

PHASE SIX

'Collaborative practice'

Given a vision with ownership, spelt out into some clear practical objectives, and provided with resources, training and support, the stage is set for leader, leadership team and the whole church community to be working together to achieve what has been agreed. This of course will be ongoing while other stages of the cycle may be repeated in order to arrive at more collaborative practice in due course in more areas of the church's life. If this stage is clearly seen as the aim of all activities, the visionary leader will be ready to repeat stages one to five as often as necessary in order to keep things moving.

PHASE SEVEN

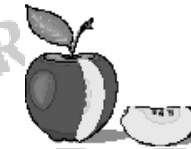
'Holding the Vision'

This is similar to Stage One further down the line: the leader is responsible for reminding the people of the fundamentals, keeping the dream alive, offering renewed encouragement and stimulus, and periodically re-focusing and re-grouping as things evolve. There will be plenty for the visionary leader to do while the collaborative ministry is under way!

August 2006



Wakefield Ministry Scheme



VISION BUILDING A Resource Pack for Churches

Collaborative Ministry | Visionary Leadership

Contradictory or Complementary?

Ordained Ministry in a Collaborative Context

One of the key requirements for Ordained Local Ministry is that candidates must emerge from, and in due course be expected to minister in, a recognised situation of collaborative ministry. All Local Ministry Development, whether lay or ordained, aims towards the establishment of a pattern of collaborative ministry in the parish. Although the term collaborative ministry is not always used in the same way, it is taken here to mean an understanding of shared ministry within the corporate life of the local church which includes shared responsibility and leadership, an ethos of teamworking at the heart of the church, as well as a 'sharing out' of the tasks of ministry.

Leadership for Collaborative Ministry

Within other arenas of discussion of strategic ways forward for the mission and ministry of the church, visionary leadership is sometimes identified as a prime need. At times this can seem to be set against collaborative ministry as an alternative, leading to debate about which is the more crucial. The point is made, for example, that without visionary leadership, collaborative ministry can be little more than a talking shop which never gets anything done, or a mechanism for putting a brake upon progress because of the idea that everyone must have their say and be expected to reach a consensus.

PHASE THREE

'Vision-building'

This is where visionary leadership aims to turn 'my vision', expressed in those general terms of motivational ideas and values, into 'our vision', to be expressed eventually in practical objectives. This will involve give and take, some refining and modifying of the leader's personal vision in the light of the listening and consultative process. An appropriate group: the PCC, or its Standing Committee, or the Local Ministry Team or Staff Group or any leadership group duly owned and recognised by the PCC, will have the task of drafting the local, contextualised vision with its strategic objectives. The visionary leader may well initiate the process by tabling a first draft, but should expect it to be amended in the light of discussion.

PHASE FOUR

'Shared ownership'

Once the vision document has been produced it needs to go back to the wider congregation in as many ways as possible for further discussion and feedback before finally being adopted by the PCC.

PHASE FIVE

'Vision resourcing'

The visionary leader will be thinking ahead in order to make sure that the needs are met which will enable the objectives identified for the period of the vision to be delivered. Sometimes this will be an up-front role of teaching, training and encouraging. Sometimes it will involve investigating resources and bringing them in. There is plenty of scope for visionary leadership here without this implying that it is now the leader's task to take direct control of everything that happens!

PHASE ONE

'Visionary Foundations': vision, values and principles

Even before being appointed, a potential leader with energy, drive and vision will wish to lay his or her cards on the table about certain things. Every minister of the Gospel will surely have things which fire them up, things they most devoutly long to see, things which most fundamentally inform and inspire their leadership. No potential leader comes with a completely blank piece of paper, or if they pretend to do so they are either not being honest or not showing much leadership ability. From the outset, visionary leaders will be prepared to share openly in general terms the hopes, dreams, values and principles which motivate them. 'This is what I stand for. This is what I most fundamentally believe. If I am appointed to this job, these things will be non-negotiable'.

