

**THE MEANING OF  
SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

by  
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in Partial Fulfilment  
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**Department of Educational Administration  
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**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University  
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**Antoinette van Kuik                      1997 (c)**

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an initial exploration of the meaning of service in leadership as it was understood and articulated by four educational leaders who were reputed to be servant leaders. Although all the informants worked within the field of education, the research is informed by writers from a variety of perspectives such as business, education, politics, religion, and psychology.

Nominations of suitable candidates were received from leaders of provincial organizations in the arts community, the public school system, the private school system, and religiously affiliated colleges. One informant from each area was then randomly selected and invited to participate.

As the tentative themes emerged from the observations and interviews, they were taken into account in the subsequent research design and questions. This iterative design was used to clarify each informant's thinking about service within leadership. The questions probed the informants' motivation in leadership, their self-interests, their view of a "better society", their handling of power and position, and their relationships with other people.

The data were qualitatively analysed and the emerging themes for individual informants described. I have identified four overall themes: First, the concept of servant leadership was illustrated in my informants' actions and beliefs and is helpful in understanding and describing how they related to their work. Second, my informants'

service stemmed from their characters which were shaped by their individual experiences and choices. They were unique people who had found a way to know themselves, their interests, their abilities; and a way to work together with other people to benefit a larger ideal. Third, my informants were guided by dedication to an ideal which went beyond themselves and had a greater importance than any single individual. Finally, my informants related to their followers as equals in that they recognized a mutual search for meaning, they shared mundane tasks, and they brought their position into service of the ideal.

In my final chapter I note three further, albeit, tentative observations about the concept of servant leadership. First, servant leadership involves a passionately held ideal which is also accepted as a morally good thing by others. Second, servant leadership involves sharing that ideal with an organization of like-minded people. Finally, servant leadership, as it should be, is not there for itself but for the sake of the ideal and, through the ideal, for other people.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Research Questions	1
A Background Study	1
Description of the Background Study	2
Insights Into Service and Leadership	2
Insights Into Methodology	3
Participant Perspective	4
Researcher Perspective	5
An Overview of the Dissertation	6
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature	8
Service	9
Service and the Self	9
Service and Rational Self-Interest	10
Motivation	10
Servant Leadership	12
The Goal of Leadership - A Better Community	14
How Leadership Can Contribute to a Better Community	15
What is Better?	16
Service Can Legitimate Leadership	18
Leaders Must Serve Society	19
Service and Social Sustainability	20
Service Has Potential for the Leader Herself	21
Reflection	22
Mutual Identification and Learning	23

Redefinition of Power and Position	28
Service Promotes Mutuality	28
Shared Meaning	28
Interaction between Leader and Followers	29
Service in Leadership Implies a Redefinition of Power	30
Can Serving make a Leader Powerful?	30
Shared Power	32
Coercion versus Autonomy	33
Service in Leadership Implies a Redefinition of Position	34
Modifications Within the Leader - Follower Relationship	35
Followers Become Leaders	35
Greenleaf Reverses the Leader - Follower Relationship	36
Summary of the Literature Review	39
My Foreshadowed Questions	40
The First Research Question	41
The Second Research Question	41
The Third Research Question	41
The Fourth Research Question	42
The Fifth Research Question	43
The Sixth Research Question	43
Chapter 3: The Present Study	45
Design of the Study: Why Qualitative Research?	46
Selection of Informants and Establishing Contact	47
Data Collection	52
Semi-Structured In-depth Interviews	52
Observation	53
Time and Length of Study	53
Data Analysis	53
Scrutiny of the Data	54
Flexibility and Incongruity	55
The Identification and Understanding of Individual Perspectives	56
Researcher Perspective	56
The Researcher and the Leader	60
Limitations of Research	64

Chapter 4: David Daniels	67
Who is David Daniels?	67
David's Home Within the Denomination	69
The College as Integral to the Baptist Church	72
The Role of the College With Students	73
The Role of the College in the Denomination	75
The Denomination	76
David as a Servant Leader	79
The Overseers	80
The Consortium Discussion	82
Three Reasons For the Consortium	83
The Challenges of the Consortium	84
What Servant Leadership Means to David	88
Influence and Respect	88
Dialogue	91
Evidences of David's Respect for the Students	92
Conclusion	94
Chapter 5: Louis Lafrance	95
Introduction to Louis Lafrance	95
Waldheim	96
Attitudes	97
Determination to Serve	99
Source of Service Mentality	100
Father	100
Community	101
Desire to be Recognized and Remembered	103
Service as a Two-Way Street	105
Recognizes Opportunities and Pursues Them	106
Sees Positive Possibilities	107

Fits in With the Flow	109
Working Together	110
What About the Negative?	112
Keeps Things Pleasant	116
Demonstrates His Commitment in Practical Ways	116
Leaves the Project	118
Conclusion	119
Chapter 6: Father Leonardo	121
Introduction to Father Leonardo	121
A Service Mentality From Childhood	122
Service and Faith	124
Unhurried	125
Service At St. Joseph's School	126
Caring	127
Care for Students and Families	127
Care for Staff	129
Father Leonardo Values Complete Honesty	132
Full Disclosure	132
Relationship to the Founding Church	135
Leadership By Vision and Persuasion	137
Sharing the Vision	137
Persuasion	139
Father Leonardo Gives Up Power and Control	142
Parentally Operated	143
Ultimate Responsibility For the School	144
Accepts Errors	145
Committees	147
Hands Off Position	149
Does Not Want Control or Dependency	150
The Vision/Mission Statement for the School	151
Conclusion	153

## Chapter 7: Betty MacNeil

Who is Betty MacNeil?	154
The Premier Music Conservatory	154
Betty Places Service Ahead of Self Interest	156
Betty's Hours	156
Betty and Money	158
Betty's Pay	158
The Teacher's Pay	159
Betty's Personal Safety	160
The Conservatory as a Tool to Serve	161
Betty's Service to the Students	162
Betty and the Students Work Hard	163
Betty's Service to the Music Teachers	165
How Betty Accomplishes Her Service	169
Betty Identifies Needs	169
Betty Identifies Resources	172
Betty Finds Others to Help Her	173
Stanley	174
Tessa- Betty's Secretary	175
Sally Wong	176
The Parent's Association	177
Betty and Self-fulfilment	177
Betty's Love of Music and Learning	177
Purpose in Life	179
Freedom	181
Betty and Self-respect	182
Betty and Power	184
Conclusion	187

Chapter 8: My Informants, the Literature and Servant Leadership	188
Servant Leadership - Not an Oxymoron	189
Am I a Servant Leader?	190
Servant Leadership Involves a Degree of Altruism	192
Servant Leadership and Personal Fulfilment	196
Character and Servant Leadership	198
Servant Leadership as a Way of Being	196
Life Experience	199
Belief System	201
Servant Leadership is Expressed in Individual Ways	203
My Informants Had an Ideal	206
Self-Respect Arises out of the Ideal	206
The Ideal is Shared	207
Persuading Others About the Shared Ideal	210
Students	211
Staff and Colleagues	213
Shared Ideal - Shared Power	215
In Charge Versus Controlling	217
Mutuality in Relationships	219
Shared Search for Meaning	220
Acceptance of the Human Condition	221
Listening and Reciprocity	223
The Mundane	224
Redefinition of Position	226
Modifications Within the Hierarchical System	226
<i>Primus Inter Pares</i>	228
Conclusion	229

Chapter 9: The Heart of the Matter	233
The Essence of Servant Leadership	233
A Passion	234
A Shared Passion	236
The Shared Passion Overtakes Self-Interest	239
A Blend	239
Servant Leadership as an Inward Quality	241
The Future	242
Appendix A	246
Works Cited	250

## Chapter One - INTRODUCTION

### Research Questions

I was interested in looking at the relationship between the concepts of service and leadership in the context of education. The purpose of my study was to learn about the meaning educational leaders reputed to be servants attached to service within their leadership. How did they understand service and leadership; separately and in interaction within leadership? How did my informants think about and practice both service and leadership? How did they resolve the tensions inherent between these two concepts?

Behind my personal interest in leadership and service was a conviction that although leadership and service are frequently thought about as opposites, leadership, at its best, involves an element of service. It was the relationship between the two that I wished to highlight and examine. I wanted to know how it worked in "real life" educational settings. I wondered what other people had written about serving and leading and how contemporary servant leaders in education went about their work. This research is the account of how I went about this search and what I learned.

### A Background Study

While the idea of service has been an integral part of my childhood and adult life through both religious and other experiences, my first opportunity to study it empirically was Edward. I became aware of Edward Smith, a teacher, principal, and school superintendent in the 1960's and 1970's who had a widespread reputation for generosity and serving throughout his community. Qualitative researchers Bogdan and Biklen suggest that initial exploratory opportunities can be used to assess what is feasible (61) and that

"investigators may enter the research with some idea about what they will do, but a detailed set of procedures is not formed prior to data collection" (58). That seemed to fit in that I had a notion of what I wanted to explore but was not ready to formulate a detailed plan. Within eight months of his death, I proceeded to interview in-depth nine teachers and principals who had known Edward. Most had become his personal friends.

### **Description of the Background Study**

It was my purpose to learn what significance Edward Smith attached to service within his leadership. I wondered about his motivation and the degree to which he felt his work was fulfilling. I began by asking each informant to describe the context of their contacts with Edward. I followed up on the things they said to ask about their impressions of his leadership and service. Invariably, topics such as Edward's way of relating to people, his view of success, his relationship to power, and his goals were raised. I transcribed these interviews and returned the transcriptions to the informants to be checked for accuracy. I then incorporated all changes (which were largely inconsequential) into the transcripts before I proceeded with the data analysis.

When I came to the end of the interviews I had 115 single spaced pages of interview transcriptions. I read and reread these and coded each paragraph with my assessment of the key themes. I then brought material on common themes together by the computer cut and paste method and related them to one another. I finally wrote these up in a paper (53 double spaced pages) which I distributed to my interviewees as I had initially promised. I also wrote a twenty page addendum for my advisor.

### **Insights Into Service and Leadership**

In this background study I got an inkling about the themes that I ultimately might be working with in my dissertation. First, while Edward gave evidence of placing service ahead of personal gain, he enjoyed an extra-ordinary measure of personal fulfilment in his

work. Edward's servant leadership involved elements of self-denial, but it was essentially self-fulfilment.

Second, Edward commanded respect. While all leadership involves some vulnerability, Edward was able to listen, care and lead in such a way as to respect himself and the contributions his work made to the communities that he worked within.

Third, I learned that service is not powerlessness, it is using power to serve. While power is safe only in the hands of those who serve, a leader cannot serve without power. Edward found meaning in the learning and growing of the students and the community and used his power to this end. My study of Edward suggested how leadership can be legitimated by serving. He was trusted because he showed students and teachers the same consideration and loyalty he expected from them. He was seen as using power for the advantage and protection of others. I felt I was on to something that had great potential for the conceptualization, understanding and practice of educational administration.

### **Insights Into Methodology**

This background study gave me insight not only about the concept of service and leadership but also about the use of qualitative methods to study leadership. I had developed some skill in conducting interviews, in asking the right questions and knowing what to probe further, as well as some skill in the analysis and interpretation of data. Moreover, I identified several things I wanted to do differently in my research.

For example, when I studied Edward, I waited until all the data were collected before I began analysing the themes. Identifying themes in all the uncharted data at the end was difficult because there was a lot of material to go through. It also meant that I was unable to check and recheck my analytical categories, interpretations, and conclusions with my participants because the data collection process was over when I did my analysis.

More importantly, the background study raised issues regarding the nature and interpretation of the data I had collected. These issues centred on two areas; participant perspective and researcher perspective.

### Participant Perspective

The question of participant perspective arose because the data generated through my interviews suggested a leader who was dedicated to education throughout his life. Edward lived simply and was loved by many. This was clearly the way my interviewees wished me to see him.

There were some questions, however, that remained unanswered. Only two of my respondents identified a disappointment in their relationship with Edward: one was demoted by Edward but remained a personal friend while the other left to work elsewhere when it became clear that Edward had no intention of promoting him. Both remained overwhelmingly positive about Edward. Did he not have a darker side? How could I find out? If the people I interviewed saw Edward's substantial power as used for their benefit, would I be likely to find out about excesses or abuses? How could I separate what was true about Edward from my informants' positive relationships and experiences with him?

Some of these questions were difficult to get at simply because of the passage of time. For example, the school district in which he led had undergone such significant changes that I was unable to interact with the setting as he had known it (Lincoln and Guba 304). My understanding of the circumstances surrounding Edward Smith's leadership was therefore limited to the recollections of his followers which had been coloured not only by the passage of time and subsequent developments that many of them compared unfavourably to Edward's (their?) time, but also by Edward's recent passing. Although those I interviewed had known him well and had extensive contact with him, I was not able to access him directly. I also had no way of satisfying questions about what Edward's "opponents" thought; indeed, I was led to believe that they did not exist.

### Researcher Perspective

The most baffling questions about my research, however, concerned my own motivations. Why had I selected Edward as my informant and how did my own experiences affect my handling of the material? What did I like and dislike about his leadership and what were these responses and reactions based on? What did my study reveal about myself? What were the lenses I brought to the study? Which of my core values were supported or challenged by their stories and how did I deal with those? How did my research fit in with my concurrent personal development?

There is a general acceptance that the emotions and predisposition of researchers will influence the research process and cannot be removed. When I did my study, however, I thought about my own perspective very little and I may have unconsciously hoped that not thinking about it would make it go away. There is danger in this because without the effort to acquaint myself with and understand my perspective, I may have unwittingly presented an analysis that is partially autobiographical, that is, written about myself rather than about my informant (Peshkin, *In Search of Subjectivity* 20). Since researcher perspective arises again in my present study, I will revisit the question in my third chapter and present several techniques for its management.

The overall result of my study of Edward was a realisation that leadership is a relationship that is deeply and intrinsically tied into how we think about ourselves and that therefore studying it is difficult but also important and promising. This background study was important to the iterative planning of my dissertation study in that it showed me where some of the difficulties would arise and allowed me to consider how I would deal with them. It also gave me opportunity to hone my in-depth interviewing techniques that became the basis for my research. Through it I also learned about the process of coding data and hypothesising on the basis of the data collected as is proposed in grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss). I became committed to studying the concept of servant leadership by

qualitative methods for reasons that I will explain in my third chapter. I also was able to begin stating my research question in a general way.

### An Overview of the Dissertation

The relationship between service and leadership is an uneasy one and it is difficult to consider them together when extreme examples are used. The four parts of my second chapter summarize what I learned about servant leadership from the literature. The first part concerns the concept of service and its interpretation. The literature recognizes that people can be altruistic and may help others even when it is counter to their own interest to do so. It also suggests that there are motivations that stand in opposition to self-interest that, given free reign, pushes for only one's own interest without thought or responsibility for anyone else. The second part of my second chapter introduces the concept of servant leadership. In servant leadership, the leader's role emphasizes increasing the capacity of the group as a whole to reach goals they all endorse and that have a positive value to the society at large.

In the final two parts of Chapter Two, I review literature that suggests that when service and leadership are combined two aspects of leadership are thrown into sharper relief. The first aspect concerns, again, the motives of the leader. The literature suggests that service means that the goals of leadership transcend mere self-interest and aim to foster community by encouraging people to look beyond their own immediate financial interests. The second aspect of servant leadership concerns the leader's turning her power and position into tools for service. As the other group members are persuaded about the same vision, the servant leader uses her power to build up the entire group's ability to serve that ideal. Service encourages mutuality and role exchanges between the leader and the led and an equal exchange of accountability between them. As such, it requires a rethinking of the leader's power and position.

The third chapter explains my choice and use of qualitative research methods in the collection of data by in-depth interviews and participant observation with leaders. In it I explain my approach in the analysis of the data and my use of individual perspectives, both my informants' and my own.

The fourth through seventh chapters are an introduction to my four informants and a summary of what I learned about their views of serving and leading from interviewing and observing each one. In these chapters I discuss how the nature of service in leadership is uniquely expressed in each individual leader's circumstances and personality.

In the eighth chapter I go beyond the individual stories to identify and articulate the nature of servant leadership I found in my informants in light of the literature and my own reflections on servant leadership. These are the overall servant leadership themes that my research highlights. In the final chapter, I move toward a conceptualization of servant leadership as it was represented by my informants and speculate on how servant leadership can be fostered in the future. I hope that this will eventually allow us to conceptualise, understand, and enact educational administration in new and different ways.

## Chapter Two - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I found that the literature in both service and leadership is voluminous and diverse, and so I reviewed literature applicable to the relationship between them. The writers I found helpful all write from the context of capitalism, but from a variety of perspectives such as business [Greenleaf (1991)], education [Blackmore (1989) William Foster (1989), Noddings (1984), and Sergiovanni (1992)], politics [Burns (1978)], religion [Nouwen (1979)], and psychology [Coles (1993) and Kohn (1990)]. The fact that they write about topics outside of education has resulted in a certain tension between my more widely based literature review and my sample that was limited to educational leaders but I did not wish to limit my literature review to education alone as I found the other writers to offer helpful ideas. While I am certain that there are many fundamental aspects of leadership that educational leaders have in common with leaders in other settings, I am not arguing that contexts such as education, business, or religion have no particular significance.

In this chapter I first clarify the meaning of service and introduce the term "servant leadership". Following that, I have chosen to group the themes I found in the literature under two headings: Themes that speak to the goal of leadership, which is a better society, and, related to that, themes that have to do with the redefinition of power and position. The attitude of mutuality is basic to both the discussion of a better society and the redefinition of power and position so I end there in the first theme group and begin there in the second.

The purpose of this literature review was to further clarify the research question I was asking in order to understand the concept of servant leadership better: What meaning do educational leaders reputed to be servants attach to service within their leadership? At

the end of each section, therefore, I summarise the clarification offered to the question and then, at the end of this chapter, I again bring that material together in a summary statement.

## Service

The first aspect I address is the concept of service. While the leadership literature reveals a rich range of thought, its emphasis is on the intentional, directive, visionary, and powerful aspects of leadership. Service is less frequently mentioned in leadership discussions and when it is, it is frequently discounted by the cynical presumption that everyone operates only out of rational self-interest. Other writers take issue with this and assert that other motivations from the altruistic part of the self suggest that it is possible for a leader to put aside her own interests to serve and empower others. It is my initial understanding of both service and self-interest that I present here. Both those views were challenged, enriched and modified as the study went on. I return to these concepts in my final chapter.

### **Service and the Self**

When I first began my work on the topic of service and leadership, I found myself experiencing what Antonio Porchia spoke of when he said: "A door opens to me. I go in and am faced with a hundred closed doors" (qtd. in Nouwen, Wounded Healer xv). One of the reasons for this confusing state of affairs was the fact that when we speak about serving, giving, and compassion, our vocabulary is such that it can be reinterpreted negatively. The problem I faced was that wherever I turned, the assumption of self-interest crept in and presented another angle that effectively cancelled out the value I had originally assigned. We often see service as tainted by selfish motives or the inner needs of a compulsive person who cannot help herself. I began to understand something of what was causing this when I read Frank:

The flint eyed researcher fears no greater humiliation than to have called some action altruistic, only to have a more sophisticated colleague later demonstrate that it

was self-serving. This fear surely helps account for the extraordinary volume of ink behavioural scientists have spent trying to unearth selfish motives for seemingly self-sacrificing acts (21).

