of forms of power to French and Ravens initial list, including 'expert power'

[460] *The Ordinal*.
[461] Incumbents F, I, A.
[462] Incumbent J (gendered language quoted in context).
[463] See Denis Edwards in *The Spirituality of the Diocesan Priest, Edited by Donald Couzzens, (*Liturgical Press, 1997*) p.73* or Columba Marmion, *Christ the Ideal of Priest* (Green wing Press, 1952) p.43.
[464] Incumbents A, C.

which is based on the premise that someone is implicitly trusted and carries agency in a situation if they are perceived to hold expertise.[465] In churches there is an increased level of power held by a leader if that leader is perceived to have the ability to connect people with God, or perhaps in a coercive manner to even disconnect them from God. The words of The Ordinal suggest a significant amount of responsibility that comes with this perception of power and the weight of this responsibility was expressed by the incumbents interviewed.

The sacramental authority that ordained ministers carry can extend beyond leading worship or ministering the sacraments due to the way that they are perceived by others.[466] Ordained ministers in the Church of England hold significant power over congregants due to the perception of their ability to connect people to God. This in itself is an important part of ordained ministry, however historically it has been too easy for positive elements of sacramental authority to develop into its negative shadow side, clericalism, due to human failings.

6.5.3 Ordained to Become an Example Setter

The leadership role of being an 'example setter' was prevalent in both the textual analysis and the interview data. The Church of England's working party for selection criteria wrote in 1993 that the leadership capabilities of an ordained priest should include the 'ability to offer an example of faith and discipleship, to collaborate effectively with others, as well as to guide and shape the life of the Church community in its mission to the world.'[467]

[465] R. Gill, *Theory and Practice of Leadership,* p.249.
[466] *SGPF Report*, p.21.
[467] Advisory Board of Ministry, *The Report of a Working Party on Criteria for Selection for Ministry in the Church of England*, (1993).

Example-setting as a mode of leadership is also a common theme in the New Testament. One New Testament model of leadership that we have already studied is the idea of an overseer, or *episkopos* in the Greek. There are several examples in the New Testament which describe the lifestyle expected of an overseer, and the example that they are expected to set such as 1 Timothy 3: 2-7[468] or Titus 1.[469]

The idea of ordained leadership involving example-setting is not disputed. The Ordinal includes the charge from the bishops to the candidates asking them 'Will you endeavour to fashion your own life and that of your household according to the way of Christ, that you may be a pattern and example to Christ's people?'.[470]This 'example-setting' aspect of ordained leadership often featured in the interview data and revealed a further complexity. A priest has consistently been thought of as someone who can be trusted to set an example and to go to for counsel or advice.[471] The fact that several respondents expected that their leaders are fashioning their lives according to the way of Christ meant that if their incumbents were to fail in some way and let down those that they were leading, then the pain and distress experienced by those who were led had a significantly worse impact than when they were let down by secular leaders. This in part can be attributed to the difference between being in a leadership role in a secular setting and being in a leadership role with a spiritual element added to it, such as the words used in The Ordinal suggest. The interview data demonstrated that whilst there will usually be emotional damage when a leader is leading poorly, either

[468] 1 Timothy 3:2-7.
[469] Titus 1: 6-9.
[470] *The Ordinal,* p.5.
[471] P. Avis, *The Anglican Understanding of Church* (SPCK, 2000).

intentionally or unintentionally, this is exacerbated when an individual's relationship with the leader is emotionally connected with their relationship with God and the Church.

There is a further difficult dynamic with the 'example setting' role of ordained leadership. If we consider the ordained person to be setting an example of how to live a Christian life to the lay person, and the lay person is hoping to imitate that spirituality, then there is a danger that ordained leaders are seen as 'better' or 'more advanced' Christians. Firstly, this is problematic because there should not be a hierarchy of better or worse Christians in the church, this could lead to a toxic environment and diverges from Jesus' teachings. Secondly, this could suggest that all Christians who want to grow in their faith will eventually be ordained, which also is problematic. Whilst both the texts and the interview research concur that ordained ministry involves an element of setting a spiritual example, differing understandings of what this means can create further complexity and misunderstanding. The power and agency held by a leader who is called to set an example not just in public ministry, but in their personal spirituality and in their private life is wrought with complex pressures and is a line that must be walked carefully.

In this section on ordination, I have said several things. Firstly, I have said that ordination and the roles that ordination allow access to, puts someone in a specific position or role which carries functions, expectations and possibilities. Many of these are examples of leadership or are areas in which leadership gifts are expected to manifest. It is important to recognise that ordination does have an impact on the expectations that are placed on a person and denying or ignoring these expectations results in the disguising of a hierarchy which nevertheless continues to operate. This can make that hierarchy harder to recognise and to handle safely.

Lynch[472] warns that in an ecclesial setting this can inadvertently perpetuate existing power imbalances by not engaging with the reality of their existence.