However, warning bells should ring if too many precisely detailed things are non-negotiable at this stage! The language of vision should be expressed here more in terms of ultimate guiding than practical objectives. The latter should wait until the leader has actually embarked upon the new task.

PHASE TWO

'Consultation': listening, exploring, evaluation

Once in post the visionary leader will take time to find out what is really going in the new situation. There will be key individuals and groups to visit, talk with, listen to; a careful process of sifting, evaluating and understanding. This consulting needs to go on as widely as possible.

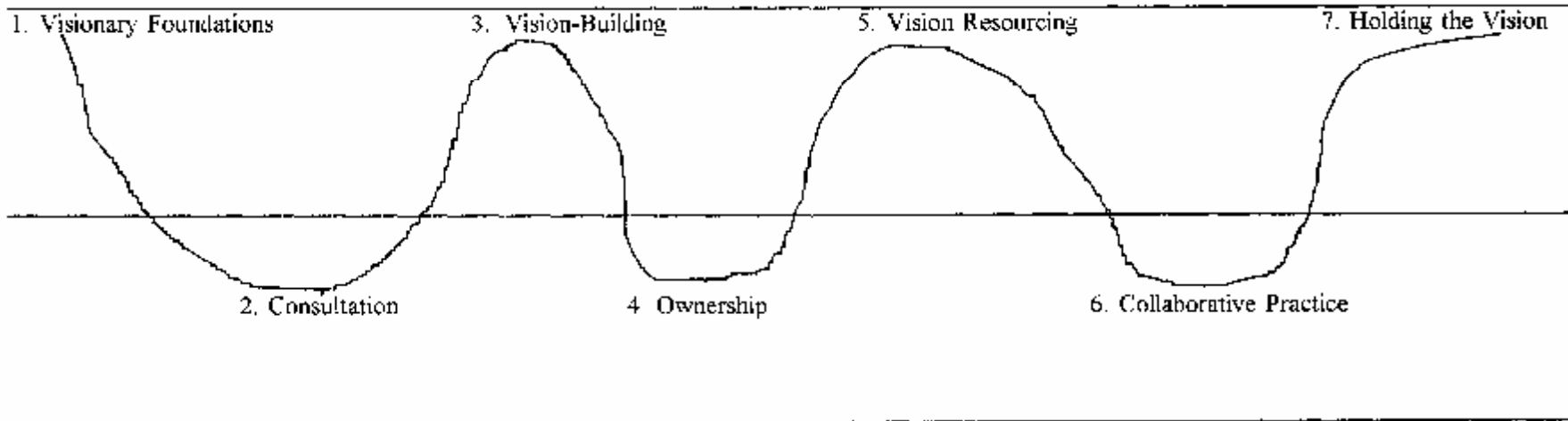
Vision Building and Collaborative Working

This leaflet suggests a process for holding together these two needs for visionary leadership and collaborative ministry. It offers a way for visionary leadership to be shaped and informed by the recognition that a collaborative pattern of church life and ministry is the desired outcome. Few of those who argue the case for visionary leadership would deny that the product of such leadership should be a thriving, ongoing corporate life of the church as a ministering and witnessing community, and not a body dependent upon the charisma of its leader. The key question for all visionary leadership is what will be left behind that will continue to prosper when the visionary leader moves on.

The need for visionary leadership can be justified on the basis that 'where there is no vision the people perish'. However, it follows that the people need to own the vision and feel that they have had a role in bringing it into being. The process of vision-building is always one of partnership which involves listening, consulting and reviewing as well as inspiring, challenging and leading from the front. What follows therefore describes a series of phases through which the visionary process interweaves with the collaborative process over time. For the purposes of this exercise the starting point may be taken as the arrival of a candidate for a parish vacancy of incumbency status.

VISIONARY LEADERSHIP - COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY

A Seven-stage Cycle
The Leadership



The People

—————→ Time

For further explanation, see over