### **Service and Rational Self-Interest**

I felt that the presumption that everyone operates from only rational self-interest, that is, for personal material benefit only, ruled out the possibility of altruism from the outset and was unduly limiting. I was glad to find that the capacity for sharing, for empowering, for altruism is convincingly presented by Alfie Kohn, a psychologist and ethicist, in his book, The Brighter Side of Human Nature:

It is undoubtedly true that some people help others for self-serving reasons, and the reasons generally proposed (public recognition, escaping guilt, and so on) are as credible as any. But the possibility of genuine altruism has been ruled inadmissible by most investigators, all of their ingenuity having been devoted exclusively to explicating the mechanisms of egoistic motives (192).

Kohn suggests that each person is a mixture of both selfish and altruistic urges. "We may agree that each person is alert to her own interest without concluding that this is her *only* consideration, and we may agree that some people are thoroughly selfish without concluding that this is true of *everyone*" (207 italics in the original). Thinking of oneself as a generous, altruistic person who can be of service to others (self-transcendence) is the most reliable way to promote helping and caring over time in a variety of situations (Kohn 203). Not to recognise and celebrate this possibility is to forego all trust and caring, the importance of which is convincingly written about by Noddings, a feminist writer.

### **Motivation**

Sergiovanni, who has done extensive work on leadership and whose increasing emphasis on the moral side of leadership, takes issue with the rational self-interest model when he argues that motivation is more complex than simple self-interest. He observes that

we "regularly sacrifice our self-interest on behalf of held beliefs, felt obligations and firm convictions" (Reflections 310). He suggests that in addition to self-interest, motivations might include religious values, family and personal value systems, commitment to the ethic of caring, respect for the value of community, a sense of what is right and good, a desire to serve others, and a desire to serve ideals (Reflections 310; Moral Leadership 18, 19, 23). There are yet other possibilities including the need for achievement, responsibility, and recognition; respect for authority; the intrinsic motivation in a satisfying task; loyalty; and high ethical standards. Less conscious motivations such as habit, emotion, taken-for-granted custom, conditioned reflex, and unconscious desires may also influence service.

Coles, a child psychiatrist who teaches at Harvard University is the author of the Children in Crisis series for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. He states that these motivations express the "moral call within" (75) that has to do with who we are and the moral standards we have observed in the daily lives of our parents (Coles xxii). One civil rights activist put it this way: "It matters ... to me and my family, [because] that's the kind of people we are, and this is what we believe in doing" (Coles 34).

The literature suggests that a leader can decide that she will use her power and position as a servant, as a conduit to empower and enable those who follow her. Kiechel describes serving in leadership this way: "The leader exists to serve those whom he nominally leads, those who supposedly follow him. He takes their fulfilment as his principal aim" (121). Blackmore, a feminist writer, argues that in a caring community a leader can act in a powerful manner but with good intention for that community, even while laying themselves open to scrutiny by that community (122).

This literature does not suggest the complete elimination of all benefits to the leader or the elimination of financial remuneration. What it does suggest is that leaders can be motivated by more than economic gain. While they may not be completely self-denying, it is also possible not to be completely self-centered, self-absorbed and interested only in their

own self-aggrandisement. This does not rule out self-fulfilment or gratification in their work.

I decided that I would consider a range of reasons for serving behaviour. I wanted to find out how the leaders I would study saw themselves by considering questions like the following: Do they talk about situations in which their actions were taken in full knowledge that they would be counter to their self-interest? Which of their own interests are served by their leadership? Do they find their leadership intrinsically satisfying? Do they show interest in challenging the growth and development of their followers? Why or why not? Are they open to being challenged by their followers?

### Servant Leadership

Service and leadership are sometimes seen as opposites. In fact, the term "servant leadership" has the ring of an oxymoron, but it is found in the literature. Its main proponent is Robert Greenleaf who wrote a collection of essays titled Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness. Greenleaf spent his working life as an executive with AT&T. He lectured at MIT, Harvard Business School, Dartmouth College as well as the University of Virginia and founded the Center for Applied Ethics that today is known as The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership. He found the idea of the servant as leader in Hermann Hesse's Journey to the East and his over-riding concern is with service. While the servant who leads is a different idea from the leader who serves, especially in terms of the position and power they have, both combine service with leadership. It is the leader who serves that is the focus of my study.

Like Coles (75) who wrote of the "moral call within", Greenleaf addresses the motivation of the leader herself. He sees the great leader as having a servant nature that suggests who the leader essentially is, deep down inside, whether or not she is in a leadership role (Servant Leadership 8). Greenleaf differentiates the one who begins with the natural feeling that she wants to serve and only then aspires to lead from the one who is

leader first, perhaps because of a need for power or material possessions, and who chooses to serve after leadership is established (Servant Leadership 13). Greenleaf accepts both as different, but legitimate paths to servant leadership.

Furthermore, the term is introduced briefly by Sergiovanni in connection with moral leadership in the more limited context of the school community. Sergiovanni adds the idea of the leader and followers serving a shared ideal together. He says, "Servant leadership is practised by serving others, but its ultimate purpose is to place oneself, and others for whom one has responsibility, in the service of ideals" (Moral Leadership 138). This servant leadership, he suggests, is possible in a community in which all are loved and accepted, where community ties become substitutes for external controls, where self-interest gives way to sacrifice and where members associate with one another because they enjoy it and share a common purpose.

Greenleaf and Sergiovanni suggested further questions about motivation. Is the servant leadership style an expression of who the leader is, deep down inside, or is it a learned response? Is there an ideal that they and their followers are serving? To what extent do their followers share this ideal? Is there any sense of community?

In Coles' notion of the "moral call within" (75) and Greenleaf's discussion of motivation, I caught a glimpse of the dynamic behind the fulfilment I had observed in Edward. They acted as they did because it was true to their character, that is, the people they had become through their interaction with their communities. They were people who did not push aside their morality for the sake of superficial self-interest, but they were aware of where their true fulfilment lay and acted on it. By doing so they achieved personal integration and growth within their service (Coles 75). I wanted to find out what view of service my informants received from their families and what value their communities placed on service.

### The Goal of Leadership - A Better Community

It seemed to me that service is a concept that, when grafted onto leadership, alters both concepts in significant ways. I now turned my attention to the literature that suggested that service means that the goals of leadership go beyond mere self-interest to the betterment of community. The literature suggests that servant leadership does this by maximising a sense of relatedness to one another that encourages people to look beyond their own immediate personal interests. I had seen this in Edward's work for the betterment of the school district and his community.

While many authors on leadership do not deal with service, quite a number have an emphasis on the betterment of community. In addition to Greenleaf (1991) there are other writers: Burns (1978), a political scientist whose award winning work Leadership has spawned numerous leadership studies and William Foster (1989), a critical theorist in educational administration, see leadership as a moral enterprise aimed at the betterment of people's lives within community. They see it as not mere preaching, the uttering of pieties, or the insistence on social conformity but say it "emerges from, and always returns to, the fundamental wants and needs, aspirations, and values of the followers" (Burns 4). They emphasize the importance of the relationship between the leader and followers assuming a form that serves the vital needs of the followers over a prolonged period (Burns 453).

These writers contend that leaders contribute to a better community when they work together with their followers to improve the life of their community and everyone in it. The definition of "improvement" is, of course, open to interpretation and if an ethicist were to consider these actions, she would, no doubt, raise a great many considerations. I have, however, selected Greenleaf's test of service as the criteria for "goodness" in this research: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further

deprived?" (Servant Leadership 13 italics in the original) This view of service within leadership has a way of legitimating leadership in the eyes of the followers and becoming sustainable in that it promotes the personal growth and development of both the leader and the led. In addition it is important to consider the effect of a group's goals on other people.

### **How Leadership Can Contribute to a Better Community**

William Foster (1989), Burns (1978) and Greenleaf (1991) write from different organisational contexts; William Foster speaks directly of schools, Burns writes from the political arena, and Greenleaf brings out his experience in a large American business. In spite of these differences, they present compatible viewpoints of how leadership can contribute to a better community.

William Foster and Burns define leadership in such a way as to imply service. For William Foster, leadership occurs when leaders and followers play critical and transformative roles in their community by commenting on the present and former constructions of reality, holding up certain ideals for comparison, and enabling of a future vision based on an interpretation of the past (52, 53). Leadership shows how innovations continue the basic mission, goals and objectives of received tradition, but also incorporate future possibilities (54). Leadership, for William Foster, is an action that may involve many people at different times; it is not a position.

Burns' concern with transformational and transactional leadership centres on the goals involved. In transactional leadership, the reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers is based on an exchange that allows each of them to reach individual, unshared and independently held goals (4, 425). Transformational leadership occurs when goals are held mutually and the interaction between leaders and followers becomes a joint effort towards a common goal that is in their collective best interest (425). The interaction promoted by transformational leadership has a causal effect on social relations and political institutions because it changes leaders' and followers' motives and goals (454). For

Burns, the test of leadership is purpose and intent drawn from values and goals resulting in decisions and real, intended change (415).

Greenleaf sees servant leadership as a way to a society that is just and loving, and that provides greater creative opportunity for all its people (Servant Leadership 49). It is built by the more able and the less able serving each other (Servant Leadership 49). Greenleaf says that it is our attitude and level of caring that needs improvement (Servant Leadership 53) and that we need to make the care we have for all people touched by our institutions count (Servant Leadership 55). It is leaders that he calls on to guide institutions into greater service by creating organisations of support rather than fear. Increasing the serving capacity and performance of institutions is the most open course to the achievement of Greenleaf's good society because even if only one institution of a particular type achieves distinction in service and communicates this experience, the quality of our overall society will improve (Servant Leadership 49).

In summary, for William Foster, leadership occurs when leaders and followers evaluate the present and the past in a dialectical process that allows the group to make good decisions about their future direction. For Burns the common goal of transformational leadership allows the leader and followers to combine their efforts rather than to work against one another. For Greenleaf, the greatest possibilities for a better society lie in individuals working with our largest organisations in order to make them better at serving.

### **What is Better?**

Leadership involves social betterment in two ways. First, Burns promotes looking beyond one's individual interests. Second, William Foster is concerned with emancipation through critique. Greenleaf combines these two in his test of service that addresses its effects on those served and on the least privileged. These definitions, while clearly related

and compatible, emphasize different aspects of our inter-relatedness in community. Singer and Wooton add the dimension of relationship to the larger societal picture.

Burns defines "higher values" when he expresses his concern that leadership not lead "down" to "barbarism" in a narrow, egocentric self-actualisation, but "up" to higher values, purposes, or forms of self-fulfilment (Burns 452). Although goals are held mutually, Burns makes it clear that the transformational leader both elevates the wants, aspirations and values of the followers (454) by treating them as persons (462), and promotes a greater awareness of humanity and the improvement of the larger social situation (Burns 449).

William Foster sees leadership as critical of present and former constructions of social reality and enabling a more emancipatory future (52). William Foster sees any leadership that does not work toward human emancipation as oriented toward the accumulation of power and indicating an individual rather than a communitarian impulse (49). For William Foster, leadership must be committed to social change and development rather than control and production. Leadership is the achievement and refinement of human community (48) through "the ability of humans to relate deeply to each other in the search for a more perfect union" (61).

Greenleaf's test for service combines Burns' higher values, purposes, or forms of self-fulfilment (452) with William Foster's concern for human emancipation (49). To identify service, Greenleaf recommends asking: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived" (Servant Leadership 13-14 italics in the original)? Greenleaf wants leaders who are honest, loving, and responsible. A responsible leader is one who builds rather than destroys and asks questions about the

effect of her actions on other people (Greenleaf On Becoming 306). Greenleaf feels that people should follow only those leaders who are clearly willing to serve.

While Greenleaf's test for service focuses on the internal workings of the group, Singer and Wooton argue for the importance of examining the values and actions of a group against external standards such as their relationship to and effect on other groups. Singer and Wooton recall the experience of Albert Speer who, as a powerful person in the Third Reich, put his commendable participative management theories and administrative genius to work promoting the goals of one of the most inhumane societies in history (79). By Speer's own admission this occurred because he failed to think about the human and social consequences of his actions and became indifferent to the people who were adversely affected by the actions of the Nazi party (82). Singer and Wooton suggest that humanistic values and actions are not sufficient to lead us to a more democratic or humanistic society but that end results must be carefully examined in light of the larger societal and moral questions (99).

These writers show the importance of asking questions about how what the leader does affects other people both within her organization, and outside of it in society and the world at large. The consequences of not asking those questions are clearly demonstrated by Singer and Wooton in their account of Albert Speer (79-103) who used his administrative genius in the service of one of the most inhumane societies our world has ever known. In short, Speer was a leader who realized his responsibility to ask questions about the effect his government had on people outside of it too late, after untold damage had been done. This literature argues that servant leadership must spring from "good" intentions, be "properly" conducted and have "good" consequences.

### **Service Can Legitimate Leadership**

Part of the influence of servant leadership may come from its symbolic value in that it is part of the way we think about the society we desire. [For a similar claim see Acts of

Compassion by Robert Wuthnow (302)]. Our frequent disappointments do not take away from the fact that we know what we seek. Service can legitimate leadership because first, it answers the critical theorists' concerns that leadership serve community and second, because it builds the social fabric and is therefore sustainable.

### Leaders Must Serve Society

Critical theorists such as William Foster (1989), Perrow (1986), Zey-Ferrell (1981) and Alvesson (1985) are concerned because they see managers as using organisations and their followers as a means to shape the world in the way they want, with them in control and receiving the greatest share of the benefits, rather than as a means to serve the best interests of their immediate followers and society at large (Perrow 11).

To William Foster, the treatment of people as a means to an end rather than as ends in themselves represents an ethical slide in which 'what works' is 'what's right' (55). Foster sees a manager who holds an organisational position and pursues goals that are driven by organisational needs as legitimated by getting the employees to embrace organisational goals or, minimally, to co-operate with them in return for a reward. In business management this may translate into goals such as greater profits, satisfying the material cravings of employees and giving the illusion of power to subordinates (44, 45). William Foster sees this as a powerless attempt to predict and control human action in order to justify and shore up existing power relationships (48). He contrasts this with leadership that is interactive, mutual, and occurs in community.

Service answers these concerns. Blackmore sees relationships as being very important (121) and suggests a shift in leadership focus from the individual to the collective, which then has the potential to be a fully human community structured on relationships among people (124). Blackmore argues for the redefinition of leadership so as to foster community and the relationships within it (122).

Tournier said, "A chief is always respected when he [sic] demands of himself as much as he expects from his staff, and when he shows them the same consideration and loyalty as he expects from them. But he is despised if he makes use of his power for his personal advantage, or in order to protect himself from adverse circumstances" (Violence 161). Greenleaf describes leaders who serve as those who have the ability to hurt, but can be trusted not to do any harm (Servant Leadership 42). Trust is sustained when leaders respond to problems by beginning within themselves rather than out there with someone else (Servant Leadership 44). Service addresses critical concerns because it breaks with the rational economic model of self-interest on the part of a leader.

### Service and Social Sustainability

Service legitimates leadership because it builds the social fabric. Greenleaf states that institutions that achieve distinction through the use of people, even the intelligent use of people, do not last long (Servant Leadership 40). Institutions must move from people-using to people-building by having their leadership establish that people are their primary interest. From this principle, the right actions will fall into place (Servant Leadership 40). Chappell makes the point that business draws on the common goodness of people and communities to make a profit. For goodness to be sustained, we must be restorative and re-creative, rather than attacking and consuming the common good. "If we are not [restorative], we should not presume it will always be there" (Chappell in Frick 5). Servant leadership seeks to redefine leadership in such a way that it builds community (Blackmore 122).

Service is a way leaders can restore and recreate rather than exploit the goodwill of organisational members. Service may be an important way to persuade followers that they are not merely being used as a means to an end that may or may not be in their interest. Seeing a leader step outside the rational economic model by serving is a powerful inspiration for members to explore and cultivate their own, more altruistic motivations.

When I realized that servant leadership may be an important part of the answer for the critical theorists' concern about the use of followers to the end of the leader and for the establishment of social sustainability, I came to see the potential of my research. As I would also like to contribute to the betterment of community, this became an important motivation in my work.

### **Service Has Potential for the Leader Herself**

In the earlier presentation on motivation, I noted that Coles sees service as a "function not only of what we do but of who we are [which, of course, gives shape to what we do]" (xxvi). Coles sees an iterative relationship between the leader's identity, beliefs, and purposes and her service experiences (143). Serving can enable us to find and affirm ourselves (Coles 85). Many of the people Coles met spoke of Someone above themselves at the apex of the universe. They saw themselves as agents who offered their gifts for service. One lady explained how her service came about as follows: "Now maybe it was the Lord Jesus putting that idea in my head, or maybe it was just me trying to get myself closer to Him - I'd be in His favour. Or maybe it was just my momma in me talking to me... (218).

When Coles talked to older people about their service, they talked much less about idealism and a great deal more about an enlightened self-awareness that Coles refers to as egoism (221). They had apparently discovered, in a lifetime of sifting and sorting their interests, that those who put a lot into service get back much more. Rather than talking about going out into the world to change it, the older people talked about what they got out of it themselves. They tended to be more modest and had learned to accept the things that could not be changed.

There are two ways in which serving while leading helps the leader. First, the caring implicit in service brings questions that can lead to growth through reflection.

Second, sharing one's search for wholeness with followers through mutual identification and learning enriches the experience and relationship for both.

### Reflection

Service implies caring which, in turn, demands intense introspection. The caring implicit in service raises questions about the systems in which the leader and follower live; questions about the differences between the leader and the followers; questions about how the leader's actions affect her followers, her organisation, the various stakeholders, and so on and on. This caring also increases one's vulnerability because, in addition to the hurts to the self that any one person experiences, when one cares for another, one can also be hurt through the hurts that happen to that person (Noddings 33).

William Foster says that to move beyond using people as instruments for the achievement of organisational goals and to avoid exclusive identification with her own purposes, a leader must see beyond the immediate needs of the organisation and be willing to examine her own life (51, 59). He lists questions that it is important for a leader to ask: Am I benefiting from someone else's pain? What can I do about it? In what ways am I contributing to my own problems and what changes can I make to address these? Leaders must be willing to be individually ethical and to concern themselves with how a moral community can work (William Foster 55). Listening to and treating others as truthfully valued persons will expose the leader because it does not allow the masking of duplicity and dishonesty behind a veil of power and position. This vulnerability can result in personal growth.

Additionally, Coles points out that it is naive to think of servant leaders as innocent, humble and loving, without a real fighter instinct when in fact, those who serve can also be full of themselves, conceited, greedy for power to win and determined to let the world know they have won (201). A leader's blind idealism can serve as a cover for self-

satisfaction evidenced by a refusal to recognise others who live out a different ideal. Anna Freud said,

How sad that in the name of goodness and kindness to others one can see plenty of mean-spirited behaviour - a demanding, controlling, manipulative, condescending, self-centred ruthlessness that masks itself as good will, as an effort at charity, as an attempt to change the world, reform a given society. Perhaps you have noticed that among those people of ethical credibility and ethical vision, there can be no shortage of vanity and conceit, of cruelty and selfishness, of lies and deception (Quoted in Coles 204).

When a leader becomes shrill, moody and humourless, she is in trouble and needs to re-evaluate what happened to her former satisfaction, accomplishment and learning (Coles 203). Taking up this challenge as well as the challenge of leading ethically has enormous personal growth potential. It follows then that servant leadership can promote personal growth for the leader as well as the followers.

#### Mutual Identification and Learning

A shared search for wholeness as joint seekers of truth and mutual actualisation is possible between leaders and followers when leadership is not merely a self-regarding quest (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 36; Burns 448-449). Greenleaf observed that "there is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between the leader and the led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share" (Servant Leadership 36). This shared search for wholeness communicates empathy and an unqualified acceptance that helps people and may even inspire dedication and heroism (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 21). Burns calls this "emotional involvement" and "identifying with their point of view" (446). This is the kind of presence that Noddings calls "engrossment;" a stepping into the others' world and making a connection with them (24). It involves a receptivity that opens the door to others

in such a way that they recognize that they are being received rather than being held off (Noddings 60).