Secondly, having recognised this power dynamic, it is important to engage with how people inhabit these roles and how their roles are perceived by others. In ordained ministry, and leadership, it is possible to see both functional and influential leadership existing. The nature of a licensed role and the restrictions of certain roles to the ordained mean that an ordained incumbent will hold an amount of functional leadership. However due to the nature of being a primary preacher and the expectation on a priest to 'set an example'[473] there is an influential model of leadership at play simultaneously. Therefore, an ordained incumbent will be able to utilise nearly all the forms of power described by Bertram and Raven[474] and expanded on by Gill.[475]

Thirdly, priests are expected to set an example which is a form of leadership. Within ordained leadership we again see that the functional positions inhabited by priests are often deeply entangled with elements of influence. By virtue of being ordained, an incumbent can inhabit a position that is rarely available to a lay person. However also from that position they are able to persuade, provide an example, and encourage others via an influential mode of leadership. Similarly, someone who ministers the sacraments will usually automatically be seen as someone holy and trustworthy and even someone who can connect others to the

[472] Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership,* p.69.
[473] ABM, *The Report of a Working Party on Criteria for Selection for Ministry in the Church of England*, (1993)
[474] French, J. P. and Raven, B. H., 'The Bases of Social Power' in Cartwright, D. and Zander, A.F. (eds), *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory*, 3rd edn (Harper and Row, 2003).
[475] R. Gill, *Theory and Practice of Leadership,* p.345.

divine. This creates a complex combination of functional and influential leadership alongside differing types of power and agency.

6.6 Chapter Summary and Reflections

Richar Osmer in *Practical Theology* writes that any practical theology should resolve with a 'pragmatic task'[476] which asks the question 'having learnt what we have learnt, how might we respond?' The pragmatic response to the research undertaken is primarily to do with effective communication. What has become apparent is that words such as 'leadership', 'discipleship', 'management' and 'ordination' are important to the life of the church and for people in ministry can carry a lot of baggage. The difficulty is that these words can mean different things to different people and these understandings can be held very tightly by the individuals involved. This can be particularly prevalent in specific areas of the church where theological understandings are reinforced due what Western labels dynamic conformity[477] but is more commonly referred to as an 'echo chamber.'[478] Differences can also arise between ideas about leadership found in formal or normative texts and ideas about leadership held by those who are engaged with church leadership in their daily lived reality.

What has become clear through the process of this research is that to have healthy discussion across the church about the topic of leadership, we need to understand other peoples' perspectives and gracefully grasp what they mean when they use terms that we believe we

[476]R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Eerdmans, 2008), p.4.
[477] S. Western, *Leadership, A Critical Text* (SAGE, 2019) p.123.
[478] Incumbent I.

are familiar with. Leadership as a concept is deeply embedded in the Church of England and despite the negative reaction to the word that is sometimes demonstrated, is generally valued and appreciated. The FAOC writes:

> It [leadership language] has simply become too prevalent and too deeply embedded, and we acknowledge that this is in part because it can name important needs in the church's life. Rather than arguing about whether we should stop using leadership language, therefore, we discuss how this language might be used *well*, and how the dangers involved can be recognized and avoided.[479]

To summarise the different elements of this theological reflection it is perhaps important to recognise that different questions have approached different aspects of leadership. This is to say that the analysis of a functional understanding versus an influential one for example is answering a different question to the analysis of the relationship between ordination and leadership. There is a further discussion to be had around the implementation of leadership and the relationship between leadership, discipleship, management, power, and ordination.

This thesis has established that that discipleship can be a sub-set of leadership, but that management can also be a sub-set of leadership. When one person uses the word 'leadership' they may mean what another person means when they say discipleship and the same can be true of management. This is not to say that management and discipleship exist in isolation. There is a strong relationship between the two and they can each facilitate the other. The confusion surrounding this terminology and the way that the terms can be used

[479] *FAOC Report,* p.23.

interchangeably makes it easy to misunderstand others and can make it difficult to have a healthy discussion about leadership.

The functional/influential question is less a question of what leadership looks like, or what its task is, but is more a question about how it is implemented in order to complete that task. It is difficult to identify a clear understanding of this in the Church of England without a good terminological foundation on which to build. What has become clear is that the two modes of leadership are not mutually exclusive, but that the act of leadership will usually involve an intersection of the functional and the influential.

The study of how ordination relates to the role of incumbency has been a helpful window into how leadership is seen to relate to any ordained role within the Church of England. Ordination and leadership have a similarly nuanced intersection. It is true to say that ordination is a route to church leadership, but this truism exists as a concept understood by all but not defined clearly in any text or constitution. This reality exists alongside the truth that church leadership is not the destination or even the desire for all who are ordained. Given the dangers that are associated with poor leadership, that often seem to manifest in the misuse of functional position, an ability to talk about this dynamic is desperately needed in the Church of England. What we can now say is that although ordination is a route to leadership, it is not the only route to leadership and nor should it be. We can also say that leadership itself is usually not the objective for people who seek ordination, but that leadership is a tool to be used by the ordained as they minister their vocation.

What this research has demonstrated is that as a body, the Church of England is not yet in a position to have a good conversation about leadership. It does not have the shared language

or the shared categories and distinctions for its members to speak to each other well. This lack of shared language does not simply generate unnecessary confusion and avoidable disagreement; it also makes it harder to name and face up to the realities and the dangers of poor leadership. A number of factors have contributed to the existence of such a multiplicity of understandings and the lack of understanding across the church.