Leaders are usually keen to have followers identify with and learn from them, but service implies that this is mutual. Blackmore says that she "recognizes the interdependence of people, and sees moral judgement as not being predicated upon some abstract universal morality or individual rights, but upon concern and responsibility consequent upon the relationship of self to others within specific contexts" (120).

Nouwen, who after a distinguished teaching career at Notre Dame, Yale and Harvard, spent his latter years sharing his life with the mentally challenged people of the l'Arche community, has written extensively for Christian leaders. He is speaking in the first instance to ministers and priests, whose work, like that of educators, is transformational. I have included his work here because although it is more reflective than empirical, it is insightful and presents ideas that probe my thinking. Although Nouwen's emphasis is explicitly religious, his ideas on relationships are not far removed from those I read about in Sergiovanni, Blackmore and Noddings.

He says, "If we accept leadership, it can only be honest if it takes the form of service" (Living Reminder 48). Humility is a willingness to work along side of others, to admit things you cannot do yourself, to admit the need for criticism, and to ask for reminders about how the problems of the world are problems that you have within yourself (Creative Ministry 86). This humility is the antithesis of pride that Nouwen sees as especially insidious because those who innovate must generally view themselves as above the community they are seeking to improve. The tendency to see evil out there but not present within themselves makes it difficult for leaders to listen to people, accept their criticism, and learn from them (Creative Ministry 74-6). Service suggests approaching questions with others, in an attitude of openness to learning from them about the subject matter, about them, and about the leader herself (Noddings 177, 65).

Nouwen suggests that the leader who serves must identify with the led by entering into their lives, taking the risk of becoming hurt, wounded or even destroyed in the process (Wounded Healer 82-3. This is also suggested by Noddings 33). Through identification, the leader seeks to place her own experience of faith and doubt, hope and despair, light and darkness at the disposal of others who want to find their way (Wounded Healer 39). By identification, the leader is able to recognise that nothing human is alien to herself and offer every neighbour compassionate forgiveness (Wounded Healer 41). This implies replacing abstract moral principles with judgements that are based on concern and responsibility within relationships (Blackmore 120).

As part of the respect implied by service, Nouwen emphasised the importance of leaders being willing to learn from their followers. "He who wants to bring about change has first of all to learn to be changed by those whom he wants to help" (Creative Ministry 83). Nouwen says that as long as we want to change other people because we feel guilty about our advantages, we are still playing the power game and waiting for thanks. Those served may or may not be thankful. Nouwen sees a leader's desire for thanks as a subtle desire for power because thanking someone admits dependency on them. If service is to continue in a giving attitude, the one who serves must understand that thanks is often resisted because it threatens self-respect (Creative Ministry 74-6)

Only when we come to see that those we lead have a lot to offer us, can we see our work merely as a small return for what we have received (Creative Ministry 83-4). Coles cites an example of one person who came to this realisation suddenly:

Talk about arrogance! Talk about being wrapped up in your own world! That's what I saw in a flash - that in this work you can get quite isolated from the very people you're trying to serve. 'We' are the servers; 'they' are the people served (Coles 240 italics in the original).

This mutual identification can also help a leader avoid succumbing to a leadership myth such as is documented by Meindl and his colleagues. They noted that observers ascribe a larger-than-life role to leaders in terms of what leaders do, what they are able to do and the effect they have on the lives of others (79). When leaders foster a myth that is unfounded in reality, disappointment is inevitable. When it comes, followers reject the leader and blame her for not measuring up to their unrealistic expectations. The leader who plays into such a myth is setting up her own downfall.

Service has great potential for the leader's personal growth and identification between the leader and the led creates an avenue of learning for both. Noddings, for example, views moral questions as concrete human problems to be lived and solved in living, rather than as intellectual puzzles needing abstract solutions (96). Coles says that people who are offering a service need to spend a lot of time looking at themselves, looking at what kind of people they are and what they are hoping to get from their service (Coles 184). Only then is there a chance that their service will be meaningful, positive and self-affirming. Service within leadership is an opportunity to reflect on ourselves and to seek out together "something bigger and more compelling; a way to live, a sign of what matters, a clue as to what this life means." (Coles 280).

The literature on the goal of servant leadership showed how service in leadership can be viewed as contributing to a society characterized by personal growth, service and care for the least privileged. Leadership is seen as a moral enterprise aimed at maximising our ability to relate in community. There is an emphasis on "higher" values, purposes, and forms of self-fulfilment (Burns 452) and on the emancipation of those who are least privileged in society (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 14). Leadership that serves has the potential to contribute to social sustainability and to facilitate the mutual growth of the followers and the leader. I saw these as goals that I also wanted to contribute to through my research.

This literature on servant leadership as seeking a better community suggested additional clarification for my research and suggested questions that I might consider. Are my informants working toward a better community? If so, how do they identify what is better? What need is it that they are working to address and why? How do they talk about what is important to them in their leadership role? What service are they trying to provide, why, and for whom? Are they working together with their followers for a commonly shared goal, or are they merely obtaining compliance through their power, rewards or vision? Do they have a commitment to the growth and empowerment of their colleagues and their students? Do they use their staff or their students in any way? What is the effect of their leadership on those who are the least privileged?

This literature also suggests questions about the effect of service on my informants themselves. What are the assumptions on which their idealism is based? What is their family or community background? Do they see themselves as going out into the world to change it or do they see themselves as benefiting from their service? How do they deal with the things that cannot be changed? What is the role of reflection in their life? What questions are they asking about the system in which they and their followers live? Do they have a "cause" that they passionately believe in and are tenaciously fighting for in the face of opposition? If so, how do they balance their service with their desire for change? Do they find satisfaction, accomplishment and learning in their work or have they become shrill, moody and humourless (Coles 203)? Are they open to learning from their followers and do they encourage critique from followers? Is there a mutuality about their relationships? How do they think about those they serve?

The questions outlined here were designed to explore my informants' thinking about their goals. Although I did not follow up systematically on each one by turn because that would have interfered with the flow of natural conversation and some questions fit more easily into one situation than another, I referred back to them frequently when

assessing my data and planning my interviews and observation times. Having them listed in this way helped me both to find the right way to approach individual situations, and to be thorough in my data collection.

### **Redefinition of Power and Position**

The literature that I review in this section suggests first, that the mutual identification and learning that contributes to the growth of both the leader and the led has implications for their relationships. Second, service means that leaders use their power to facilitate the goals they share with their followers rather than to coerce or manipulate them. Finally, service modifies the positions held by leader and follower.

#### **Service Promotes Mutuality**

The theme of leaders and followers bonding into a mutually caring unit comes through in the symbiotic relationship suggested by Burns (452), the school community of Sergiovanni (Organisations 217), the consensual, dialectical relationships of William Foster's leadership (46) and Greenleaf's *primus inter pares* (Servant Leadership 61). Burns sees "one-man leadership" as a contradiction in terms (452). Rather than leadership on the basis of personal charisma or position, service implies first, a shared meaning and, second, an interaction characterised by mutual listening and negotiation.

#### **Shared Meaning**

Sergiovanni recognises the importance of competent leadership skills as basic to school leadership. His emphasis, however, is on the additional unity, order, and meaning leaders give by relating everyday events and activities to the overall purposes, ideals and norms of the organisation; translating long-term goals into operational programs; and giving their time and attention to important philosophical and historical traditions, principles, issues, goals and outcomes (Cultural 8, 9). It is this shared meaning that governs what and how things will be done and that maximises the satisfaction and personal development of the people in the organisation. Meaning leads to shared commitment, and

excitement about the organisation and its work (Leadership as Cultural Expression 107-111).

### Interaction Between Leader and Followers

There are both similarities and differences between the way Burns and Greenleaf describe interaction between the leader and the led. Both Greenleaf and Burns emphasise the importance of a leader listening to her followers in order to be sure that the highest priority needs are met. Greenleaf suggests that true interest in others can be gauged by one's ability to listen to them (Servant Leadership 17). Does the leader really want to understand or is she only intent on making her own point? Does she fear silence or welcome it as an opportunity to evaluate the dialogue? Greenleaf and Burns see a kind of reciprocal process in which leaders and followers listen, act, communicate responses and modify subsequent actions to take that feedback into account (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 13-14, Burns 440, 449).

However, Burns' sense of competition and working to win is foreign to Greenleaf. Burns states that leadership is a collective process emerging from the clash and congruence of the leader's and follower's motives and goals (460). It is the combination of moral education (in things such as fairness, equity, honesty, responsibility, and justice) with the acquisition of a marketable skill that provides an individual with a power base from which to throw her weight into the economic and political arena (449). The followers evaluate leaders' potential for humane and responsible leadership on the basis of free speech and open conflict, and leaders utilise the adversarial process (459).

This tone contrasts with Greenleaf who says that everyone needs the tempering influence of challenging colleagues in the service of, and for the sake of, a commonly held goal. Service implies that the leader begins by listening carefully and seeking to understand (Servant Leadership 17, 44), and then, rather than blaming another person, she seeks the answers within herself (Servant Leadership 17). While Greenleaf would not argue with the

acquisition of moral qualities and marketable skills, his emphasis is on the willingness to serve. He feels that no one should be powerless (Servant Leadership 85) and that everyone, even the less able, should have the power to serve (Servant Leadership 49).

In his view, we are asked to accept the human condition with both its suffering and its joy and to work with its imperfections to build wholeness through "adventurous creative achievement" (Servant Leadership 12). Greenleaf's servant leader is challenged by the vagaries of human nature, but she is willing to tolerate imperfection because of her interest in and affection for her followers (Servant Leadership 21). The servant leader cultivates integrity because it is this inner quality that will sustain the followers (Servant Leadership 44). Although Burns' descriptions of leader follower interactions have a greater emphasis on competition and conflict, and Greenleaf's a greater emphasis on acceptance and reflection, both see mutual listening and negotiation as basic to finding and sharing meaning. I wondered whether I would find examples of both the "Burns" way and the "Greenleaf" way among my informants.

### **Service in Leadership Implies a Redefinition of Power**

The literature strengthened my hunch that mutuality of servant leadership implies a redefinition of power and that the way my informants handle power in their relationships would be central to my research. The traditional idea of the powerful leader who rules from on high, sometimes with brute force, is clearly not mutuality. There are several points made regarding service and power in the literature: first, there is power in service; second, the power is shared between the leader and followers; and finally, coercion is rejected in favour of follower choice and autonomy.

### **Can Serving make a Leader Powerful?**

The literature recognises power in service because service influences follower motivation and commitment. Burns says that management manuals are weak because they train people to manage others by manipulation, that is, by treating others as things (446).

At best they seek out the easiest and simplest way to persuade people to do things that are in the best interests of the power wielder (447). Burns warns that playing on low-order wants and needs of people has the potential to upset the natural balance of people's motivation in place of raising it (445, 446).

Burns suggests that leaders should study motivation and commitment because he sees them as a dominant cause of action (Burns 442). Burns sees the knowledge of people's motives, aspirations, values and goals (404, 435) and the use of that knowledge to identify and align the commonalities between leader and follower hierarchies of motivations as key to leadership (404, 435). Leaders must assess follower motivation as seriously as they analyse the power bases of their rivals (Burns 420, 435, 461).

Motivation, however, is not a simple, quick fix for leaders to manipulate. Burns sees countless and infinitely varied motive and power bases that produce a density of relationships beyond full comprehension (437). Sergiovanni sees motivation as complex and reaching far beyond simple self-interest to things like religious values, family and personal value systems, commitment to the ethic of caring, respect for the value of community, a sense of what is right and good, a desire to serve others, and a desire to serve ideals (Reflections 310; Moral Leadership 18, 19, 23). There is some evidence that women may be motivated differently than are men (Shakeshaft 69, 84). It follows that tapping into this motivational structure as Burns suggests will be a complex undertaking for leaders.

Burns sees a common purpose as key to this power and argues that identification with the point of view of one's followers (transformational leadership) is far more effective in the long term than both Machiavellian manipulation that treats followers as things rather than people (446) and transactional leadership that is based on a contract. When follower and leader motivations are brought together in the service of a common goal, as they are in transformational leadership, Burns sees a great deal of power.

There is nothing so power-full, nothing so effective, nothing so causal as common purpose if that purpose informs all levels of a political system... Moreover, unity of purpose and congruence of motivation foster causal influence far down the line. Nothing can substitute for common purpose, focused by competition and combat, and aided by *time* (439 italics in the original).

Blackmore suggests that power should be seen as the capacity of the community as a whole to work effectively toward the shared ideal (122). Leadership does not have to be domination or the ability to get one's own way, but can take on forms that empower the individual and the group (123). Blackmore redefines leadership and the power that accompanies it as "the ability to *act with* others to do things that could not be done by an individual alone" (123 italics in the original).

There is power in service, but it comes through the followers rather than by imposition on the followers. Power does not come through organisational position, through the ability to provide rewards in return for compliance, nor through the ability to create highly motivating and absorbing visions, but through guiding the abilities of the followers to serve organisational goals.

### Shared Power

There is a range of responses to the question of power sharing between the leader and followers. For Sergiovanni the leader's position and control remains unchallenged. Burns suggests a symbiotic relationship between leader and followers in a social and political collectivity (452). Greenleaf's emphasis on spreading power rather than concentrating it in the leader was the most interesting to me. Greenleaf states that everyone, including the leader, needs the help and correcting influence of colleagues (Servant Leadership 53) and that no one should be powerless, no matter who they are (Servant Leadership 85).

Service means that power is "power with" rather than "power over" the followers. Greenleaf says little about leader's power. His emphasis is on the use of power to provide opportunities, alternatives and individual autonomy rather than on simply possessing it. In his good society, no one is powerless and everyone is engaged in the work of the more and the less able serving each other (Servant Leadership 49). Power is used to build, support and redeem as well as to protect or facilitate the growth of another. It can be a means to serve others rather than belittle them. When power is directed by service it advocates the self-determination of the followers and supports their decisions.

Greenleaf might agree that serving can make a leader powerful, but he does not see it as yet another "peculiarly efficacious technique for getting one's way" (Yoder 244). Kiechel (121) explains that service goes beyond empowerment theory because rather than being primarily interested in the purposes of the organisation, it sees human beings as having a value in their own right. As such, they are an end in and of themselves and the leader and her organisation is there as much to provide meaningful work for its workers and a worthwhile service or product as it does to flourish as an organisation. Service helps a leader see people around her as fellow created beings with importance and worth, whether or not they contribute to her particular goals or those of the organisation.

#### Coercion versus Autonomy

Coercion and manipulation are incompatible with service because it is unethical to treat people as a means to an end rather than as ends in themselves (William Foster 55). There is, however, a tension between the need for an organisational plan and co-ordinating that with follower goals.

Leaders who use their position to achieve only personally beneficial objectives are power wielders and not leaders at all (Burns 2; William Foster 55). Both Greenleaf and Burns emphasise the importance of free choice and autonomy for followers (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 42; Burns 437). While coercion and manipulation may get a particular

short term result, they violate the person and strengthen resistance and therefore their controlling effect lasts only as long as the force is strong (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 42). Service implies the use of conviction, persuasion and example (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 30) to create opportunities and alternatives so individuals can choose and build autonomy (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 42). Persuasion and the consequent voluntary acceptance are self-perpetuating (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 42). Greenleaf's emphasis is not on the autonomy that comes to the leader who gets to the top, but on a wide spread autonomy that results from service.

These writers are clearly supportive of follower choice and autonomy and yet they do not deal extensively with the question of how to deal with situations in which follower choices run counter to the goals of the organisation as a whole. I imagine that for Burns these questions would probably be resolved by debates and votes and that William Foster would look to the dialectical process to find a solution. Greenleaf might attempt to discern the interests of the weakest party affected and then act according to that. These are merely speculations I cannot substantiate, but my impression is that leaders who serve still lead with strength.

The power of service is based on the alignment of follower motivation and commitment with organisational goals. Service implies that this power is shared with the followers and used to cultivate their autonomy rather than to coerce or manipulate them.

### **Service in Leadership Implies a Redefinition of Position**

The mutual identification and learning that contributes to the growth of both the leader and the led also implies a redefinition or modification of position. Most of the writers I am concerned with propose modifications within the hierarchical system and support the idea of position exchanges between followers and leaders, but Greenleaf essentially reverses the positions of the leader and the led.

### Modifications Within the Leader - Follower Relationship

Burns leaves the value of the leader-follower relationship intact. To win and retain a place "up" in the system is better because it allows one more autonomy that translates into power. Moreover, Burns makes the assumption that the leader is in a position to shape, alter, and elevate the motives, values, and goals of the followers (425, 452).

Others modify the leader follower relationship through replacements for leadership. Sergiovanni's moral leadership proposes that order and meaning can evoke enough group identity among professionals such as teachers to free leaders from daily supervisory tasks (Cultural and Competing 8-9). Although the leader retains her position, she is freed from the bartering relationship of having to trade rewards and punishments for compliance (Sergiovanni, Communities 216). Blackmore calls for modification of the hierarchical system through a reformulation of "the political and epistemological commitments underlying the dominant notions" of leadership (120). She is asking that the way leadership has evolved and the way it is understood be rethought so that helpful modifications can be made.

### Followers Become Leaders

Serving promotes position exchanges between followers and leaders. The result of Burns' transformational leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts leaders into moral agents and followers into leaders (4). Great leaders help make their interested followers into leaders (Burns 443). William Foster not only sees followers becoming leaders, but also leaders becoming followers through mutual negotiations and shared leadership roles (42).

Leaders willing to work themselves out of their position are difficult to find but at least one such leader has been documented by Dyck in his article about Dan Wiens. Dyck observes that Dan seems eager to work himself out of his role as the informal leader of the Shared Farming movement (242) and that he invites others to join even if that means

competition for his farm. Despite strong financial incentives, Dan has made it clear that he is unwilling to promote Shared Farming on behalf of several NGO and government agencies. Apparently, while he is not afraid of direct competition, he is afraid that if he becomes the figurehead for the Shared Farming movement, he will undermine its potential to be a local grassroots people's movement and so he avoids the limelight (242).

I've gone out of my way to tell other farmers about the Shared Farming concept, hoping that they would get involved. Many did and now I have competition. This evangelistic activity may seem akin to shooting myself in the foot, but I believe that competition is an asset. Someone who comes up with an idea like Shared Farming and then tries to protect his or her turf is going to become isolated and not have the stimulation of other peoples' ideas. This will eventually kill the project that he or she is trying to protect (Dyck 239).

#### Greenleaf Reverses the Leader Follower Relationship

Greenleaf essentially reverses the positions of the leader and the led in that the leader is essentially the servant of the follower. A leadership position is not something to cling to, but rather to serve within. In as far as leadership means service not of one's own agenda but the ideal, it is a reversal of the hierarchical system and effectively turns the normal perception of servant and leader on its head. Service has to do with the internal spirit of the leader; it is a way of "being" more than a way of "doing". The servant leader considers herself not as one who is to get something from her followers, but as one whose purpose it is to serve, empower and give dignity.

In organisational terms, Greenleaf suggests that this principle be practised by surrounding a leader with others who are equally strong (Servant Leadership 63-65). He suggests that the hierarchical principle that places one person in charge as a "lone chief atop a pyramidal structure" be replaced (Servant Leadership 61) with a *primus inter pares* (Servant Leadership 67). By this he means that there is a first among equals rather than a

single chief who is held ultimately responsible (Servant Leadership 61). The cardinal principle is that no single person should have unchecked power but that all are both restrained and encouraged by their peers (Servant Leadership 71). *"No person is complete; no one is to be entrusted with all. Completeness is to be found only in the complementary talents of several who relate as equals"* (Servant Leadership 112 italics in the original).

Greenleaf feels that the "lone chief" is abnormal and corrupting to the leader in that it weakens informal links and dries up the channels of honest reaction and feedback. This cuts the leader off from the help and correcting influence of close colleagues (Servant Leadership 63) and can result in both a distortion of judgement and a loneliness for the leader who cannot be sure of her subordinate's motivation (Servant Leadership 63). It is also difficult for the lone chief to lead by persuasion because she holds too much power and whatever she suggests is taken as an order (Servant Leadership 65).

In addition, Greenleaf sees the lone chief as detrimental to the organisation because the gross burdens of leadership destroy the creativity of many leaders long before they leave their offices. When they do leave, there is a major disruption in the organisation while the next leader is located (Servant Leadership 65). Disillusionment sets in when the new leader's clay feet are inevitably discovered and the process is repeated.

Finally, having only one leader at a time is detrimental to our community in that it results in a dearth of opportunities for potential leaders to develop (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 65). Future leaders are not trained. A top leadership team of equals with a *primus* would be an opportunity for competent people with vision and values to learn and would therefore "grow more leaders faster" than any other available course (Servant Leadership 89).

Service implies changes to the positions of leader and follower within the hierarchical system. The literature suggests techniques that replace day to day leadership

tasks and encourage exchanges between leaders and followers. Greenleaf's *primus inter pares* remains an interesting concept with much to commend it.

In this section on the redefinition of power and position I have said that the shared meaning and interaction implied by service in leadership results in a redirection of leadership power from enforcing compliance to the leader's vision, to service of the an ideal. It also brings modifications to the hierarchical system and allows for a more fluid relationship between the roles of the leader and the led. This is based on the things they share.

This literature on servant leadership and the redefinition of power and position suggests three additional aspects for my research. It suggests probing the meaning shared between leaders and their followers, the nature of the leader's power, and the nature of the position held by the leader. In the following paragraphs, I will again suggest questions I can draw from in my actual interviews when probing these issues.

First, there are a number of questions that probe the meaning shared between the leader and the staff and students. Does this lead to a shared commitment and excitement about the organisational work they share? What is the tone of the interaction between the leader and her followers? Is it one of fair competition as suggested by Burns (459) or is it like the challenge of colleagues committed to the same goal as was suggested by Greenleaf (Servant Leadership 17)? Does the leader accept the limitations in her staff and students and work within those? Are those who are less able, empowered to serve (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 49)? Does the leader show integrity?

There are also questions exploring the nature of the leader's power. Is it based on the leader's ability to impose upon her followers or to work through them? Is the leader's power used to support, build, protect, or facilitate rather than to belittle or coerce? How does the leader handle the tension between the organisational need for a plan and the

individual needs represented by the followers? What does she do about opposition, about followers whose goals are not complementary to her own? What "show downs" has she faced and how does she see service in that context?

Finally, there are questions that probe the position of the leader. Is it a hierarchical position? How does she perceive her position and how does she handle the implications of a hierarchical position? Does she encourage followers to grow to the point where they can take over her leadership position? Has this ever happened? Is the organisation set up in such a way that no one person is isolated in a top leadership position (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 65)?

### Summary of the Literature Review

In the literature I found, first, a discussion of the concept of service as it relates to self-interest and an introduction to servant leadership. In addition, I found two main themes related to service in leadership. First, it contributes to the goal of leadership, that is, a community in which there is greater concern for the interests of the entire community and second, it contributes to the redefinition of the power and position of the leader and the led.

First, the literature reviewed in this section indicates how service in leadership may contribute to the accomplishment of a better community. Leadership is seen as a moral enterprise aimed at maximising our ability to relate in community. There is an emphasis on "higher" values, purposes, and forms of self-fulfilment (Burns 452) and on the emancipation of those who are least privileged in community (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 14). Unselfishly motivated service can legitimate leadership because it is a break with the rational economic model of self-interest on the part of a leader and it builds the social fabric and is therefore sustainable. Social relationships cannot be sustained in a system that continually takes more than it gives in return.

Additionally, when leadership is not merely a self-regarding quest (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 36; Burns 448-449), there is the possibility of a shared search for wholeness. When leaders spend time looking at what kind of people they are and what they are hoping to get from their service (Coles 184), their service can be meaningful, positive and self-affirming. Leadership that serves has the potential to facilitate the mutual growth of the followers and the leader.

Second, service in leadership contributes to the redefinition of the power and position of the leader and the led. While there is power in service, it is based on the alignment of follower motivation and commitment with organisational goals. Service implies that this power is shared with the followers and used to cultivate their autonomy rather than to coerce or manipulate them.

Service also implies changes to the positions of leader and follower within the hierarchical system. Serving promotes positional exchanges between followers and leaders. The literature suggests techniques that replace day to day leadership tasks and encourage exchanges between leaders and followers. Greenleaf essentially reverses the positions of the leader and the led in that the leader is essentially the servant of the follower.

Important for both the building of a better community and the redefinition of the power and position is a mutuality, that is, a shared meaning as well as mutual listening and negotiation. It is the recognition and acceptance of this mutuality that has the greatest potential for personal growth in both the leader and the led.

### **My Foreshadowed Questions**

My reading of the literature suggested six areas for exploration with the educational leaders who are reputed to be servants. I have chosen to express these six areas as research questions and suggested, in each case, several subquestions to help me explore the issues with my informants.

The First Research Question: How do my informants balance their self-interests with their leadership?

I set out to explore how my informants balance their self-interests with their leadership since I wanted to consider both self-interested reasons and the reasons that grow out of the "good" part of ourselves. I asked questions like: Do my informants see themselves as altruistic? When and in what ways? Which of their own interests are served by their leadership? Do they find their leadership intrinsically satisfying? This literature suggested that the motivation leaders identified for their service would be of interest to me. I wanted to know whether the servant leadership style was an expression of the leader's true person deep down inside, or was it a learned response?

The Second Research Question: How is servant leadership related to the character of my informants?

This literature also suggests questions about the effect of service on the leader herself. What are the assumptions on which their service is based? Is it family, religion, reading, reflection, personal experience or something else? What view of service did they receive from their family? What is the value placed on service within their community? Do they see themselves as going out into the world to change it? Do they see themselves as benefiting from their service?

I asked about the role of reflection in my informants' leadership. How do they deal with the things that cannot be changed? What questions are they asking about the system in which they and their followers live? Do they have a "cause" that they passionately believe in and are fighting for tenaciously even in the face of opposition? If so, how do they balance their service with their desire for change? Do they find satisfaction, accomplishment and learning in their work (Coles 203)?

The Third Research Question: How do my informants view and talk about their commitment to a better society?

The literature suggests that service implies a commitment to a better community, that is, the ability to articulate what is good and to govern leadership with that vision in mind. I wanted to find out how my informants view and talk about what is important to them in their leadership role. Are they working toward a better community? If so, how do they define what is better?

What service are they trying to provide, why, and for whom? How is it that they combine service with a tenacious fighting for what they see as right? Is it possible to serve and value equality while simultaneously fighting hard for those ideals that they passionately believe in, particularly in the face of opposition?

The Fourth Research Question: How do my informants handle their power?

The literature indicates that while service implies a particular orientation towards power sharing, the concept of power and authority implies the ability to get one's way in the face of opposition. This suggested that I ask about what power my informants feel they have and how they use that power. What nature and amount of power do they see themselves as having? Is it based on their ability to impose upon their followers or to work through them? Do my informants see themselves as using their power to support, build, protect, or facilitate? Are they working together with their followers for a commonly shared goal, or are they merely obtaining compliance through their power, rewards or vision?

How do my informants handle the tension between the organisational need for a plan and the individual needs represented by the followers? What do they do about opposition, and about followers whose goals are not complementary to their own? What "show downs" has she faced and how does she see service in that context? In what circumstances have they used coercion? Do they prefer follower choice and autonomy? It seems that service in leadership may imply the surrender of power to those with whom the leader disagrees because the leader has defined herself as the servant. Is this so for my

informants? I want to talk about how my informants balance caring for their followers with getting the job done.

The Fifth Research Question: How do my informants relate to other people?

I wanted to ask questions about my informants' relationships with both their colleagues and their students. What is the tone of their interaction? Is it one of fair competition as suggested by Burns (459) or is it like the challenge of colleagues committed to the same goal as was suggested by Greenleaf (Servant Leadership 17, 44)? Are they open to learning from their followers and do they encourage critique from followers? Is there a reciprocal, mutual caring between my informants and their followers, with both of them listening and hearing one another? Are they open to being challenged by their followers? How do my informants think about those they serve?

How does their commitment to the growth and empowerment of staff and students show in their thinking and in their actions? Do they indicate interest in challenging the growth and development of their followers? Why or why not? Do they use their staff or their students in any way? What is the effect of their leadership on those who are the least privileged? Do my informants accept the limitations in their staff and students and work within those? Are those who are less able empowered to serve (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 49)? Do my informants have integrity?

Is there a meaning shared between the leader and the staff and students? Are they serving an ideal or an idea together with their followers? To what extent do their followers share this ideal? Is there any sense of community and acceptance in a common purpose? Does this lead to a shared commitment and excitement about the organisational work they share? What influence does this have on external leader controls?

The Sixth Research Question: How do my informants handle their position within their organizations?

The literature suggests questions about the leader's position. How did she achieve her position of leadership? Is it a hierarchical position? How does she perceive her position and how does she handle the implications of a hierarchical position? Do my informants promote their followers growth into leadership positions including their own? Has this ever happened? Do they apply Greenleaf's principle of *primus inter pares* (Servant Leadership 67) and if they do, how does it work? What benefits, if any, are there to the leader, the followers and the organisation?

Having read the literature and garnered these questions, I explored these issues with my informants through the methods I describe in the next chapter. My review of this literature draws upon a variety of writers whose work has implications for the understanding of leaders who are seen to also serve. Although few have written directly about the concept of servant leadership, many present related concepts. Servant leadership is not a completely discrete concept, but one that to varying degrees blends with other conceptualizations. I speculated that servant leadership would be practised and expressed in different ways by my various informants as they were in different educational organisations and that a single model might not emerge. However, I also felt that it might be possible to identify some common characteristics.

### Chapter Three - THE PRESENT STUDY

My research question focused on the meaning educational leaders who are reputed to be servants attach to service within their leadership. The purpose of this study was to explore the thinking of real life servant leaders and to compare and contrast that with both my own perceptions and the literature. The literature suggested probing my informants about things like self-interest, motivation, and ideals as well as their practice of power and position within relationships. My challenge was to design a study that would further the understanding I had gleaned from both my background study of Edward Smith and the literature.

As I wished to explore the concept of servant leadership rather than to prove or disprove a hypothesis constructed at the outset of my study, I elected to do inductive qualitative research in which my research design would emerge from the evidence as it was collected and analysed. It seemed appropriate to my goal of exploring the meaning educational leaders attach to service within their leadership to have the non-quantitative, interpretive information interact with the emerging and increasingly specific themes (Bogdan and Biklen 32).

In this chapter I will first of all present three reasons for my choice of qualitative rather than quantitative research. After that I will present the methods I used to select and contact my informants, and to collect and analyse the data. In each case I will present both my choices and the reasons for those choices.

### Design of the Study: Why Qualitative Research?

To learn about how my informants see service within their work, I chose qualitative research even though leadership research has been dominated by questionnaire measures. Only recently have qualitative research techniques for data collection been introduced and then only in conjunction with quantitative analytical and interpretative processes (Bryman et al. 14-15). Although it is a departure from accepted practice, a qualitative research design was a strong choice for two reasons. First, it helped me to look at leadership within its relational context. Second, it allowed me to look at leadership from the perspective of the leader rather than from my own preconceived notions.

First, I saw qualitative research methodology as helping me to look at leadership as a human activity based within the inter-relationships of people that are subject to an infinite number of contextual and human factors that can be better studied by qualitative research. I wanted the naturalistic quality of qualitative research in that it takes place in actual settings and relies on people's words and experiences. I wanted to spend time learning the immediate and historical context in which my informants practice leadership so that I could understand and describe the richness of my observations verbally (Bogdan and Biklen 30). I thought that looking at the context would help me see the process of leadership rather than simply its outcome (Bogdan and Biklen 31) and also, I hoped, would give my research data high validity.

Second, I was convinced that leadership can be better understood if the meanings assigned to it by its own actors are incorporated within the understanding of it (Hamel 16). Because qualitative methods seek the leader's interpretation of actions, events and perspectives, rather than relying on categories pre-set by the researcher (Bryman et al. 16; also Maxwell 289; Bogdan and Biklen 32), I felt they would help me expand my understanding of serving and leading. Many writers on qualitative research concurred. Werner and Schoepfle say that the leader's perception of what is happening helps the

researcher explore the internal meaning leaders give their leadership (72). Stake believes that relevance is enhanced when researchers participate in the lives of the leaders to learn their perspectives as well as their behaviours (in Jansen and Peshkin 704). I hoped that considering the variety of meanings leaders attribute to their experience would bring the concepts and data of leadership closer to one another (Bryman et al. 16 -17).

In retrospect, I see that using qualitative research methods in actual settings and relying on my informant's words and experiences was well suited to my purposes in that it allowed me to understand the meaning my informants give to service within their leadership. Being there and spending the time talking to and observing my informants in a variety of settings and then interacting extensively with the data allowed me to take into account both contextual and relational factors and thereby to understand service and leadership in new ways.

### Selection of Informants and Establishing Contact

My research question specified leaders from the field of education even though the ethic of service may be stronger in other sectors of our society, for example, the hospital, volunteer, or religious sector. I decided to limit myself to one sector because I felt that there might be some differences in the way service and leadership interact in different settings and mine was a preliminary exploration of service and leadership rather than a comparison of its manifestations in different sectors of society. My choice of educational leaders from a variety of educational settings reflects my personal interests. My informants came into my study in two ways.

The first occurred when I undertook a study of Betty MacNeil's<sup>1</sup> views on service and leadership for a Qualitative Research class. She was the leader of the Premier Conservatory of Music and I selected her because, in the course of an earlier study of her

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<sup>1</sup>Not her real name. With one exception noted later, all names of people, places, and organizations in reference to my informants have been altered.

conservatory, she plainly stated to me that her purpose in her work at the conservatory was to provide a community service. This was confirmed by the people I met in the course of my study. When I would explain that I was observing Betty to help me understand the relationship between service and leadership, they would say things like, "Betty is a very good example of that. She puts in so very much!" My class required me to do three observations and two interviews of Betty and to write a memo about the themes in my findings. In the proposal for this dissertation I requested and was granted permission to include Betty as one of my four informants.

As I wanted to include three additional persons drawn from the private school system, the public school system and the religiously affiliated colleges, but I wanted to avoid the difficulties I identified in my background study, I did not select them from people that I already knew. Rather, I drew up a list of provincial organizations from each of these categories and then contacted each president or their equivalent by letter. I explained my interest in studying leaders who are seen as "servants", that is, people who put altruism or the public interest before their own concerns. I then asked whether they could identify anyone who they had heard described in those terms or whom they would describe in those terms. I followed up the letter with a phone call to ask for their nominations. The vast majority of the people I contacted were happy to make nominations and did so after thoughtfully considering my request. While most people made nominations within their own organization, several also identified people in other categories.

In the public school system I received nominations from the president of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, the past-president of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, the president of the Manitoba Association for Lifelong Learning, the president of the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils, the General Secretary of the Manitoba Teacher's Society, the past-president of the Federation of Independent Schools, the past-president of the Manitoba Association of School Principals,

and the Director of Education of the Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education. I received a total of eight usable (a small number had to be eliminated on the basis of unavailability, i.e. one nominee was living in Africa!) nominations in the public school category. One person was nominated twice.

In the private primary and secondary schools category I received nominations from the president of the Manitoba Association for Lifelong Learning, the president of the Federation of Independent Schools, the past-president of the Federation of Independent Schools and the president of the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools. I received a total of six usable nominations in this category and, again, one person was nominated twice.

In the religiously affiliated colleges category I received nominations from the president of Providence Bible College and Seminary, the president of the Canadian Mennonite Bible College, the academic dean (the president was overseas at the time) of Concord College, the president of Catherine Booth Bible College, and the president of the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools. In this category, I had a total of six usable nominations, but no one was nominated more than once. My only usable female nominee was in this category.

After the usable nominations were gathered the decision on whom to approach needed to be made. I contacted my committee and received permission to select the people who had been nominated twice in the public and private schools categories. I also requested and received permission to select the woman in the religiously affiliated colleges category in the hope that I might be able to have a gender balanced sample of two women and two men. It was agreed that if these initial selections did not work out, I would proceed by random selection in each category.

As they were selected, I sent each nominee a letter explaining my study and stating that they had been nominated (I did not give them the name of the person who had nominated them). The letter invited them to participate as an informant in my study and offered them a preliminary interview of approximately three quarters of an hour in which I would explain what was involved and answer any questions they had so that they could decide whether or not to participate further. The letter also explained that participation would involve three or four one-hour interviews and permission to observe them several typical leadership settings. The letter contained a sample Letter of Consent that all my informants signed before we proceeded. While I explained that I was unable to ensure confidentiality, I promised each informant the anonymity of a pseudonym.

I followed up the letter with a telephone call to get their initial response and to set up a time for the preliminary interview. The responses in each of the three categories were different, but I was pleased with the consideration each nominee gave to their participation in my study.

In the public school category, the person who was nominated twice said that he was unable to participate because he was already overly committed and the first person I randomly selected became my informant. In the private school category, the person who was nominated twice accepted my invitation to be an informant for my study.

In the religiously affiliated college category, the woman was unable to accept my invitation because her work involved a significant amount of confidential material. The first randomly selected person declined because she was too busy. The second randomly selected person declined because, although he was intrigued by my study and would have liked to participate, he was planning to be out of the country for a goodly part of the time I would be interviewing. I was relieved when the third person I randomly selected accepted my invitation to become my informant. This meant that I was working with four

informants; Betty from the Music Conservatory and three men from the public school system, the private school system and the religiously affiliated college system.

In addition to speaking to the informants on the telephone, I met with each one in a preliminary interview. In this interview I answered their questions and we talked about their leadership in a general way. We also talked about the times and places that would be available and most useful for observation. On the basis of this information, I wrote a tentative schedule of interviews interspersed with observations and asked for my informants' comment. After this plan was finalized we followed it with whatever flexibility each situation demanded.

Given this method of selecting my informants, it follows that I was working with people who were seen as leaders because of the position they held and who were then seen as servants because of how they led. This is in contrast to a study of servants who are nominated as leaders because of what they accomplish within their position of service. The leader who serves has a different position and power base than does the servant who leads. It may be possible to seek out nominations of servants who lead and then do another study for comparison to the data I collected on leaders who serve.

This method of selecting my informants also meant that I was unable to study those who declined my invitation to participate in my study. It so happens that both a woman and a person of colour were invited but were unable to participate. Had they been in my study, I would have had a gender balanced set of four informants and one informant of colour. This would have provided for additional diversity and possibly a wider generalizability for my findings than is currently possible with my more homogeneous set of informants, three out four of whom reflect a Judeo-Christian orientation that happens to be similar to my own.

## **Data Collection**

I decided to concentrate on in-depth semi-structured interviews and observations in my study but I also referred to materials such as photographs, memos, and personal documents as they became available to me. There was an iterative relationship between the interviews, the observations, and the other material in that the observations and other materials would not only suggest questions that I might seek clarification on, they also allowed me to observe what the informant meant by what they said in the interviews.

### **Semi-Structured In-depth Interviews**

Seidman suggested that although it may not be completely sufficient, in-depth interviewing would access leaders' subjective understanding of their role (Seidman 4-5). I felt I would learn through the reflective stories of my informants for two reasons; first, while leadership is complicated, it is based in the concrete experience of people, and second, story telling is a process in which people reflect on the meaning of their experience by selecting details from their stream of consciousness (Seidman 1).