The pragmatic suggestion therefore must be to provide better leadership training and resourcing. However the purpose of this cannot be to create yet another stream of understanding, or yet more definitions of term that are already in use. The need that this research has identified is one of learning how to understand the terminology and leadership values that are already in use, of learning how to appreciate and listen to those who have different experiences and priorities, and of learning how to extract the positive elements of leadership whilst leaving unhelpful elements behind.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that leadership is theologically understood and practised in a variety of ways across the Church of England, and whilst some may appear to be incompatible with one another, some disagreements are rooted in misunderstandings which might not be insurmountable if the church had shared language and terminology.

This research has broken the discussion down into four conversations. The first of these questions how discipleship relates to leadership, the second unpicks the complex relationship between management and leadership, the third explores the understandings of functional and influential leadership and the fourth asks whether ordination begets leadership. All four of these conversations are beset with disagreements and confusions. People's relationship with and experiences of leadership are often emotionally charged and framed by deeply held convictions. The relationship between power and leadership, and the way that power is exercised adds an emotional dynamic which at times has caused harm. An added complexity is that some individuals' perceptions of church leadership is inextricably linked to their views of the Church itself, and in some cases, even to their understanding of God. Some corners of the church have strong theological views on leadership and members of these congregations' views on leadership are formed within an echo chamber and they may not be aware of wider conversations about it.

A further confusion is that normative texts may try to define terms such as 'power', 'leadership', 'management' or 'secularism' whilst those in parish leadership have formed their own separate understandings of these terms. Commentators may offer a helpful critique of a topic such as managerialism, an example of this is Chloe Lynch's compelling argument that it

is incompatible with the basic telos of ecclesial leadership.[480] However this is a conversation that the church is unable to have while understandings of terms are used interchangeably. There are parallels here with Cameron et al[481] who identify that a formal voice of theology, i.e. one that comes from academic observers of a situation, may differ from an operant or espoused theological voice that comes from those engaged in praxis. The difference here is not simply one of theology, but sometimes one of terminology and language. There is a legitimate critique of managerialism encroaching into the Church of England, and there is a legitimate need for leadership and for management. However, for many incumbents and church wardens, the terms 'leadership', 'managerialism' and 'management' are not distinct ideas but are interchangeable. There are some who are dismissive of the term 'leadership', at times with a notable aggression. However, when investigated, what they are often critical of is secular managerialism and increased use of what is perceived as 'jargon'. Whilst commentators such as Kotter[482] and Zaleznik[483] have argued for a clear separation of definitions of leadership and management, others such as Adair[484] have contended that they are inextricably linked. This thesis contends that in a church context, the two cannot exist independently.

Discipleship itself is a term with several differently held understandings. There are some who understand discipleship to mean the state of 'being a Christian'. Within this understanding it

[480]C. Lynch, *Ecclesial Leadership as Friendship*, 1st ed. (Routledge; 2019) pp. 20-23.
[481] H. Cameron and C. Duce, *Researching Practice in Mission and Ministry: A Companion* (SCM Press, 2013) p.165.
[482] J. Kotter, *A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs from Management*, (New York Free Press, 1990).
[483] A. Zaleznik, 'Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?'*, Harvard Business Review*, May/June 1977, pp. 67–78.
[484]J. Adair, *How to Grow Leaders, The Seven Key Principles of Effective Leadership Development* (Kogan Page, 2005) p.64.

is possible to describe leadership as a subset of discipleship.[485] However for others, the term discipleship describes a process of learning or being 'discipled,' primarily by Jesus Christ but also by other people who are mentoring or 'discipling' one another. Within this context, a person that is discipling another person is, in a sense, leading them. This inverts the relationship between leadership and discipleship, with discipleship becoming a subset of leadership.

The relationship between leadership and management can also become confused, in part through terminology. There is a strong biblical and theological case to be made that many elements of management such as administration or effective oversight are examples of leadership which carry significant spiritual significance. Management contains theological themes such as stewardship, accountability and pastoral care, so we can say with confidence that management is a theologically rich concept which can be good and can be spiritually fruitful.

Identifying positive or theologically valuable elements of management is difficult for some members of the church however. It has become anecdotally true that either management is inherently bad or that that leadership is spiritual and management is purely practical. It is also a held belief by some that leadership is spiritual whilst management is secular. One reason for these beliefs is that management can be perceived as a top-down, controlling leadership style which can trigger painful responses due to past experiences of poor leadership. A second reason may simply be that when using the term 'management', a person may be referring

[485] Lay Leadership Task Group, *Setting God's People Free: A Report from the Archbishops' Council* (Church of England, 2017, https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/gs-2056-setting-gods-people-free.pdf.

what others would describe as ‘managerialism,’ which is a secular concept with more genuine criticisms.

The foundation that is built here is that leadership, management and discipleship are not easily distinguished nor defined. The dynamism of the church’s life is more nuanced than any single person’s ability to define it and the terms used are already emotionally charged due to the complexity of human experience. This means that the conversation about whether leadership in the Church of England is primarily understood to be functional or influential is also complex.

Within discussions about functional and influential leadership there are further distinctions such as whether leadership is top-down or collaborative, whether it is concerned with task or culture, and even whether it is releasing or coercive. These extra distinctions are not exclusively reducible to the functional and influential distinction but some general patterns can be observed and due to peoples’ experiences or held beliefs they may be quick to generalise.