I used in-depth, semi-structured interviews to listen actively to the thoughts of my informants. After some initial descriptive questions that helped me understand the setting in which each leader worked, and bearing in mind the questions suggested by the literature and my observations, I asked questions designed to help clarify the emerging themes. I asked questions when the information was incomplete, unclear or ambiguous (Woods 362). As suggested by Seidman, my goal was to allow my informants enough room to fashion their own responses independently (18, 73) and to balance respect for what my informants were saying with taking opportunities to ask difficult questions that probed more deeply into controversial issues (74). The interviews were taped and then transcribed verbatim. (For the amount of data I collected in the interviews, please see Appendix A.)

### **Observation**

I interspersed the interviews with observations designed to learn what their experiences as leader were like. For the sake of accuracy, I attempted to remain non interfering and detached enough to make a written record of all that happened (Bogdan and Biklen 79, 83). Immediately following each observation time, (usually in the car before leaving the parking lot), I jotted down a quick chronological outline of the events and conversations I had seen. When I arrived at home, I fleshed out these notes on my computer and added all the details I could remember. I then corrected spelling mistakes and completed the sentence structure. (For the amount of data I collected in the observation times, please see Appendix A.)

### **Time and Length of Study**

My observations and interviews with Betty Mac Neil occurred over a period of approximately two months from January 22 to March 24 of 1995. With the exception of one interview that occurred in late August, all the interviews and observations with David Daniels, Louis Lafrance and Father Leonardo occurred in February through June of 1997.

### **Data Analysis**

As I set out to analyze my data, I was well aware that social phenomena such as leadership are highly complex. The literature on qualitative research said that beginning with and allowing everything to grow out of the data would help me to capture this complexity and then to make convincing sense of it (Strauss 6, 10). To this end I collected data and examined it. As themes emerged, I returned to the data to "test them out" more closely. In this section, I will spell out how I went about this process in more detail.

### Scrutiny of the Data

As mentioned earlier, my interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed verbatim and my observations were recorded as soon after the observation as possible. At the end of each set of field notes, whether observations of interviews, I collected the material on the various themes that arose from the data. As I went over the transcriptions and the notes, I pondered the significance of the various observations and enlarged my initial reactions into observer comments that could be compared to material from previous observations and interviews. I would also record personal reactions to the material in an attempt to clarify the implications of the material for my thinking.

In this time consuming but interesting process, the data were intensively analysed, often sentence by sentence, or phrase by phrase to bring out the complexity of what lay in, behind, and beyond those data (Strauss 10, 22, 31). I looked for main concerns and patterns of behaviour by asking myself what was actually happening in the data and what theme the data contributed to (Strauss 30, 35). There were times when I would begin looking at some material thinking that there was really nothing of significance there, only to realize a short time later that something like the word choice or the nuance supported or called into question something else I had heard or seen. In looking at an incident and considering whether or not it fit a particular pattern or theme, I compared it with previous incidents in the same and different groups. It was by constantly comparing the old and the new data that the themes were formulated.

When it seemed that two or more incidents might be related to one another, I would place them next to each other by the copy and paste method. I would then write about what I was sensing in my own words in order to clarify the concepts connected with a particular theme (Glaser and Strauss 107; Strauss 32) and to contemplate what questions would help me clarify the concept further. Both the data collection and the final result were the product of successively evolving interpretations made continually during the course of the study

(Strauss 10). At first the themes were somewhat tentative but they became increasingly focused, frequently suggesting further questions for clarification and verification. As my analysis proceeded and my themes became more focused, I selected key themes and pondered their relationships with other key themes in further analytic memos.

I thought through a variety of explanations for my observations and then evaluated those on the basis of their logical soundness, their adequacy in accounting for the evidence, and their consistency with other evidence and hypotheses (Kofodimos 31). Because I was identifying the emerging themes as I was collecting the data, I had plenty of opportunity to ask my informants for clarification. When collecting, analysing and presenting the findings of my study, I wanted to understand my informant's individual views on serving and leading. It continues to be my hope that this basis will help point the way to finding a greater understanding and clarity about serving and leading in general.

### **Flexibility and Incongruity**

My reading in qualitative research methods had warned me that it is important to keep the emerging characterisations of my informants flexible. I also wanted to be ready to accept the coexistence of multiple and even seemingly contradictory views as these often turn out to be equally real parts of a single person (Kofodimos 30; Lincoln and Guba 309; Woods 351). As stated earlier I wanted my insights on servant leadership to emerge from wrestling with the unstructured data rather than from testing explicitly stated a priori hypotheses (Kofodimos 28; Maykut and Morehouse 29).

In order to do this I found that I needed to recognize that not all my informants were equally familiar with or aware of underlying factors (Van Maanen 546). If one of my informants was a delight to interview because he was unusually articulate, this alone did not make the information he gave me any more valid. I tried to remember that my informants might be unaware or inaccurate in their accounts of their own feelings, views, and experiences and that they might even consciously or unconsciously distort or conceal

them (Van Maanen 544-548). My reading had suggested that lies, deceptions, evasions, and conjectures could be especially valuable to me if I recognised them for what they were because people prevaricate about precisely the things that mean most to them (Van Maanen 544).

In retrospect, it seems that when my informants decided to participate, they also decided that they would be open with me and I did not "catch" any one of them in a lie or a deliberate deception even though I thought about that while doing my analysis. There were times, however, when I would tell them about a difficulty I was having reconciling two or more pieces of information and I would ask them for help. In this way I referred my data, analytic categories, interpretations, and developing conclusions back to my informants for correction, verification, and challenge in the course of the data gathering (Lincoln and Guba 108-109, 314).

### **The Identification and Understanding of Individual Perspectives**

Qualitative research techniques gave me the opportunity to grasp the place of my informant's perspectives within their settings and to interpret it meaningfully (Glesne and Peshkin 100). In order to do this, I had to remember that all people, including myself and my informants, are complex human beings who have self-interests to protect (Maykut and Morehouse 27; Werner and Schoepfle 74; Seidman 2-3). Correctly understood, these complexities can become the richest part of the data. To this end I wanted to understand the perspectives I brought to the study as well as the development of the relationship between myself and my informants.

#### **Researcher Perspective**

When I first considered the topic of service within leadership, I wondered if it would be "too close to me". By this I meant that it was a topic so close to my personal Christian faith that it would be difficult to maintain an adequate sense of distance. Indeed, my most difficult challenge has been understanding the identities, needs, and agendas I

brought to the research myself. My advisor suggested that my perspective was the basis for my ability to make a unique contribution (a view also found in Peshkin: In Search of Subjectivity 18) and that my perspective could benefit both me personally and my research if it was recognised, monitored and written about appropriately. Peshkin describes his experience this way:

In short, the subjectivity that originally I had taken as an affliction, something to bear because it could not be foregone, could, to the contrary, be taken as "virtuous." My subjectivity is the basis for the story that I am able to tell. It is a strength on which I build. It makes me who I am as a person and as a researcher, equipping me with the perspectives and insights that shape all that I do as researcher, from the selection of topic clear through to the emphases I make in my writing. Seen as virtuous, subjectivity is something to capitalise on rather than to exorcise" (Glesne and Peshkin 104 italics in the original).

Although there were misgivings, I proceeded and I have enjoyed the challenge both in the safeguarding and monitoring of distance and in rethinking a concept that may otherwise have remained an unexamined given in my thinking. For me, this research was an opportunity to seek, uncover, and understand my own taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions on leadership and service (Glesne and Peshkin 101; Woods 380). Van Maanen explains that it is the differences and the unexpected similarities with one's own world that find their way into the writing of a researcher (548). It follows that researchers can learn a great deal about themselves by observing what they see as important in their research.

I was aware that researcher perspective unavoidably enters into every phase of the research process: the choice of subject, the focus of the research, the questions that are seen as relevant for interviews or observations, the kind of data evoked, the explanatory hypotheses and interpretations generated, the findings selected for further consideration,

and the conclusions drawn from those findings (Kofodimos 15). Rather than setting my bias aside I decided to be open about it (as suggested by Agar in Jansen and Peshkin 706), and to reflect on it and its consequences at all stages of my research. I felt this to be the most honest choice in light of the fact that I was attempting a project that was close to my personal faith.

Peshkin states that it is only when this lies inert and unexamined, that its capacity to filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe or misconstrue operates without awareness or accounting to the reader of the research (In Search of Subjectivity 17). "The quest should not be for the fools' gold of objectivity, but for the real gold of self-awareness. For it is not our subjectivity that entraps us, but our belief that somehow we can be free of it" (Rubin 103 quoted in Jansen and Peshkin 703). In this section, I explain first the sources of my bias and then describe three resources for dealing with it - writing reflectively as I worked, checking my transcripts and my interpretations with my informants, discussing my work with my advisor, and utilizing alternative sources of information as they became available. Peshkin makes it clear that social scientists must do more than confess the presence of subjectivity in their research; they must attend to it meaningfully (In Search of Subjectivity 17).

While I was well aware that service in leadership was part of the Christian world view I had received from childhood and had some commitment to following, I realized that I did not entirely understand how it was practised in educational institutions. My perspectives on leadership were also based on my past experiences with, observations of and reflections on a variety of leaders such as teachers and community leaders. In addition Woods suggested that my research would be influenced by all my past experiences, my values and interests, the people I conferred with, and how I responded emotionally to my informants (374).

My main tool was the reflective writing I interspersed in my analysis at every stage. This is in line with Peshkin's suggestion that the researcher maintain an introspective journal in which to record her feelings, mental processes, philosophical positions, and reflections on the research experience in terms of her own values and interests (Glesne and Peshkin 108-109). I used my reflective writing to monitor my personal reflections on what I was learning and on the interpretation of the data. In the next section I will explain how I used these reflections to monitor my relationships with my informants. As I wrote my observer comments. I noted my emotional reactions and examined their significance for my research and myself.

While I recognize that parallel to the research story there is a more personal story of what these findings have meant to me, I was guided by the questions asked by Jansen and Peshkin about the limits of propriety between researchers and their audience in deciding what to write about (719). I recognized that there is a degree of self-revelation that is unwanted, unneeded, and improper and that the feature of the writing must remain the leader rather than the researcher. Other writers concur. Zonabend says that the researcher should report only those parts of her personal experience that contribute to the understanding of the research. Other personal material belongs in the research diary (54). Grant and Fine encourage the revelation of those aspects of personal history and biography that affect the researcher's orientations toward topics and research subjects (408).

As a second safeguard, I checked my work with my informants as I went along. For example, as each interview transcript was typed it was returned to the informant for checking and correction so that I could be sure I had correctly understood their intent. As the themes emerged, I would ask my informants to comment on my interpretations so as to confirm or modify them. When I wrote the chapter about the informants, a draft was sent to each one and they were asked to comment on both the contents and confidentiality. We discussed their response and the reasons for it so this process was yet another source of

information about their purposes in participating. Occasionally there were requests for changes that I dealt with on a case by case basis so as not interfere with the research purpose.

I regularly referred questions to my advisor so that I could talk through my research experiences, findings, and decisions for things like catharsis, challenge, design of next steps, and legitimation (Lincoln and Guba 108-109). I was also grateful to a member of my review committee for reading and assessing my analytic memos as I completed the interviews for each of my informants. As this is a dissertation, my advisory committee also had both a debriefing and auditing role. I saw them as having more distance than either I or my informants and valued that. I wanted to be sure that my analysis remained plausible to others (Glesne and Peshkin 104). This was especially valuable for the two final chapters that I did not check with my informants as there is frequently a conflict between social theory and the everyday perspective of those within the situation (Woods 354). Rather I checked these with my advisor and my committee.

As a final safeguard, in a limited number of cases, I was able to access printed material such as things my informants had written, newspaper clippings, photographs, and personal documents related to my informant's history. These documents provided an alternative point of view in addition to the interviews and my observations.

#### The Researcher and the Leader

The interaction between me as researcher and my informants was a part of my research. Early on I became aware that I found certain informants easier to understand and identify with than others, but I had four goals in my work with my informants. I wanted to, first, cultivate relationships carefully so that I would be trusted with the information I needed. Second, I wanted to learn whatever I could from my informants' handling of power between us. Third, I wanted to monitor and learn from the emotional reactions I experienced in relating to my informants. Finally, I thought carefully about the possible

influences of my own personal preferences on the research and consciously made accommodations to deal with them.

First, I gave careful thought, time and effort to developing trust. Without the cooperation of my informants, my leadership research would have been severely hampered as rapport that gains entry into the innermost arenas and confidences is a necessary (although not sufficient) condition for obtaining good data (Woods 351; Glesne and Peshkin 94). In order to encourage the development of trust, I began my relationships with my informants formally, with an emphasis on common courtesies in order to communicate respect for the leader. I also thought about Seidman's suggestion that the rapport and relationship the researcher builds with the leader during the research process must be consistent with the relationship the researcher expects to have with the leader after the research is over (Seidman 74, 75).

Furthermore, I knew I had to retain control over the project's purpose, questions, methods, analysis and use (Glesne and Peshkin 84, 100; Seidman 7) but was concerned that my informants might feel that there was something they could lose through the research process. I wanted to leave some distance so as to minimize my influence on what my informants revealed and how they made their revelations (Jansen and Peshkin 706). I wanted to balance enough identification and intimacy to understand the leader's role and point of view with enough critical detachment to allow for making observations and rigorous critical analysis (Kofodimos 16; Woods 355). I attempted to say enough about myself to seem alive and responsive but little enough to keep the focus on the experience of the leader (Seidman 73). I wanted to be able to dialogue with and challenge my informants about what they said.

I approached my informants professionally and courteously and for three out of the four my control of the project seemed to be a non-issue. The fourth would occasionally ask a short question about the process that I answered as forthrightly as possible. We were

then able to proceed. I believe I was friendly, but I did not become a friend in that I have not continued my relationship with any of my informants since my field work ended.

Second, Kofodimos says that while complete objectivity in the research of a leader is unrealistic, the relationship of the researcher and the leader can shed light on the leader if the researcher monitors her experiences and adds this material to the data (16, 23). Zonabend says the complex interaction taking place between the researcher and the subject (leader) must be taken into account in understanding the research (53).

For example, while most informants made minimal changes to the interview transcriptions, one informant made detailed and repeated revisions until, after three revisions, I finally stated that I could not wait any longer. The reasons given for the requests included a fear of being seen as critical, colloquial, or politically incorrect. Although in spoken style this informant's speech was quite casual, it was important for all the grammar to be completely correct. The same thing happened when I shared the initial draft of the chapter introducing this informant. On the one hand this was an irritation for me, but I quickly realized that it also provided me with important insights. When I probed further I found that indeed there was a relationship between this desire for control over what I said and the particular way in which this informant wished to be perceived. I found clues to how my informants handled power with other people by observing how they handled issues of power with me.

Third, because I was aware that my personality and inner needs were part of the research relationship and influenced my informant's reactions as I conducted the research (Kofodimos 10, 29), I monitored the emotions I experienced in relating to my informants. I did not want them to go unexamined and, furthermore, felt that they could contribute to my analysis. Smith advises researchers to engage in self-examination when they find themselves experiencing heightened emotions and to identify whether these emotions are generated from the situation or are self-generated and irrational (in Jansen and Peshkin

705). I acknowledged the emotions in my reflective writing, and then also wrote about what had transpired and pondered what significance that could have for my next contact with the informant. I might decide to modify my approach to see whether a similar situation would develop, or to watch for similar interactions with other people, or to ask the informant a question related to the experience.

For example, there was one informant who talked a lot without listening in-between. When I realized this was happening, I decided to be more forthright in my questions, interrupting when necessary so that I could maintain control of the direction of our conversations. I also observed interaction with other people to see whether this was a general habit or something that happened only with myself and eventually, I broached the topic in an interview and we discussed it. In another situation, one of my informants started off by posing seventh grade mathematics problems for me to solve mentally, and I felt irate, but, by writing about it, it also became a research clue for me. It suggested an entire new area for me to explore in our interactions.

Finally, I recognized early on that I would respond more naturally to some informants than I did to others. While I recall having both positive and negative feelings toward all my informants at one point or another, I saw that as a natural part of getting to know another person. I monitored myself for critical as well as laudatory sentiments for two reasons: First, I wanted to recognize both what I saw as strengths and as weaknesses in each informant. I agree with Kofodimos when she observes that excellence in leadership depends less on a list of desirable traits than on the fit between the leader's characteristics and the demands of their particular managerial role. Rather it depends on the flexibility and self-awareness with which she handles herself, and on her ability to creatively translate her inner conflicts into outer achievement (7). Because I wanted to avoid what Woods refers to as romanticization (375) of my informants, I thought carefully about everyone's strengths and weaknesses to consider whether I was taking everything I knew into account rather

than avoiding certain realities. It was not my purpose to critique their choices or to applaud one over the other, merely to present them as the persons they presented to me. However, without attaching identities to things that could be interpreted as weaknesses, I wanted my picture to be somewhat balanced.

Second, I also monitored my reactions because I wanted to temper any personal tendency to be more attentive to some informants than others (Glesne and Peshkin 104). As I realized that I identified more with one informant than another, I could monitor the time I spent, the questions I asked and the attitudes I displayed more carefully (Glesne and Peshkin 99). I was especially aware of the necessity to understand those informants whose faith and language in talking about service were different from my own. To be sure about this, I spent extra time with them, making and recording observations, checking those observations in subsequent observations times and interviews, writing about them and then checking my writing with them yet again. I wanted to be sure I could write about them authentically.

My relationship with each of my informants was unique and formed an important source of information for me as I reflected on them. I was impressed with my informants willingness to be open with me and entrust me with all the information I needed to understand their views. In response to the trust they showed me and the deeply felt respect and admiration I felt for each of them, I have attempted to balance saying enough so the reader would be able to understand clearly with protecting their privacy. In a few instances this took a number of rewrites. It would be difficult to say too much about their cooperation and helpfulness to me. I am grateful for the opportunity to have met and conversed with each one of my informants. I have gotten to know some great people.

### **Limitations of Research**

Qualitative research usually involves gathering detailed information about a small number of cases. In my study there are four. It is the uniqueness of each case that is

emphasized, rather than the representativeness. In this study, I am interested in learning what meaning educational leaders who are reputed to be servant leaders ascribe to their service. I want to learn how they think about it and explore their beliefs and meanings. By doing this I am hoping to be able to promote a discussion of the concept of servant leadership that I believe will be useful in understanding leadership better. While I recognized that it would be interesting to speak to the people working for my informants about their *daily dealings* with specific individuals in their places of work, I decided to limit the scope of my study to what I could learn directly from the leaders themselves. I did, however, observe each of my informants in their interactions with others and used that information both to verify and provide material for the interviews.

In writing, my effort was directed at appreciating and respecting each one individually and presenting their practice of servant leadership as authentically and accurately as possible. It did not seem to me that comparisons between my informants would be helpful in this process as I wished to think about and present each one as a valid expression of servant leadership. There was no benchmark to compare them to - this study was about exploring that rather than deciding whether they measured up to it. I constantly asked myself what each observation contributed to my understanding of servant leadership.

This led to questions on my part about what to do with the "imperfections" or shortcomings I observed in my informants. Given that they had trusted me with important information, I did not want to paint critical and unfavourable pictures of them. I resolved this question by presenting each one as a person who had made valid choices within their life situations, choices I could respect and that made sense given a broad view of their situation. When there was a shortcoming that they were prepared to acknowledge, I could present it that way in my writing. Other times I wrote about it in such a way as to prevent attaching it to any particular informant.