There are examples of both functional and influential dimensions to leadership in the texts studied, in the examples of local leadership researched and in the biblical corpus. Although in theory any combination could exist in leadership, there is a general perception that functional leadership tends to coincide with top-down, task-focussed leadership whilst influential leadership tends to be more collaborative. It is also true that the majority of negative experiences of leadership tended to be examples of functional leadership displaying coercive and controlling behaviours.

All this being established, there is little surprise that further confusions and divisions arise when trying to define the relationship between ordination and leadership in the Church of England. All the elements discussed to this point can come into play to some extent in an exploration of ordained ministry. The power and agency associated with ordained ministry cannot be adequately captured by the term *clericalism* alone. For some, ordination confers a new level of functional authority; for others, it represents formal incorporation into an institutional system. For some it is about granting access to a sacramental ministry that, in certain contexts, may function as a gateway to divine encounter or spiritual legitimacy. This means that the complexities regarding discipleship, management, functional and influential modes, power and theology are intertwined in our understandings of and relationship with ordained ministry. Studying the function of ordained ministry and how it interrelates to leadership at a local church level with incumbency has created a picture of how the Church of England understands the relationship between ordained ministry and leadership in many other priestly roles. This is central to how the Church of England understands leadership more generally due to the interrelation of ordination and leadership across the church.

In conclusion, it is evident that any attempt to engage meaningfully with leadership in the Church of England must begin by attending to the language used and the assumptions that underlie it. The multiplicity of theological interpretations surrounding leadership in the Church of England reflects not only the complexity of ecclesial practice but also the lack of a coherent and shared conceptual framework. Without shared definitions or an awareness of how terms are received across different ecclesial contexts, the church risks losing out on meaningful conversation and engagement and seeing more misunderstanding and disparity.

Yet within this diversity lies opportunity: the recognition that leadership is not a fixed construct but a theologically rich, relational, and perhaps even evolving practice and one in which we can all learn and grow.

This thesis has brought clarification to the differing theological and terminological understandings of leadership in the Church of England which, if approached with grace and humility, could facilitate a better conversation to be able to take place. A primary recommendation would be that those engaging with this conversation recognise the deeply held convictions of others and acknowledge the influences and lived experiences that may have contributed to these convictions.

A second recommendation is that when engaging with this topic, the theological and biblical merit of both management and discipleship are not dismissed. It is important to recognise that both management and discipleship contain elements of leadership and that leadership contains elements of both management and discipleship. It is an oversimplification to dismiss either as being too secular or too modern, but it is important to see that neither of these terms have a monopoly on what leadership is. Conversations would benefit from participants recognising value in different understandings of these terms and identifying merit in the contributions of differing perspectives.

A third recommendation is that participants in discussions of leadership specify whether they are referring to functional leadership or influential leadership. This can be done without dismissing the other but recognising the relationship between the two.

It is also important to appreciate the varying perspectives on ordination, power and the dynamic between the two that are held by people with differing influences and experiences. This research has demonstrated that the Church of England does not require a new definition

of leadership, nor is it possible to create one if it did. But just as it has done with terms such as ‘worship’, ‘mission,’ and even ‘church’, the Church of England will benefit from a humble recognition that the term leadership is held differently by different members of the church. This new approach could begin to facilitate conversations between the centre and the edges of the church, allow people to see beyond the dynamic conformity that they have experienced, and understand each other in greater depth.

As the church continues to grow in its understanding of leadership in a changing ecclesial and cultural landscape, it must do so with both theological attentiveness, grace, and a commitment to mutual understanding. Only then can a more integrated and faithful conversation about leadership begin to emerge. This is a conversation about which I am excited. I still believe, as I did at the beginning of this process, that a good understanding of leadership can lead to a more fruitful ministry and a greater impact of the Kingdom of God on the world. I hope that this contribution to a greater understanding will benefit the ministry of the church and any situation in which I need to minister leadership.

Appendices

Appendix A: Case Study Churches

Church	**Size** (S = 0-40 USA) (M= 41-150 USA) (L= 150+ USA)	**Deprivation** (L= bottom 33%) (M= 34-66%) (H= 67-99%)	**Tradition** (described by incumbent)
A	L	H	Charismatic Evangelical
B	M	M	Reformed Evangelical
C	S	L	Open Evangelical
F	M	H	Middle of the Road
G	M	L	Liberal Catholic
H	M	M	Evangelical/Liberal
I	L	H	Liberal Catholic
J	S	L	Anglo Catholic
K	M	H	Anglo/Liberal Catholic
L	S	M	"just normal" Open Evangelical

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Incumbents

1. Please tell me about yourself, explain your current role and briefly describe your church?

I will use the next three questions to allow you to reflect on what leadership is, and what constitutes good practice of leadership.

2. Can you describe what you understand is meant by the term 'leadership'?
3. Can you think of an example where you feel that you have exercised leadership well?
    a. What made this a good example of leadership?
4. Can you think of a time when you have seen leadership exercised poorly either by yourself or by someone else and can you describe it?
    a. On reflection, what should have been done differently in that situation?

I will use the next 4 questions to allow you to reflect on what has informed your understanding of leadership.