The research questions listed at the end of my third chapter were the questions that I went into the research with and they were, by and large, answered by each of my informants. I referred to them repeatedly as I planned the initial and subsequent interviews and observations. The answers, however, did not come in a questionnaire way, and if I had attempted to summarize them in a table, the answers would be paragraphs so filled with qualifiers, explanations, and exceptions that they would be less useful than the "stories" I have written about each informant. I wanted my descriptions to be "thick" (Geertz) and to describe each informant with as much integrity as I could.

To protect the identity of my informants I have changed significant details about each one. This includes their names, their ethnicity, all names of places, organizations, religious associations. In every case, my concern was to protect my informants without violating the essential characteristics of their personal story.

In summary, I elected to do qualitative research because I wanted to look at servant leadership from the perspective of the leaders and their relational context. My informants were educational leaders from the arts community, the public school system, the private school system and the religiously affiliated colleges. They were recognized and nominated as servant leaders by the presidents of provincial educational organizations. As each one was selected by random, I negotiated a mutually acceptable plan for in-depth, semi-structured interviews and observations of their leadership roles. Data gathered in both the interviews and observations were carefully transcribed and checked to ensure that the information and conclusions I drew were well substantiated. I paid careful attention to the development of trust between myself and my informants and was gratified with their response in sharing their stories with me.

## **Chapter Four - DAVID DANIELS**

In this and the following three chapters I introduce the four informants who are at the center of my research; the four leaders who agreed to explore their understanding of service and leadership with me. You will notice that each account is individual. This is because, although I did similar sets of interviews and observations with each one, I took my cues from them and they showed themselves to be unique people with unique stories. I introduce each one to you individually, telling you a little about them and their contributions to my thinking about servant leadership. In my eighth chapter I will reflect on what I learned about serving and leading from them as a group in light of the questions suggested by the literature.

### **Who is David Daniels?**

When I wrote to David Daniels<sup>2</sup>, the Provost of the Baptist Union Bible College, to tell him that he had been nominated for my study, he accepted my invitation. He saw in it an opportunity to assess his leadership style and to look at the implications this has for how his leadership is received. He had served as Provost at the above college for eighteen years and wanted an opportunity to reflect on his experiences. He stated that he was intrigued by my study especially because he was anticipating moving into the role of president of his college, something that happened just prior to our final conversation.

In addition to significant teaching, as Provost he was responsible for the planning and co-ordination of the academic program, supervizing faculty and directing the students regarding their programs. As President he is now involved in the overall co-ordination of the various facets of the college and its relationships to other colleges and the church.

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<sup>2</sup>Not his real name. All names of people, places, ethnic groups and organizations have been changed.

David was concerned about the observation times because he sees the personal interactions interspersed throughout his days as being at the core of his leadership. Not only was he concerned that several of the potential observation settings would be "fundamentally altered" by my presence and therefore less useful, he also wondered about confidentiality. Given these concerns, we talked at length about the possibilities for observation and finally identified three settings that he felt to be appropriate. The last of the three turned out to be a six-hour meeting with representatives of other Baptist colleges that provided a lot of material for further discussion. David provided me with a look at servant leadership within a tightly knit community setting.

When I first began interviewing David, I noticed that when I would ask him a question, he would frequently frame his answer as representing the beliefs and opinions of his denomination. He answered my questions from within the tradition rather than as his own opinion, almost always speaking of "we". If he then began to speak of himself as opposed to the group, he would notify me by saying something like, "I am speaking only for myself here." That he and his family are so deeply identified with the Baptist church seemed unusual to me so I asked him whether he had ever thought seriously about moving outside of that circle. He said,

I don't know. There are times when I have wondered whether I should move out, but only fleetingly... That is not who I am. I struggle with how I understand myself as a Baptist. On one hand I am enough of a modern person who values choice that I like to think I chose the Baptists. At other points I think I can simply say, 'No, that is who I am. I don't need to ask those questions.' I think I have affirmed that identity.

David's ultimate commitment to the Christian Church is expressed through his work in the Baptist Union of Western Canada. His specific "ministry" within his denomination is that of college professor, Provost and now, President. He feels this to be

a significant ministry although he recognizes that "the Christian Church has existed for almost two thousand years without BUBC and the Baptist people existed for years without BUBC." His deep identification with his denomination influences his entire life including his leadership that was the main focus of my interest.

### **David's Home Within the Denomination**

As David's father was a pastor and denominational administrator, I asked David about the role of his denominational community in his home while he was growing up.

Well, there is no question that is one of the most important elements for the way I understand myself... I struggle with how one understands identity, not individually, not vocationally, but as a particular part of the people of God. That community item is very, very important to me. I probably get it from my home... My father was a pastor and a church leader who spent 14 years as Administrator of the Baptist Union of Western Canada.

David explained that the life of the church was inseparable from their family life and that "the boundary between what was the work of the church and what wasn't was simply non-existent." Their family was one hundred percent involved in the church and David accepted this as right and appropriate. He says, "Why would you want relief from that which you enjoy most. There never was." When their family was to have a special treat, they would go together to a church conference; in fact, David says that all their trips were to conferences. "That was life!"

When I was approximately 9 or 10 years old, we had a favourite cat. One night my father came in and said he had killed it accidentally with the car. As a reward to help me feel better he said that the next time there was a conference outside the province we could all go. I know some people find that funny. It just made so much sense.

David explains that when he was growing up "the whole community was also a part of the church in a way. Ours was by far the largest church in town, and my father was the pastor of it for nineteen years. There is a kind of integration in a community like that which is far greater than in the city." David bought into this way of life without reservation even though it meant that his parents had little time for his interests. He says it did not bother him, but he has changed this with his own children.

I was in high school for four years and I was on the high school basketball, baseball and volleyball teams all four years. I am not sure if my father ever saw me once in those four years of playing, even though the whole town would be there. I was never hurt, it never bothered me. He was busy and so it never ... whereas I think, I've probably attended more of our kids games than any of their friends.

Throughout high school, David says there was never any question in his mind that he would "complete a doctorate" and become "an academic". He was passionate about reading and his community was just becoming open to higher education. This was coupled with the influence of David's father who, as early as elementary school and quite in contrast to the norms of his community, had dreams of getting an education abroad. These dreams ended in grade eight when his mother died and "he had to quit school all together. In his mid-twenties he returned and finished his high school and did some college" but David's father's vision for studying "in Chicago or some place like that" was never realized. David received very strong encouragement for higher education from his home.

At the end of high school David had several academic options from which to choose. As his teachers had been encouraging him, he left "assuming it would be mathematics". In addition, he knew that his family valued the field of education highly, and he had a sense "that [his] mother wanted [him] to become a doctor". In the end, however, David chose to follow the norm for the men of his family, and became a minister.

He now sees himself as "a minister-type person" who ministers on behalf of the church as a theologian, professor, dean, and president.

I came from a larger family of church people. Both of my grandfathers were ministers and I think I have about ten uncles who are ministers - there was simply an awful lot of that and I felt that was almost a norm. [My father] was a pastor. He spent nineteen years as pastor of a congregation ... Basically he was a pastor and administrator.

David came to the college initially when his father was a student in the early fifties and then returned again and again, initially after high school as a student but also after taking an arts degree, then a Master of Divinity and finally a doctorate in other places. It is here that he has always found a welcome and a role in which he can both contribute and develop his abilities. David began as a Junior Instructor on the college faculty when a regular professor was on leave. In addition to teaching he has worked in admissions, in public relations, as Provost and finally, as President.

When I asked about his three children he explained that he has "always been far more careful to take time for their activities than my parents were... They are integrated into my life far more than most children" so that they "all know the college". His daughter has talked about attending for years and he assumes she will. He says that "they have been brought in, hopefully in a way which allows them to own it. (That is always a question a parent asks.)" I asked if he was hoping that they would have a role similar to his in the denominational community.

Well, I asked myself that question and I am not sure. I certainly have never begun with the assumption that they would be academics so that isn't as central to who I am, I think. My oldest son is doing a pastoral internship this summer. That decision has raised all sorts of questions in my mind about what I want. I think I

would be very happy if they would go into church work although I don't feel that that is the only option that would please me.

There is no doubt in my mind that David loves and identifies with the college. His life is deeply tied in with it and his denomination. When I expressed surprise at his not wanting anything else, he recognized that he has difficulty understanding those who do not have the same good experience that he has had with the church.

One of my struggles is relating to faculty and others who don't. You are right, I have a hard time understanding that. I always have to tell myself rationally that it is appropriate for people to want distance from their work. I wish we could build a house here [at the college].

### **The College as Integral to the Baptist Church**

David sees his college as having its' "primary role in relationship to our church" and says "we have always understood ourselves as ... an agency of the church. Our role is to contribute to and serve that body and so we have no 'sort of existence' in and of ourselves." When the college relates to the larger community outside the Baptist church, they do so on behalf of their denomination rather than as an independent entity.

I think that it is clear that we as a faculty and staff of the college see ourselves as a group of people tapped by the church to help the church be faithful and to help the church nurture the next generation into that body. The commitment is to a part of the people of God and to helping that part of the people of God become more faithful.

The college fulfils this mandate primarily by working with young people after they graduate from high school and then sending them back into the church. They have, however, also found that they have a direct role to play in the denomination in that they provide resources such as speakers, courses, radio talks, and written articles.

### The Role of the College With Students

The college would not be there without the students. David sees the role of the college as helping "the church nurture the next generation into that body". To that end, David and his colleagues at the college work to help the students recognize "who they are both in their strengths and imperfections." David wants them to recognize that one is "always in a movement from where one is at towards something."

David accepts this process within himself as well. When he described the way he understands his work and place within the denomination, he recognized that he was describing an ideal and stated that he knows that he does not actually work that way. He said, "I know I don't, but that's what I try to do and sometimes perhaps I even succeed. A lot of times, obviously I don't. I'm more selfish, etc., etc., etc." This does not deter him from retaining the ideal.

David's second concern is for students "to develop a sense of identity with the body" by which he means the church.

When it is our Baptist young people, I would wish they could begin to see themselves as part of the Baptist community. If it is a non Baptist ... I would begin by encouraging that sense of identity within that person's own tradition.

David does not give up on students easily. A student who was caught breaking their "no drinking" rule was given the consequence of seeing David on a weekly basis to talk. Her attitude was belligerent and she stated that she had no idea of "where her faith was" but also that she anticipated that she might be in jail in five years. David was open to continuing the conversations in the hope that he might be able to plant some thought that would be helpful. He said that he is continually amazed at how open students are about their personal faith or lack of it. He continues to find ways of maintaining communication with them even when they make choices that pain him. David seemed to me to be like a loving father who works faithfully and waits patiently for that work to bear fruit.

It is easy at BUBC to reflect on those grads who have done well, academically or in some business, etc. and those who have after BUBC committed themselves to the church more closely. Yet, every year there are some who, I hope it is not because of BUBC, but, during their BUBC years choose the opposite and that hurts a lot.

David hopes that the college can improve the contribution it makes to their denomination but he recognizes that they will continue to work with young people "who have high ideals and are very human" and "struggle on very down to earth issues." To accomplish this, the college cultivates a closely knit community in which there is a spirit of disclosure and openness. When David presented the courses that were being planned for the following year, he gave full details on each or explained the questions that remained and asked for feedback on their preferences or stated a date by which the instructor might be announced. I thought the students responded warmly to David. He explained that the college cultivates spiritual interest in the students through personal relationships, courses and worship.

Internally, that involves fellowship with the students and personal relations. It involves courses in which one treats students and content with as much integrity as one can muster and it involves worship. It includes at least these three elements internally.

#### The Role of the College in the Denomination

The college has also found ways of contributing directly to the life of the denomination and to this end, they expand their teaching roles beyond the classroom by speaking, preaching and writing for their denomination. I was interested in David's view that this includes challenging the denomination. He says that the college has been mandated by the denomination to "push" them, possibly in ways that they do not like.

It is not that we simply do what the church tells us to, we also try to push our church but do so on behalf of them. We see pushing them (or pushing ourselves

together with them) as a mandate they have given us... I think there are times when we need to argue with our church.

He sees the role of the college as being a thoughtful, evaluative one that challenges the thinking of the larger church, all the while, recognizing "that, in the end, they determine" and that "they need to decide". Theologians like David contribute to the process of formulating theology out of "the experience of actually working in all life's situations" but theology remains the task of the people of the denomination.

We don't play that role on behalf of the constituency in the sense that they have given it over to us, but rather that we have a specific role and perspective in that discussion... We do not have the whole picture although our mandate is to look at things from a particular perspective. We do argue with our church and will debate with them... At some points we are saying, 'Wait a minute. Are we sufficiently recognizing the impact that has on us and our theology?'

David sees the challenge for academic theologians as "on the one hand, not to expect to provide the theology for the church", and yet to find a way of contributing to the process in a way that doesn't "determine the results". David recognizes that "there still is some power" in the hands of the theologians but says that "whenever I feel I'm in a setting where I am looked at as having the trump card, I find myself claming up." While David enjoys a good argument, he wants to meet resistance and when he senses that people are simply waiting for him to pronounce the correct theological answer he reacts "at a most gut level".

When academics debate they frequently use a somewhat aggressive debating style which people in the churches are not used to. That then can easily feel overbearing or overwhelming. I think one of our challenges is to recognize this as a natural tendency of our style in our internal discussions. We have to hold back a bit or put a little greater emphasis on listening so that it really becomes a discussion and not

our pronouncing our positions with them either having to accept it or ignore it... I think it is something we are aware of and to some extent there I will speak for myself. I think it is something that I will always struggle with.

David also suggested that the relationship between the college and the denomination is changing in that they no longer ask "Who, in our church, can help us?" when they are faced with a question. They now look for those who are specialized in that particular aspect of church life and do not mind whether the person is from within their denomination or not. This has the effect of decreasing the influence and security of the college. Dealing with this specialization is one of the challenges that David identifies as facing the college.

### **The Denomination**

When I asked David about how people come to be members of his denomination he said that although "the majority were born into families who are part of that community", there is also an element of choice because "there are many, many others who are born into those families and are not part of the community." In addition, there is also a small but growing number who come into the denomination without any family connection whatsoever. Those who stay, like David, see the "larger body, or in some cases, not the larger body but the local congregation, as the one in which they want to be as Christians."

David recognizes that while some elect to make their home within his denomination, there are also those who leave. When we talked about the people who stay and those who leave, David identified several dynamics that play into these decisions. David feels that those who remain "find in that body a community, a support in times of crisis." While it follows that those who leave probably did not "see the support in that body", David suggested that the impetus for leaving can come either from within the person or from the nature of the church. He named a history of abuse as an example of something from within a person's background that might lead a person to leave the church.

We are a very, very human group just like everyone else and if you are born into a family where there is abuse, that kind of reality is often translated into objection to a larger body. That is just one example, perhaps an extreme one, but never-the-less it reflects the kind of dynamics that influence the decisions a person makes.

The reasons that center in the history and character of the denomination are more difficult to face. The fact that David brought these up in our conversation speaks of openness and a willingness to deal forthrightly with denominational strengths and weaknesses. It seems that frequently the very things that are their strengths have a down side that work against them.

Also, there are times we have been, I don't know if exclusive is the right word, but, narrow in a way which has made some people feel that this is not where they want to be. They feel rejected. One of our strengths as a Baptist people has been our emphasis on ethics, on continuity between lifestyle and theology. One of the weaknesses of that is that we can be somewhat judgmental and not as supportive and receptive to people who for a variety of reasons fall outside of what is considered acceptable by the largest number.

David recognizes that the Baptists developed "a particular kind of piety in which works was everything" in their close community. David now sees the move from those separated, committed communities into the North American culture as the big issue for his denomination in the last twenty-five years. He sees the diversity that has resulted from this adaptation as threatening their very existence.

Some have gone a long way in moving into a business world and simply becoming Canadian business people. They are very aggressive and very much into the world there. Others have moved into North American culture very much religiously and have moved to an almost right wing fundamentalism. Many have gone very far in the direction of liberal political thought and others into liberal theological directions.

Given his commitment to the preservation of community and tradition, I asked David what he sees as the desirable place of diversity and exclusivity. While he confessed that he found the question difficult, he stated two things about which he was convinced. First, he "completely" rejects the notion that all institutions should "be diverse in exactly the same manner" when diversity means "having no core or common assumptions." His second point was related to the first in that he stated that "there is an inherent exclusivity in any organization. Otherwise, it is not an organization." He gave the example of a baseball team that is open to people who want to play baseball, but not open to those who do not want "to do what that group has defined itself as being." It is his feeling that the church "should be open to anyone who wants to be a part of the church, but it is exclusive to those who want to be part of that church."

Given these views, David would like to see his denomination be open (he says that "there hasn't been enough outward looking"), without compromising their identity. He says, "We have been the quiet in the land, the ones who separated ourselves from larger society" and, like his father, David does not favour being separate from society but rather encourages integration while remaining distinct from it. He articulates a "need to, not separate, but distinguish ourselves from larger society."

He sees the issue of movement into the wider society as one that the denomination again needs the college to help it work on since it "requires a kind of spirituality that has not been part of our tradition." He says that they need to turn to other traditions for help in retaining their emphasis on a lifestyle that they would refer to as discipleship. He is prepared for the college to caution those who "have suddenly become excited and impressed by the potential of moving into larger society" to think carefully about the impact their orientation will have on their denomination.

### David as a Servant Leader

I found it interesting to note that while David is clearly living out his Christian convictions by serving his denomination and college, he does not often speak about service. In four out of our five interviews, he used the term "serve", "service" and "servant" a total of only four times. It was only when I deliberately brought up the following "servanthood passage" that he used the term service and then only eight times.

You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:43-45).

(Compare this to Father Leonardo who used the term an average of more than ten times per interview.) He said only that "a kind of emphasis on servant leadership has been hammered into most Baptists" and that he wants "to place [himself] within that."

I speculate that there may be a couple of reasons for his hesitancy to use this language. The first lies in the influence of a distinctly Baptist piety that says that it is better to let others discover the evidences of your Christianity than it is to tell them about it. David explained that traditionally "if someone would ask if you were a Christian, you should say, 'Well, ask my neighbour.'" Secondly, I think that his early experiences with leaders who felt they were servants but whose leadership style he wishes to distance himself from may offer some clues. In the following section I will first, review the development of David's view of servant leadership against the backdrop of his early experiences, second, describe a process in which he is working out his views and finally, give a description of how David articulates his thoughts about serving and leading.

## The Overseers

I see David's view of leadership as influenced by the leadership developments in his denomination during the time he was growing up and his father was active in church leadership. At this time his denomination was led by overseers who had as many as twenty congregations at a time. When we talked about his perceptions of their leadership, I sensed both a deep respect for them as individuals and a rejection of their style of leadership. It was here that I saw David's concept of Christian servant leadership being both formed and challenged through several stages.

During his childhood and growing up years, he says that the servanthood concept was always "very important and if you would have talked to any of these overseer, they clearly would have understood themselves in that light." His father was being "nurtured and mentored" by a overseer for whom he had "the highest respect" and held "somewhat in awe". In due time, David's father was invited to be his assistant. David picked up on his father's respect and describes his personal relationship to the overseer this way:

I was baptized in 1963. I think I was the last class to be baptized by that overseer and there is no question I was proud of it. When that overseer had his auction sale around 1975, I bought an arm chair that is in our living room. I have a tremendous high regard for what he has done ...

David, however, left his home town and church after high school and did his studies during "the peak of the 60's movement with its questioning of authority and emphasis on everyone being equal." He says he personally "was very much influenced by that" and that in his church this larger social trend precipitated a reinterpretation of servanthood that said that they should not have strong leaders. Moreover, he understood that while his father had a personal commitment to the overseer who had nurtured him, his father was also the person who was seen as the alternative to the leadership of the overseer.