5. What was the most useful leadership training that you have received?
6. Is there a passage in the bible which describes a type of leadership that you particularly value?
7. Do you feel that you had good teaching about leadership during formation, and can you share how this has influenced your practice?
8. What books or teachings have most influenced your understanding of leadership?
    a. Can you think of an example of how they have influenced your practice?

We will finish with 3 questions to allow you to reflect on the relationship between leadership and your roles as an ordained priest and as a parish incumbent.

9. Did the concept of leadership have any influence on your decision to pursue ordained ministry?
10. Can you remember how aware you were of the contents of the ordinal and the selection criteria during your discernment process?
11. Do you feel that your understanding of leadership has changed or developed as you have progressed from being an ordinand, through your curacy and into incumbency?

Finally I would like to give you an opportunity to share anything that seems relevant that has not come up in the interview questions so far.

12. Is there anything that you'd like to add?

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Church Wardens

1. Please tell me about yourself, explain how you see your role as a church warden and briefly describe your church?

I will use the next three questions to allow you to reflect on what leadership is, and what constitutes good practice of leadership.

2. Can you describe what you understand is meant by the term 'leadership'?
3. Can you think of an example where you feel that your incumbent has exercised leadership well?
    a. What made this a good example of leadership?
4. Can you think of a time when you have seen leadership exercised poorly either by your current incumbent or be previous incumbents?
    a. On reflection, what should have been done differently in that situation?

I will use the next 4 questions to allow you to reflect on what has informed your understanding of leadership.

5. Can you think of any sources either from church or the wider world that have influenced your understanding of good leadership?
6. Is there a passage in the bible which describes a type of leadership that you particularly value?
7. (if the answers to Q5 are primarily phrases or ideas) Are there any books or teachings have most influenced your understanding of leadership?

We will finish with 3 questions to allow you to reflect on the relationship between leadership and the role of an ordained priest and a parish incumbent.

8. Are you aware of any of the contents of the Church of England's selection criteria for ordination?
9. What do you think are the differences and similarities, if any, between the role of priest and the role of church leader?

Finally I would like to give you an opportunity to share anything that seems relevant that has not come up in the interview questions so far.

10. Is there anything that you'd like to add?

Appendix C: Final List of Codes

CODE 1 ANOINTING

CODE 2 AUTHORITY

CODE 3 BOOKS AND REFERENCES

CODE 4 CHALLENGE AND CONFRONTATION

CODE 5 CHANGE MANAGEMENT

CODE 6 CHARACTER

CODE 7 COLLABORATION

CODE 8 COMMUNICATION

CODE 9 COMPETENCE

CODE 10 CONTROLLING BEHAVIOURS

CODE 11 CULTURE

CODE 12 DISCIPLESHIP

CODE 13 EQUIPPING OTHERS

CODE 14 SETTING EXAMPLE

CODE 15 FUNCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

CODE 16 GENDER

CODE 17 INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

CODE 18 INFLUENCE

CODE 19 LEADERSHIP DEFINITIONS

CODE 20 LEADERSHIP NEGATIVE

CODE 21 LEADERSHIP POSITIVE

CODE 22 LITURGICAL AWARENESS

CODE 23 MANAGEMENT

CODE 24 MENTORING

CODE 25 PRIESTHOOD AND ORDINATION

CODE 26 PASTORAL

CODE 27 POWER

CODE 28 RELATIONAL SKILLS

CODE 29 SACRAMENTS

CODE 30 SCRIPTURE

Appendix D: List of New Testament Terms for Leader

Hegoumenos	**Acts 14:12** "And they called Barnabas Zeus, and Paul 'the chief speaker' (*hegoumenos tou logou*)." **Acts 15:22** "Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the leaders (*hegoumenoi*) of the brothers, to choose men..." *(ESV)* **Luke 22:26** "But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you must be as the leader (*ho hegoumenos*)." **Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24** **13:7** – "Remember your leaders (*ta hegoumenōn*), those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." **13:17** – "Obey your leaders (*ta hegoumenōn*) and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls..." **13:24** – "Greet all your leaders (*ta hegoumenōn*) and all the saints."
Kuberneseis	**1 Corinthians 12:28 (ESV)** "And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations (*kubernēseis*), and various kinds of tongues."
Proistamenos **Proistemi**	**Romans 12:8** *"The one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who gives, with generosity; the one who leads (ho proistamenos), with diligence; the one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."* **1 Thessalonians 5:12** *"Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you (proistamenous) in the Lord and admonish you."* **1 Timothy 3:4** *"He must manage (proistamenon) his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way."* **1 Timothy 3:5** *"For if someone does not know how to manage (proistamai) his own household, how will he care for God's church?"* **1 Timothy 3:12** *"Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing (proistamenoi) their children and their own households well."* **1 Timothy 5:17** *"Let the elders who rule well (hoi kalōs proestōtes presbyteroi) be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching."*
Episkopos	**Acts 20:28** "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (episkopous) to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." **Philippians 1:1** "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers (episkopois) and deacons." **1 Timothy 3:2** "Therefore an overseer (episkopos) must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach." **Titus 1:7** "For an overseer (episkopos), as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain." **1 Peter 2:25** "For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer (episkopon) of your souls."

Appendix E: Interview Participation Documents

- Participant Information Sheet
- Participant Debriefing Sheet
- Participant Consent Form
- Participant Privacy Notice

Participant Information Sheet

Project title: Towards an Anglican Theology of Leadership

Researcher: Dan Brown
Department: Theology and Religion
Contact details: danbrown@wadsleychurch.com
Supervisor name: Philip Plyming and Mike Higton
Supervisor contact: cranmer.warden@durham.ac.uk / mike.higton@durham.ac.uk

You are invited to take part in a study that I am conducting as part of my Doctorate in Theology and Ministry at Durham University. Before you decide whether to agree to take part it is important for you to understand the purpose of the research and what is involved as a participant. Please read the following information carefully. Please get in contact if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

This information sheet is in two parts. Part 1 will help you decide whether you may want to participate and Part 2 gives you further information about the study.

PART 1

What is the purpose of this study?
My research aim is to create a conversation between the normative theology of leadership held by the Church of England and how this normative theology correlates with the theology of leadership that is understood and demonstrated in practise at local church level. As you may be aware, the Diocese of Sheffield has recently begun to implement a new vision, with new leadership roles identified including focal ministers and oversight ministers, it is my hope that this research will help the diocese theologically reflect on these roles.

The research for this study will be carried out between April 2022 and October 2022. My thesis is due to be submitted by September 2024.

Why have I been invited to take part?
I am interviewing candidates in Sheffield diocese and you have been invited to take part in this project because you are either the leader or the church warden of a church that is a member of that diocese. I am aiming to hear from candidates from a wide variety of churchmanships and with differing levels of experience. I am also keen to speak with candidates of different genders, ethnic backgrounds and from a range of theological traditions.

Do I have to take part?
Your participation is voluntary and you do not have to agree to take part. If you do agree to take part, you can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Your rights in relation to withdrawing any data that is identifiable to you are explained in the accompanying Privacy Notice.

What will the study involve?
If you agree to take part in the study, please email me to say that you are willing to participate. We will then agree a convenient time and date for an interview. This will either be conducted on Zoom or in person, depending on which you would prefer. The interview will last approximately 1-1.5 hours and will be video or audio recorded.

I will ask some starter questions about your experience of leadership and the leadership training that you have received. If there are any questions you do not wish to answer, please feel free to indicate this and we can miss those questions out.

Are there any potential risks involved?
I have not identified any risks involved in this study. If you find participation in the interviews or thinking about your experiences of leadership distressing, you are welcome to discuss this with me, your area dean, or someone you trust in your own church community. However, it is not anticipated that the questions asked will go beyond the depth or scope of what you will have already covered in general conversation and personal theological reflection.

What is the benefit to me?
There is no direct benefit to you in participating in this study, although you may find it helpful and interesting to reflect on your theological understanding of leadership.

PART 2

Will my data be kept confidential?
All information obtained during the study will be kept confidential. The recordings and transcripts from the interviews will be stored securely in a password protected file

accessible only by me and will not include your name. If I refer to direct quotations from our interview in my write-up, I will give you a pseudonym and will avoid including anything which would make it possible to identify you.

All research data and records needed to validate the research findings will be stored for 10 years after the end of the project. Storage of data will be password protected and anonymised. Full details about how your data will be stored and handled are included in the accompanying Privacy Notice.

What will happen to the results of the project?
The information gathered will be stored and analysed electronically to find out what we can learn from the interviews I conduct. My findings will be submitted as part of my doctoral thesis for the Doctorate in Theology and Ministry through Durham University and may inform the planning of new studies or future research.

It is hoped that the findings from this study will help the Church of England reflect theologically on the differing theological understandings of leadership and how those who hold different positions converse with one another. Therefore, the findings may be published in theological journals, books, or websites, and they may be presented at online or in-person conferences or training days. Your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation and all data will be anonymised.

Durham University is committed to sharing the results of its world-class research for public benefit. As part of this commitment the University has established an online repository for all Durham University Higher Degree theses which provides access to the full text of freely available theses. The study in which you are invited to participate will be written up as a thesis. On successful submission of the thesis, it will be deposited both in print and online in the University archives, to facilitate its use in future research. The thesis will be published open access.

If you are interested, you can obtain a summary of the study's findings by requesting this from me at the end of our interview or by email.

Who is the lead researcher for this project?

My name is Dan Brown, I have been the leader of Wadsley church for six years, initially as a curate in charge, then as a priest in charge, and I have recently been licensed as oversight minister.

Who has reviewed this study?
This study has received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the Theology and Religion Department at Durham University.

Who do I contact if I have any questions or concerns about this study?
If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please speak to Dan Brown (researcher) or my supervisors (Philip Plyming and Mike Higton). Contact

details are provided above. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please submit a complaint via the University's Complaints Process.

The rights and responsibilities of anyone taking part in Durham University research are set out in our 'Participants Charter':
https://www.dur.ac.uk/research.innovation/governance/ethics/considerations/people/charter/

Thank you for reading this information and considering taking part in this study.

Participant Debriefing Sheet

Project title: Towards an Anglican Theology of Leadership.