It was his father who eventually took over the leadership when the overseer was painfully "dismantled".

I did my seminary studies in 71 and 73 and so I worked in an era when the servanthood passages were interpreted over against strong leadership and, almost throughout North America, the Baptist church leaders who were overseers were eliminated. We moved in a fairly egalitarian direction of the priesthood of all believers. We had some functional emphasis on leadership but not much more.

While David was influenced by this move away from "strong leadership", he was not completely persuaded. He now states that "one doesn't have to move from that recognition to a point of no leaders" and argues "against the somewhat simplistic emphasis of the 60's that that implies that one has no leaders." He says, "I do think there is a place for leadership." He did his doctoral dissertation on "The Rise of Kingship in Israel" and teaches his students that "administrative leadership is a royal responsibility" as he believes strongly in the need for good leaders as well as those who critique that leadership.

One of the tendencies among Baptists is that all people preparing for pastoral leadership want to be prophets. They want to see themselves as over against the status quo, as challenging it ... as a prophet with no role who attacks the leaders. I am not persuaded that a people moves forward best when that is the primary modeling. One needs prophets, I believe that, but I often describe prophets as those that keep the leaders on their toes, so one needs them [leaders] as well.

Very recently, another aspect of the overseer's leadership unfolded for David when his father wrote his memoirs and David assisted him by editing them. In the process he had "lengthy, lengthy conversations" with his father about the "good number of fairly major confrontations" his father had with the overseer while he worked as the overseer's assistant. This was all totally new to David as he had "never suspected any difference between them," because his father "would never have shared that." He says that his father

"did not involve [the children] in ... personal differences of opinions" but that he has "sensed more feelings in [his] father in writing that book than in the previous forty years put together."

Now David sees the overseers as having made "decisions almost unilaterally in many, many areas" so that they frequently "rode rough shod over where some people were at" and "the concerns of the individuals were sometimes ignored beyond what should be." David now sees the overseers as having been "very strong, very key but at some points almost dictatorial leaders" whose power was "used regularly on an individual basis that became problematic" in that their "word is simply forced on the people." As David is taking up a new leadership role as president of his college, he is also attempting to harmonize the leadership styles he has experienced, his seminary studies and this new information about his father's leadership story. He knows that his "father didn't like the one person leadership" and recognizes that he has "been influenced by [his] father in wanting leadership to be not democratic but co-operative rather than autocratic."

As he returned to these concepts repeatedly in our conversation, it became clear that he wishes to avoid the leadership style of the overseers. However, whether this was so because of his internal need to be a servant, or because he fears the rejection of his denomination remained unclear to me until we talked about the present consortium proposals.

### **The Consortium Discussion**

At the time of my interviews and observations of David, his college was in the process of discussing a consortium with four other Baptist colleges. I had opportunity to observe David at a meeting with representatives of the other colleges and to talk with him about the process.

### Three Reasons for the Consortium

He gave me three reasons for his college's interest in this consortium. The first is that David sees the present consortium discussion as fitting in with the changes that are necessary for the college to continue being effective in nurturing "Baptist young people into the church". In the last five years David has become persuaded that in order to maintain their goals, orientation, and ideals; change is necessary. When I asked about why this was so, David explained that in the last twenty years, the Baptist people

have gone very much in the direction of greater professionalization and involvement with higher education. What that means is that very frequently, those young people from our churches who are in the more academic, more professional kinds of families, do not see coming to BUBC as an option. They go to the university because they want to enter engineering. They want to enter the various professional fields and for them to take a year or two at a Bible college is not something they reject, they just don't consider it.

David sees the consortium as facilitating "the development of a much larger institution which offers programs or partial programs in a variety of areas." He hopes that it will significantly increase the number of Baptist young people who "consider coming here and do actually come."

The second reason David gave for the consortium was "that the Baptists are sufficiently divided already, and it really is appropriate for us not to have three or four Baptist institutions of post-secondary education." David is keenly aware of the embarrassment he and his colleagues feel about all the Baptist colleges operating separately. He feels that to be so divided is a poor witness both as colleges and as churches.

David's third reason has much less to do with the students and is related to how David sees the church articulating its theology in the context of everyday living. David is

very strongly committed to "the kind of theological thinking that takes place at BUBC" but he also feels that "a new type of dialogue" could take place if "academics in other disciplines" were represented. He fears that students who now have "done" their theology at the college may not "have the tools to keep doing theology" (that is to "reflect consciously and carefully about aspects of life within a framework of an assumption that there is a God"), when they study philosophy and sociology and engineering" in other settings. For David, theology is "good" only if it remains true to life as it is experienced by the common person.

### The Challenges of the Consortium

Although David can articulate good reasons for the consortium and the consortium discussions are moving forward, the process is a challenging one that may or may not result in eventual success. David said, "It's awfully hard work thinking through, negotiating, and attempting to protect what one believes in. The scary part is that even if one does all that hard work, one still may not be able to accomplish it." David identified at least two challenges in our conversations: his long standing history with and emotional commitment to the college as it is at present and the many important questions that remain unknowns at the present. These factors contribute to a measure of ambivalence that David is working through.

First, David recognizes that the consortium will certainly change the college he has known and loved.

I've been connected with BUBC as the college of the Baptist Union of Western Canada since I started studies here in '64, ... so there's simply a very, very strong emotional attachment to a church college which is 100 percent part of the church. Regardless of what happens, the way that has worked cannot continue if the consortium takes place.

David feels that "BUBC has done some wonderful things in the last fifty years" and recognizes that he is "a very nostalgic kind of person" who is "not the best at change". He is personally comfortable with the present and on an emotional level he does not look forward to either the consortium process or the outcome. Yet, because he sees it as right, he is giving significant amounts of time and energy to it.

I like visiting churches. I don't like preparing for meetings. I like visiting and working with students. I like teaching Deuteronomy and have a great time with students. I continue to be amazed at how students respond. I think I receive far more enjoyment out of that than fighting over issues of governance... I wish I could jump ahead five years and get on with the work.

The depth of the risk that David and his colleagues are taking was expressed when David explained that they have given their entire lives to the college and that they feel that their "souls are on the line" in the consortium discussion. David is doing this because he feels it to be necessary. He summed up his feelings about the consortium when he said, "We don't [want it], but it's just the right thing to do, so we'll do it."

Second, at this point there remain many large and small things that are unknowns. When we talked about the consortium, the phrase "I just don't know" came up repeatedly, on a variety of topics. In one paragraph, it occurred six times! Among the unknowns are fairly major questions about how present liaisons with the local universities will be handled, whether Baptist families will respond to the new institution by sending their children in greater numbers, and what would happen to the consortium in the event that one of the three colleges would withdraw.

At the consortium meeting I attended, David's tension was readily observable. He later explained that it had been his first time in that role and that he had simply not known how it would go. This was exacerbated by the fact that he had to communicate to the group that his denomination needed an extension to the timetable that had originally been projected

and agreed upon. David was aware of the consternation this caused but felt that there was "no alternative... If we simply pretended in that meeting that everything is smooth, they're not well served." His choice of the words "well served" in this context is important because it indicates that David is prepared to be truthful even about things that are uncomfortable and difficult in the belief that it is important to his service of the other people in the discussion. The goal of serving the others is something he assumes.

David is also loathe to give up the present arrangement whereby decisions are made collegially and "a strong collaborative identity among faculty" is carefully cultivated through shared decision making. This means that their process is slower and that all consortium decisions need to be brought back to the appropriate bodies as designated by the denomination. Unlike the other colleges, in the case of BUBC, the decision makers are not only the ones who are present at the consortium discussion table.

Within the college, David also recognizes that "when the consortium comes the present internal process is dead" and that he does not know what will replace it. "I see as one of my biggest challenges trying to think how to adjust what we have done and what has served us well, in a way that continues to allow faculty ownership."

Finally, it is clear that a venture of this magnitude outside of the familiarity of their community brings with it a measure of ambivalence. When I asked whether there really was no other way to achieve their mission of nurturing young people into the church, some of David's usual articulate confidence diminished. It seemed to be a case of the rational will to serve overcoming the emotional ties to the present arrangement.

I don't know. It's hard to answer and maybe my inability to give you a good answer reflects the ambivalence that I and many others here feel. I think most of us at least share some of the vision for the new prospect. On the other hand, we sometimes ask, "Why are we doing this?"

I've argued consistently in the last year that if the consortium doesn't take place, we will not simply remain as we have been. We will make a number of the changes that are assumed to be part of the consortium, but then it would be possible to make those changes and remain fully part of the church. There are days I wished that's what we could do... Emotionally, I think I would even find that option attractive. Rationally, I do think our Baptist people are better served if we work together.

It seems that this whole thing goes against him emotionally but he does it, not because he is assured of success but because he feels that the people he is committed to will be well served by his efforts. "It's a nuisance, but it has to be done. I recognize that somebody has to do some of the things. It seems to make some sense for me to be involved with it at this point."

David's actions in the consortium discussion convinced me that he is motivated by service. He is going through a painful and draining process in which there are uncharted territories to cross. He is very aware of the danger of alienating the other Baptist groups and having his initiatives rejected by his community who are very important to him. This is an exciting but also very exacting opportunity, and he readily admits: "Well, I am afraid."

It was David's willingness to take on work that he really does not like, to chart a course through uncertain waters and to risk the rejection of his denomination that convinced me that David is a servant leader who places the best interests of his denomination ahead of his own. He has thought through the best interests of his college, and, although it does not fit emotionally, he is pursuing it on behalf of the college. He recognizes the challenges involved but does not flinch from the unknowns that are a normal part of such a process. He is determined to both represent and work out the interests of his college and denomination throughout the consortium discussion process.

### **What Servant Leadership Means to David**

David states unequivocally, "leadership should be a servant leadership in that it should be there not for itself, but for the sake of the people". His basis for servant leadership is "the servant passage and concept" and that he hopes that it "will always remain central" in his thinking. The leader, for David, is not so much one who finds solutions as one who helps the church or organization in its "ongoing working at finding the most helpful ways of moving everything forward."

There were two main themes in our conversations about servant leadership. First, David embraces influence and respect rather than the power to impose. Second, his leadership is based on dialogue in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

#### Influence and Respect

David is attempting to formulate a leadership style which, like that of the overseers is based on servant leadership, but still stands in contrast to certain aspects of their practice. Rather than leadership in which power is "used regularly on an individual basis", he is trying to develop the kind of leadership in which his word is contested and thereby refined by those around him. Indeed he says that people who give him power by looking to him for "the right answer" make him uncomfortable on a very "gut" level.

He recognizes that a leader has power. However, he prefers "to consider it influence and respect and those kinds of things rather than a structure in which one has people whose word goes."

I would see strong leadership as a willingness to take a stand and a willingness to be an advocate for that stand. Strong leadership doesn't necessarily require the kind of official power to enforce that stand should you be unable to persuade the people.

Although he recognizes that imposition may very occasionally be necessary, he is careful to differentiate between such an occasional imposition and the kind of regular ignoring of dialogue and persuasion that he associates with the overseers. He prefers to lead on the basis of respect that is gained over a long period of time and wants people to have confidence that when he says something, "it has not been said lightly, it has not been said selfishly, but that it has been said for the good of the people." When I asked him how this worked in his own case, he said:

Over the years I have developed, (it is hard to judge how much but I have developed), a considerable influence within faculty so that it is clear that my perspective is considered quite carefully at least. I hope that others are as well. The power I have developed has never been in my right to do things, but rather in the recommendations I make to the faculty, the way issues are presented, information I have in certain areas and so on.

He says he does not miss the "right to do things" because he thinks that "frequently the greatest need is to have clarity on what the possibilities are and what some of the arguments on the various sides are." What he does attempt is "to outline as carefully as possible the options with the pros and cons of the various options" so that group decision making can be facilitated. "I do see a major role of the leader to be to help whatever body the person is working with develop a decision, a decision in which the whole body counts, a decision which is not only mine but theirs." He then has "a high confidence in [the faculty] to make a good decision."

He likes a style in which there is no one person who can make decisions for the group. While David is certain that this leadership is different from the overseer's style, he is uncertain about whether he would apply the term "strong leadership" to it as the leader does not make the decision but merely facilitates the decision making process of the group.

It is his goal "to develop a unity despite differences which helps people ... to understand, to grow, to develop in a way which allows them to become effective."

There is a good element here that I am terribly proud of and that is the way we have been able to fight among ourselves and end up supporting each other. It is not that we always agree, so I am very pleased with that.

Underlying David's leadership is the element of trust. We talked about how trust is fostered through experience with a leader in which his "history of consistency, sense of identity, confidence, and ability" become known and accepted by those around him. David identified inconsistency and "an emotional sense that the other person has a different identity or major commitment than you" as things that undermine trust in relationships with a leader. By this he means that it is important to know where the person "ultimately" stands on basic issues. David recognized that not only does he want people to be able to trust him as a leader, he also wants to be able to trust the people with whom he is dealing. Negotiating important things in a context where there is no expectation of mutual trust is foreign to David and he finds it unnerving.

David also shows his respect for others by his willingness to do mundane work. Like my other informants, he was the one who prepared the room, cleaned up the garbage others left behind, dragged along graduation gowns for those students who had not shown up and so on. I was impressed by the thoroughness of his preparation for both his interactions with the students and other leaders. As I watched David, I became convinced that indeed he values people and their opinions too much to impose on them, even when that would be a much easier and faster way. He works hard at both the attractive, up-front tasks and those that are in the background. I would speculate that he is respected by students and faculty alike.

### Dialogue

David's preferred relating style is dialogue with mutual respect. He was constantly assessing and evaluating what I said and comparing it to his own views. When he said things like, "I asked myself but I don't know in what way." or "I haven't quite put those two together", I thought that he seemed to dialogue even with himself. He gave the impression that he was constantly thinking about things within himself and talking to other people. He seemed to be weighing things out and trying things on for size, all for the purpose of understanding and expressing something more clearly.

David likes to argue with people who will resist his views because, as he says, "you never learn from people who agree". This made for interesting interviews and is tied into his view of servant leadership because I found David to be very sensitive to the fact that not all people feel the way he does about an argument. Although David recognizes that one must feel that "one knows better" because "if you don't feel you know better, you won't debate", he emphasizes that "one still needs to retain some modesty about one's own position and recognize that one may still be wrong." He is aware that someone who "quickly feels attacked if someone says 'Your idea is stupid!' has the potential of being or of feeling rejected." He works to communicate "a genuine respect for people and positions different from [his]" and not only their different positions but also their different "ways of defending and arriving at those positions."

This implies an intensity of listening over a prolonged period of time. He says that his "impression is that generally when one is in a situation where one can have a longer discussion, the chances of ending that discussion (perhaps not with total agreement but) with a sense of unity is fairly high." One of his reasons for this is that "if one has that longer time for dialogue ... you develop some confidence in the other person so that you can be honest." David clarifies things for himself by thinking, talking and writing about

them but this dialogue occurs within his community and is part of his service to the community.

I saw two assumptions within David's dialogue. First, he assumes that he will have the opportunity to take a stand and that others are interested in that stand. He is assuming that he will have a voice in his world of dialogue. Second, he assumes that there is a right and a wrong to debate and that important truth can be explored by dialogue. His is a dialogue aimed at the mutual discernment of truth. While he has respect for the perceptions of people, I felt that behind the exercise, there was a conviction that something of importance is being accomplished by the process, be it a "good decision", the "right way" or "ownership of the decision". Dynamics among people are of interest to and have meaning for David.

#### Evidence of David's Respect for the Students

In addition to the will to serve people well even when it is difficult or painful that I have talked about earlier, I observed sensitivity and respect in David's treatment of the students. In my observation times I was impressed by the comfort level in David's relationships with the students. They interacted with him naturally and accepted him in his role as college leader. When one student came into chapel with a spindly goatee separated into two braids adorned with beads, David spoke to him and there was a chuckle at the end of the conversation. David accepts the experimental dress of the students and gives the impression of an understanding father who cares for each student individually and who attempts to understand their point of view.

As I observed David leading a rehearsal for the graduation ceremony, it became very clear that, more than simply getting the rehearsal over and done on a very busy weekend, he was interested in their individual needs. My first clue was his thorough preparation. The desks in the room had been rearranged to accommodate the rehearsal, the procedures were outlined on the blackboard, the gowns were ready, and David had thought

everything through. He would frequently stop to take questions that had arisen in the course of his instructions to them. David was specific about his expectations and relaxed about setting boundaries. By the end, everyone knew just what was expected and was confident to do it.

I was impressed by the care he took with the names. Prior to this date, he had posted a sheet for the graduates to record how they would like their names to appear on their diplomas and in the graduation program. Now he went over each name for pronunciation because he would be calling out the names at the ceremony. There were several corrections and some students who asked that their middle name be included even though they had failed to put it in the program. One said that his middle name was from his father and so he wanted his father to hear it. I saw in this a sensitivity to individual preferences and the importance a name has. It mattered to David because it mattered to the students.

During the rehearsal several students raised the issue of how the college was handling those who were graduating with something still incomplete. When David promised he would bring it to the attention of the faculty, I wondered if he would really carry through or if this was merely a way of putting off the students. When I asked him about it later I found that he had already begun to act on it because he thought that it was a concern of the students and therefore important.

I have raised it with the registrar and I would like to see it brought to faculty for discussion. I don't know where I stand on it. I tend to be very hesitant to come down quickly on a point and so I am not sure where I stand on that issue, but I think that if there are a few students who raise it, it should at least receive some attention somewhere. So, I have checked with the registrar.

David seems to understand the peer pressure and relationships that the students face but he looks for, values and cultivates the openness and honesty in the one to one situations. It is part of the college role of nurturing young people into the church.

One thing that never ceases to amaze me is how high a percentage of the students are willing to share honestly both their faith as well as their doubts, even though when you get them in a crowd, a certain style of bravado determines how they behave and speak. As soon as you get them in a journal or in an individual conversation, it opens up.

It seemed clear that David is dedicated and well-suited to his task of nurturing students into his denomination. He takes delight in them and they reciprocate his attention.

### Conclusion

The study of David allowed me to explore servant leadership with an articulate person who is thoroughly familiar with the biblical passages about it. Moreover, our conversations occurred at a time when David was rethinking his practical leadership roles in light of his past and in anticipation of his new assignment as president. We reviewed the various influences on his leadership thinking from childhood through his theological training and working life. His insight was keen and he was open to exploring new ideas.

David identifies with and works within this community and finds deep fulfilment through his tasks. David was determined that innovations continue the basic mission, goals and objectives of their tradition, but also to enhance those by incorporating future possibilities. Also of interest was the connection I identified between the leadership style of David's college and Greenleaf's pattern of *primus inter pares*. David is also deeply committed to his community and I was grateful to have opportunity to observe how this worked out for them.

## Chapter Five - LOUIS LAFRANCE

### Introduction to Louis Lafrance

When Louis Lafrance's<sup>3</sup> grandmother died suddenly, Louis' father was brought to Waldheim to live in the residential school. In due time, Louis' father worked in maintenance in the Waldheim hospital, married the hospital cook, and had three children, the eldest of whom was Louis. Louis remained in Waldheim until he went to Normal School and then he returned to the area to teach before moving to the city permanently for further education and his career in the Green Mountain School Division.

He began working in education as a rural teacher after a year of Normal School. After four years he returned to university and completed a Science degree. After his marriage he taught high school for six years before becoming principal of two K-6 schools. He used the Green Mountain School Division as a home base to reach beyond as his interests dictated and opportunities arose in city and province wide endeavours.

He continued to study and earned a B.Ed. in 1963 and an Advanced Certificate as late as 1982. He also upgraded his certification levels both as a teacher and as a principal. He was active in organizations like the Teacher's Association, Examination Boards, Professional Development, and the Science Conference. He is both active in and keen about education. He was a founding member of the Basketball Association.