Researcher: Dan Brown
Department: Theology and Religion
Contact details: Danbrown@wadsleychurch.com
Supervisor name: Philip Plyming and Mike Higton
Supervisor contact: cranmer.warden@durham.ac.uk / Mike.Higton@durham.ac.uk

Thank you for taking part in this study. What I want to find out from this research is how the Church of England understands the term 'leadership'. I am closely reading key normative texts that hold authority within the Church of England to create one set of data, and I am interviewing people in leadership within the church of England to create a second data set formed by praxis. My thesis will be created by a conversation between these two data sets.

I really appreciate the time and thought you have given to our interview. Thank you for sharing your experience of and reflections on leadership with me. Please feel free to contact me, Bishop Pete, or someone you trust in your own church community if you feel upset or you need to talk further about any of the subjects which we covered.

In writing up the study, all data will be anonymised and your individual data will not be available to anyone outside the research team. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason, although it is usually not practical to withdraw after the research project has been written up. See the Participant Information Sheet and Privacy Notice for more detailed information about how your data will be stored and used.

If you would like further information about the study or would like to know about my findings when all the data have been collected and analysed, then please contact me using the details above.

Thank you again for your participation.

Participant Consent Form

Project title: Towards an Anglican Theology of Leadership
Researcher: Dan Brown
Department: Theology and Religion
Contact details: danbrown@wadsleychurch.com
Supervisor name: Philip Plyming and Mike Higton
Supervisor contact: cranmer.warden@durham.ac.uk / mike.higton@durham.ac.uk

This form is to confirm that you understand what the purposes of the project, what is involved and that you are happy to take part. Please write your initials or tick in each box to indicate your agreement:

I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant Information Sheet dated January 2022 and the Privacy Notice for the above project.	
I have had sufficient time to consider the information and ask any questions I might have, and I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.	
I understand that taking part in the study involves an interview which will either be on Zoom or in-person and that this interview will be video or audio recorded.	
I understand that the interview will be video or audio recorded, that it will then be transcribed in written form and the recording destroyed.	
I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.	
I understand that the data gathered as part of this project will include information about my religious beliefs and experiences.	
I understand that my words may be quoted in the thesis and in publication, reports and presentations, but that these will be anonymised and may be given a pseudonym.	
I understand that the results of this study will be made available on the open access Durham e-thesis website and may also be published in academic journals, books or websites or presented at academic conferences or training days.	
I agree to take part in the above project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.	

Participant's Signature_____ Date_____ (NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)_____
Researcher's Signature_____ Date_____ (NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)_____REV DANIEL BROWN_____

Privacy Notice

PART 1 – GENERIC PRIVACY NOTICE

Durham University has a responsibility under data protection legislation to provide individuals with information about how we process their personal data. We do this in a number of ways, one of which is the publication of privacy notices. Organisations variously call them a privacy statement, a fair processing notice or a privacy policy.

To ensure that we process your personal data fairly and lawfully we are required to inform you:

- Why we collect your data
- How it will be used
- Who it will be shared with

We will also explain what rights you have to control how we use your information and how to inform us about your wishes. Durham University will make the Privacy Notice available via the website and at the point we request personal data.

Our privacy notices comprise two parts – a generic part (ie common to all of our privacy notices) and a part tailored to the specific processing activity being undertaken.

Data Controller

The Data Controller is Durham University. If you would like more information about how the University uses your personal data, please see the University's Information Governance webpages or contact Information Governance Unit:

Tel: (0191 33) 46246 or 46103 / E-mail: information.governance@durham.ac.uk

Information Governance Unit also coordinate response to individuals asserting their rights under the legislation. Please contact the Unit in the first instance.

Data Protection Officer

The Data Protection Officer is responsible for advising the University on compliance with Data Protection legislation and monitoring its performance against it. If you have any concerns regarding the way in which the University is processing your personal data, please contact the Data Protection Officer:

Jennifer Sewel (University Secretary)

Tel: (0191 33) 46144 / E-mail: university.secretary@durham.ac.uk

Your rights in relation to your personal data

Privacy notices and/or consent

You have the right to be provided with information about how and why we process your personal data. Where you have the choice to determine how your personal data will be used, we will ask you for consent. Where you do not have a choice (for example, where we have a legal obligation to process the personal data), we will provide you with a privacy notice. A privacy notice is a verbal or written statement that explains how we use personal data.

Whenever you give your consent for the processing of your personal data, you receive the right to withdraw that consent at any time. Where withdrawal of consent will have an impact on the services we are able to provide, this will be explained to you, so that you can determine whether it is the right decision for you.

Accessing your personal data

You have the right to be told whether we are processing your personal data and, if so, to be given a copy of it. This is known as the right of subject access. You can find out more about this right on the University's Subject Access Requests webpage.

Right to rectification

If you believe that personal data we hold about you is inaccurate, please contact us and we will investigate. You can also request that we complete any incomplete data. Once we have determined what we are going to do, we will contact you to let you know.

Right to erasure

You can ask us to erase your personal data in any of the following circumstances:

- We no longer need the personal data for the purpose it was originally collected
- You withdraw your consent and there is no other legal basis for the processing
- You object to the processing and there are no overriding legitimate grounds for the processing
- The personal data have been unlawfully processed
- The personal data have to be erased for compliance with a legal obligation
- The personal data have been collected in relation to the offer of information society services (information society services are online services such as banking or social media sites).

Once we have determined whether we will erase the personal data, we will contact you to let you know.

Right to restriction of processing

You can ask us to restrict the processing of your personal data in the following circumstances:

- You believe that the data is inaccurate and you want us to restrict processing until we determine whether it is indeed inaccurate
- The processing is unlawful and you want us to restrict processing rather than erase it
- We no longer need the data for the purpose we originally collected it but you need it in order to establish, exercise or defend a legal claim and
- You have objected to the processing and you want us to restrict processing until we determine whether our legitimate interests in processing the data override your objection.

Once we have determined how we propose to restrict processing of the data, we will contact you to discuss and, where possible, agree this with you.

Retention

The University keeps personal data for as long as it is needed for the purpose for which it was originally collected. Most of these time periods are set out in the University Records Retention Schedule.

Making a complaint

If you are unsatisfied with the way in which we process your personal data, we ask that you let us know so that we can try and put things right. If we are not able to resolve issues to your satisfaction, you can refer the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113 / Website: Information Commissioner's Office

PART 2 – TAILORED PRIVACY NOTICE

This section of the Privacy Notice provides you with the privacy information that you need to know before you provide personal data to the University for the particular purpose(s) stated below.

Project Title: Towards and Anglican theology of leadership.

Type(s) of personal data collected and held by the researcher and method of collection:

Personal data will be collected through interviews conducted either on Zoom or in person. This data will include your name, age, and your theological reflections on leadership. This data will include 'special category data' as it will refer to your religious beliefs and may include gender, race, ethnic origin and sexual orientation if you identify these as relevant for what we discuss.

Interviews will be video or audio recorded. These recordings will be electronically stored in a password protected location. They will be transcribed into a written form and the original recordings destroyed. No still or moving images of you will be shared or distributed.

Direct quotations from the interview may be included in my thesis, published in academic papers or books, and in presentations at conferences or training days. These will be anonymised, will use a pseudonym, and will not include details which may identify you as an individual.

Lawful Basis:

Under data protection legislation, we need to tell you the lawful basis we are relying on to process your data. The lawful basis we are relying on is public task: the processing is necessary for an activity being carried out as part of the University's public task, which is defined as teaching, learning and research. For further information see https://durham.ac.uk/research.innovation/governance/ethics/governance/dp/legalbasis/

In order to research the theology of leadership held by the Church of England, it is necessary to collect personal or sensitive data about religious belief. It may be that you feel that your gender, race, ethnic origin or sexual orientation are also relevant to sharing your experience of discernment, in which case, these will also be included in processing your data.

How personal data is stored:

All personal data will be held securely and strictly confidential to the research team.

You will be allocated an anonymous number for data collection which will not be connected to your name or identity. Signed consent forms will be stored separately to project data.

All personal data in electronic form will be stored on a password protected computer and any hard copies will be kept in locked storage. Data will not be available anyone outside the research team.

The interview will be audio or video recorded. This will be stored in a password protected location until it has been transcribed by the researcher. No-one else will have access to the recording and it will be erased once the transcript has been completed.

How personal data is processed:

I will be using Qualitative Content Analysis to look for interesting or relevant themes in the interview transcripts. In order to conduct this thematic analysis in a systematic way, I will be using a computer database called NVivo. All data entered into NVivo will be fully anonymised and will not be personally identifiable and you will not be identifiable as an individual from this analysis.

The video or audio recordings of our interview will be transcribed by the researcher and personal information will be coded and anonymised. The original recording will then be erased.

Withdrawal of data:

Your participation in this project is voluntary and you are entitled to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. You can request withdrawal of your data until it has been fully anonymised. Once this has happened, it will not be possible to identify you from any of the data we hold. It is not usually practical for data to be withdrawn once the project has been written up.

Who the researcher shares personal data with:

Please be aware that if you disclose information which indicates the potential for serious and immediate harm to yourself or others, the research team may be obliged to breach confidentiality and report this to relevant authorities. This includes disclosure of child protection offences such as the physical or sexual abuse of minors, the physical abuse of vulnerable adults, money laundering, or other crimes covered by prevention of terrorism legislation. Where you disclose behaviour (by yourself or others) that is potentially illegal but does not present serious and immediate danger to others, the researcher will, where appropriate, signpost you to relevant services, but the information you provide will be kept confidential (unless you explicitly request otherwise).

How long personal data is held by the researcher:

Once the interview has been transcribed, identifiable data will be anonymised and the recordings destroyed. Research data needed to validate the research findings will be stored for 10 years after the end of the project, however any information which could identify you personally (e.g. consent forms) will be destroyed at the end of the project.

How to object to the processing of your personal data for this project:

If you have any concerns regarding the processing of your personal data, or you wish to withdraw your data from the project, contact Dan Brown (researcher), Philip Plyming or Mike Higton (supervisors) using the contact details below.

Further Information:

Researcher: Dan Brown
Department: Theology and Religion
Contact details: danbrown@wadsleychurch.com
Supervisor name: Philip Plyming and Mike Higton
Supervisor contact: cranmer.warden@durham.ac.uk / Mike.Higton@durham.ac.uk

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