I have been very lucky being in this community since 1960, to be sitting in this room in this building, steeped in history and running into all kinds of people all

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<sup>3</sup>Not his real name. All names of people, places, ethnic groups and organizations have been changed.

over. I feel very much a part of the community and I just know that if you want to have a community you have to contribute something to it.

In the late 1980's his school was closed due to declining enrolment and he took on a "retirement project" - directing their adult education offerings on a commission basis. Although he sees this as merely a short term job to keep him busy for the time being, they have as many as eighty courses of interest to the community in their fall, winter, and spring offerings. At present he is also part of a music group for which he acts as booking agent. They have a very full practice and performance schedule and Louis is pleased to provide music for groups of people as a community service. When he officially retired, he was recognized for more than thirty years of service to education in the Green Mountain School Division.

The person who nominated Louis perceives of him as a leader for whom service is the paramount motivation. As my interviews and observations progressed, I explored Louis' personal reasons for service as related to being recognized, positively remembered after his death, and enjoying the exchanges associated with service. I found him to have a unique ability to recognize opportunities as they present themselves, to activate the commitment of others to these possibilities and then to leave the project in their hands. He has broad experience of service in both education within his school division and in the community of Waldheim, his town of origin. Louis is a tireless person who enjoys life and has a great deal of vitality.

### **Waldheim**

Louis retains a deep commitment to his town of origin, Waldheim where he and his family still own significant property. It seems that his heart is there. When we drove by the hospital, he pointed out the willow tree that his father had planted and stated his pleasure in the fact that the planner of the hospital had incorporated it into his design. We

also went by the house where Louis and his family had lived and to the residence that had replaced the facility in which his father had actually lived.

Growing up across the street from the residence where his father was raised "like an orphan because his mother froze to death in a snow storm" shaped his life and his choices, what he takes for granted and what he believes. To him, home town means loyalty: undivided and taken for granted. He talked about the special attachment he has to the residence in which his father lived and how this is part of the reason he would like to see something done with it now that it has stopped operating as a residence. He frequently said, "The more one puts into a community, the more one gets out of it."

In the past ten years, Louis has taken two different opportunities to further the interests of Waldheim. When he heard about a foundation that had money earmarked for rural areas, he met with others from neighbouring towns to work on a share for Waldheim. A regional foundation was formed to collect money from their citizens that would then be matched by the original foundation. The interest from the money collected is available to the communities involved for community projects such as museums.

The second project is a community housing facility with over thirty suites. Louis put in \$150 to form a corporation and then served as the president of the board. The board qualified for funds to cover a feasibility study and then to build. He then stepped down to let the residents run it, but he was invited back to sit on the board of directors for a two year term. Louis feels himself to be a part of two communities, Waldheim and Green Mountain.

### **Attitudes**

Louis, at sixty-seven, is overwhelmingly positive about life. He is obviously satisfied with what he has received and is looking out for things he can give. I found myself gaining a sense of respect for him because I began to see him as a man who is

determined to serve and to serve well. Moreover, he is free within himself and enjoys what he does.

When I look back I consider it privilege to have been a teacher. There are a lot of people that would have liked that but never had a chance... I can sit here and be happy about sixty–seven years of success.

He feels lucky to have been able to teach for thirty-five years and therefore "to have a pretty good pension" and so to have his personal finances well under control. Louis has both modest expectations in terms of lifestyle and has done financial planning that gives him freedom. He gives the impression that he is careful, and that money matters but that he is not ruled by finances.

Service is his way of having a place within the community and contributing to it. He explains that his relationships usually centre around an interest or an activity. He says, "You meet people and you do things together for awhile." The things that he does with other people often are a service to the community.

When Louis is working with people on an activity, he says that "it might take awhile before they express a whole thought." but that he tends to be "already figuring how we're going to act on the situation." He feels that he can "react very quickly when somebody says something" and he is happy about that. Louis, however, also recognizes that this quality has a down side when he says, "I talk too much!" He readily admits that "you learn more by listening than talking" and that allowing the other person to talk is a courtesy that he would like to practice. He would like to listen in such a way that he would empathize with what the other person is thinking and saying.

It also occurs to me that talking allows Louis a measure of control of situations that listening does not. While I am not suggesting that Louis is a highly controlling person, I did observe that his keeping control of the conversations between him and his adult

education teachers allowed him to get his work done more quickly. I also noted that he was quick to analyze and remedy the problems that occurred.

### **Determination to Serve**

When we were planning an interview Louis suggested that I should call him a day or two ahead. When I looked puzzled, he said, why yes, he could drop dead of a heart attack or something and it would inconvenience me to wait in that case, so for the effort of a phone call he would suggest that I call first! He was very matter of fact and I recalled that when we had first made the arrangement to meet for breakfast he has asked me to do the same thing. I had thought that he felt some other activity might arise that he was more committed to, but it was probably this concern with his health. "That's what the future's all about. I could drop from a heart attack later this afternoon, or who knows what." When I asked him if he was hoping this would happen, he chuckled and said, "No, I'm just saying because I've been to a lot of funerals lately."

Whether it is this sense that he may not have a lot of time, I found Louis to serve with a sense of urgency that allows him to bend school division rules even when it is inconvenient for himself. Louis commented that he felt strongly about the board office making rules that absolved them of any responsibility of anything going wrong. He felt it was important to serve people rather than inconvenience them for the sake of some rule.

He is eager to participate taking opportunities as they come along. For example, when he received my letter, he signed the consent form and put it in the mail before I had followed it up with a phone call because he understood that I was looking for informants and he was willing to be one! He explained to me why he feels that he should do it when he is in a position to do something worthwhile.

Well, first of all, if you don't, you won't get a second chance... I can think of some occasions in my life where there was an opportunity and we did not do it. We did not get another chance... If something comes along, it doesn't matter if it is

a piece of clothing or something that you might believe useful, or taking time to visit with somebody, if you don't do it then, you won't get another chance.

Louis has much to do as he keeps several interests active and there is a quality of urgency about his activity. He says, "Well, yes, I enjoy activity, but I also know that if I don't do it, it's not going to happen." He plans for more than can reasonably be accomplished and yet accuses himself of procrastination when things are left undone.

A calendar's like a big merry-go-round and there's always something to do. There are grandchildren that I should be spending more time with. I have two kids with homes that I could go and do some work there. I can always improve my violin playing which I haven't touched for a week now. I could write a song; I could write a poem; I could write a book.

### Source of Service Mentality

#### **Father**

When I asked Louis about his father, he expressed his high regard by saying, "My father was a brilliant man who could fix anything." While Louis' father lived in the boy's residence in Louis' future home town of Waldheim a missionary doctor by the name of Dr. Judd recognized his "great talent for fixing things". Dr. Judd gave it some direction by getting him to carry wood for the furnace and to help install an old steam engine in the basement. By doing so, Dr. Judd gave Louis' father a meaningful, contributing role and a vocation that is emulated by Louis in his continued service to the community.

Louis saw in his father's function in the community an example of community life that has influenced him deeply. To Louis' father community was not an abstract idea, Louis says, "He lived it!" and he helped out where he could. Louis' father was "a trained plumber and he was fixing things for people all the time. People would come to the house and ask him to fix pumps and things. Quite often he'd simply turn a screw or something, and he wouldn't charge for it."

Louis made light of the idea that being called on in this way might have been inconvenient. He sees it as having happened within a community relationship that made it a natural part of living. There is a sense here that his father chose to help; he was not under duress in doing it. It was a large enough priority for him to want to do it, but he also found ways to make it fit with the remainder of his life. "No, I don't think my father ever found it inconvenient. He probably had to wait for supper or that kind of thing, but I think that he did what he did when he could do it... You don't find helping neighbours or relatives inconvenient."

Louis recognizes and respects his father as having been a 'brilliant man'. He also recognizes himself as being different from his father, having a greater love for people. "To sit down and poke around to fix a toaster can be fun but I think I have had more fun in the people business." Perhaps Louis has taken the community mindedness that was central to his father and reworked it to suit his own interests and abilities. This value of community and place within it is a motif that runs throughout Louis' actions and conversation. He expresses his life motto when he says;

I am a community person. I just know that the more you give to your community the more the community gives back to you. If you want to have a community, you have to do something in the community.

### **Community**

Louis sees service as part of a small town, community economy in which services are provided on a barter basis. Serving gives one a place within that bartering system, something that one can contribute to others in return for the services one receives. "If people aren't given the opportunity to do some work, well they're not going to feel part of the group." In order to feel and be a part of a community, Louis says that one must do things for the community.

With the Second World War, I really think there was a struggle for families to survive and people didn't have a whole lot of money. I don't think money was ever a concern... The thing is, I wouldn't say that giving has to do with money. It seems to be as far as building the West, people put up barns together, houses together, women's institutes, ladies' auxiliaries, and all these organizations. When there were things to be done, people pulled together. Maybe it's got something to do with the community you grow up in, and where I came from, people helped people. It didn't matter what time of day or what the day was, you helped people who needed help.

While it is doubtful that those who could not reciprocate were refused, Louis is one who wants to maintain a viable contribution. Although he recognizes that people who have more can give more, Louis downplays the role of money. He says, "I think there's more charity among poor people or people who have less than people who have more". He thinks that it is possible for rich people to "be arrogant, maybe keep to themselves, and possibly some of their wealth is being accumulated as a result of their greed and miserliness."

I asked whether people who had the ability to contribute but neglected or even refused to do this would be cut off from receiving help when they needed it.

I don't think so. There's a possibility, but it seems to me that if those people are in a particular community, depending on what their needs are, people put up with them. They're part of the community and people help them as they can.. If they do have a need...

I found it annoying if I'd go to the city to get something fixed and paid big dollars for it and back home my dad would fix things for people for free. People did things for him too, so it was a two-way street. I think that he was highly thought

about in the community as being ... well, I was going to say, an intelligent person who fixed things and helped out if needed.

Today that is continuing in a barter system but it seems the government is saying that every time somebody does something for someone, we should be collecting. It seems to me that if you tax every time someone does something for somebody, you're just killing your buying power.

Louis is somewhat nostalgic about this community system and regrets its loss. The system of bartering of services is a part of the "good old days" for Louis and he would like to replicate it in his community life at present. However, new attitudes threaten his ways both in the sense of serving one another and in the value of education.

In the Second World War, there was the attitude that we had to win so that after the war we could be better and have this sort of pride in the nation. Teachers were saying that it was important to do the best that you can for the kids because they are the future. I now see that there's downsizing, right sizing, people losing jobs all over the place. Just because you have schooling doesn't mean that you're going to get a job... When people have that kind of mentality, you just creep away in fear and keep shrinking.

### **Desire to be Recognized and Remembered**

The balance that Louis is attempting is delicate because, while he retains several properties in the Waldheim area and his personal commitment to Waldheim remains strong, his work and family life are located in the larger urban center. When we visited Waldheim together, he also made a telling comment, "the people living in these houses are no longer the ones I knew." He, however, continues to want that community to recognize him as a person who makes things happen. He has experienced this in his work in education.

It seems to me that if you want to have things happen, somebody's got to initiate it. Maybe it sounds like bragging, but at my retirement, the assistant superintendent

was here. He mentioned that while some people know what's going on, others don't know what's going on, and still others make it happen. So I guess I was being recognized as helping to make things happen.

Another thing that Louis is trying to achieve through his service is a lasting memorial. He says that at a funeral "you can tell the merit of the person to the community by the number of people who show up at the funeral. When the hall is full, people come from miles around, it is usually because the person served the community." He wants the community to know who he is and to remember him.

Well, maybe I inherited it from my father. I just believe that history, family, and heritage all go together. The thing is that we're not going to be here for very long and maybe we want to be remembered by other things besides just a tombstone some place in a cemetery. So it seems to me that we only pass this way once, so let's make it a better place.

He was careful about the image that he presents and that affected the revisions he suggested to the interview transcripts he read. He did not want to be seen as putting any church down or to appear proud about money and success. He also wanted to delete anything that had to do with financial failures on the part of other people. Phrases that were colloquial were to be changed to more scholarly language and things that were off topic, in his perception, were to be removed.

Although he is the founder of the community housing project and therefore deserving of respect and thanks, he does not live there and there is some evidence that he may become out of tune with what the place currently is, what their values are. Waldheim is, however, a beneficiary of Louis' belief that "to make the whole world a better place, people have to help each other."

### **Service as a Two-Way Street**

The idea of service as a two-way street came out especially clearly at the board meeting for the community housing facility I attended with Louis. There it was announced that a suite would be available for rent on the first of August. Citing the role that he had in the planning and building of the facility, Louis asked that he be allowed to rent the suite for the month of August so that he could use it when he was in Waldheim for his farm. In spite of some reservations a motion allowing him to utilize the suite for the one month was passed.

When I later asked Louis about this request he suggested that while he was originating the project, he had thought that it might lead to him having "a free apartment there ... for perpetuity." When he verbalized this wish to the board, however, "it was formally turned down" because "there aren't any places that have free suites for somebody who has done a good turn." He saw being able to rent the suite for a month as a privilege "because the thing is, nobody else is going to be allowed to move in for a month and move out, so I would say that it's a privilege."

Louis' continued activities on behalf of the community housing costs him time and money and he sees this privilege as something they can give back to him. "Every time I go there and back, it's at my own expense. I've never suggested that I should be paid some mileage or something." He feels that this request was something they could give rather easily because "renting the place for September is a better time anyway. A lot of people are away for the summer, and are not looking to move in?"

Louis feels that in a "private enterprise, ... if you're management or if you own something, you should be able to go, take advantage of it, and get some benefits from the deal. That's not out of the realm of possibility in my books." Louis also stated "that in city

politics, provincial politics, there's always somebody getting some benefits from the fact that they are part of what's going on." For Louis, service is a two-way street.

I gave that place five years out of my life. I put a lot of work into it and I would say that it happened because we were there at the right time, at the right place, with the right people.

Louis values the community mindedness he observed in his father and other Waldheim community leaders such as Dr. Judd. He expresses his community mindedness by serving the interests of the communities of Waldheim where he was born and grew up and the city where he lives with his family and has done his work in education. He takes pride in knowing the people of these two communities and is content there because he says "narrowing my activities to the city and Waldheim gives some stability to my life... I'm well rooted. I'm not looking forward to being uprooted or moved out of my house for someplace else."

### **Recognizes Opportunities and Pursues Them**

When I asked him how he decides which projects and causes to give himself to, I found that the value of service and participation in the community is a given in his thinking. Louis does not spend much time thinking about what is good or bad, he sees things that need doing and does them.

I don't know, I would say it has to do with people pulling you in their direction to help out. I don't sit around waiting to decide, is that good or is that bad, I just know that there are things that need doing... I just think that people's well being is important, that the seniors should be cared for. I just think that life is important.

Louis does not base his choices on thinking out what the community needs. "I've had an interest in education and housing. Who am I to say what the community needs? I haven't given a whole lot of thought to that." He seems absolutely sure that what he is making happen is the right thing and enjoys the freedom to initiate things.

I would say that one of the benefits of being the principal of the school rather than being a teacher is that you have the freedom to set your own agenda. I would say the big thing is freedom. I would rather be a leader than a slave and like the freedom to make things happen. Maybe all those things come with power or authority.

### **Sees Positive Possibilities**

Louis describes himself as an optimist who wants people to get together to do the "things that should be done". Several times he said, "Don't just sit there, do something. Life has choices. Let's get together and make something happen." It is Louis' view that initiative is important and that improvements can be achieved through dreams, risks and working together. "What I mean is that if you think it, you can make it happen. Maybe I told you someone said I was a dream merchant."

He is very quick to identify the positive possibilities in a situation and stands for doing something about those even if the opportunity arises out of an error or someone's misjudgement.

When we switched grain land to hay land, the person who rented it should have been there to make sure that the end pieces got seeded with grass. He wasn't, so what I've done is sort of turn these things into gardens and I just think that gardening is fun, growing apples, plums and things like that.

It seems that Louis recognized an opportunity to do something he enjoys in those field ends that did not get seeded into hay. It was a mistake that presented this opportunity that he now takes up with interest and zest.

Louis wants to work within each situation for the best possible outcome. In connection with teaching he says, "You can't pick the kids and you can't pick your principal. So it's what you do with what you've got where you are now." When his

school was closed. Louis accepted the decision even though it was not one he liked, and took up adult education. His attitude is positive and he accepts the decisions of others as that with which he has to work. He accepts rather than fights things that are handed down even when they affect him adversely. By this point in his life, he has accepted those things that he cannot change and seems to know the difference. He works with things like this instead of against them.

For Louis, the taking of opportunities is something he expects of others as well. When one is in a position to do something about something, Louis feels that one has an obligation to do so. He feels impatient with people who do not do this. People who "don't do anything" frustrate Louis as action comes naturally to him and he seems unable to understand why someone with an opportunity would not act and act quickly. He is pretty convinced about his ideas and doesn't understand that others may not be on the same page.

Yes, right. If someone wants to go sulk in the corner, you could put some effort into it, but if people don't want to come you can't stop them, so be it. I guess maybe I don't have a whole lot of time for people who don't want to do something.

Louis takes pleasure in thinking big and is not afraid of large sums of money if he sees an idea that is saleable. Louis thinks that the three buildings that recently became vacant in Waldheim would be useful for seniors' housing if they would put

some kind of roof over the three buildings with some kind of an atrium or solarium inside so that people at this time of year, instead of going outside in twenty below weather, can be sitting where there is a pool area and some trees are growing. In this part of the world, at this time of the year, as long as you are behind glass it can be very comfortable. Seniors are not travelling, so if this was done, it would be a facility that would attract people.

He thinks this is workable, fundable and repayable. He has a view of what it would take to make the building saleable. He asks, "Why should people in Waldheim not have the benefit of nice facilities if somebody was to make it happen?"

He sees the people who own these buildings as "stuck with" them only because they do not recognize and embrace the opportunities inherent in the situation. He sees many things as possible if somebody makes them happen. He sees the willingness to work and try as a (or even the) major barrier to achieving things. He wants other people to enjoy and benefit from his work. Louis selects the most positive interpretation of each situation and keeps the most positive possibilities open even if the details of how it can work out are not yet clear.

#### **Fits in with the Flow**

Louis has the ability to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. In recognizing an opportunity Louis is particularly sensitive to the flow of others around him both in terms of funding and social dynamics. He identifies available money, finds out how to obtain it, enlists other people in the project, demonstrates his commitment to the project in practical ways, and then leaves the project in the hands of others. Louis understands the extent of what is involved in a community having things and is willing to work at it.

Yes, communities are people. If you want something you have to work for it. If you want to have a ball team in the community, somebody has to pull together and work it out so the team comes together and the team has equipment to play with. If they're going to play teams from out of town, there's transportation needed and if people come here, you've got to provide hospitality. So it's a whole big complex issue.

He picks up on people and organizations who have "money to spend" and pursues that money by building a relationship with them (sometimes, as in the case of the air line tickets and hotel rooms he arranged for his basketball players, over a period of years). He

also finds out what their plans are and then seeks ways to follow their rules. At the community housing board meeting there was a discussion about the community meal program that was not going well and for which the funding was about to be lost. Louis wanted to see this money continue to come in and kept coming up with things that could be tried only to find that they had already been done. Finally, he had to admit defeat.

When he, quite by accident, found a foundation that had funds earmarked for setting up rural foundations, he did not approach them directly, but met with their board to find out what their plans were. When he discovered that they were interested in rural areas with a much larger population base than Waldheim, he adjusted his plan to include several towns in the surrounding area and by doing so, formulated a plan that was acceptable to the sponsoring foundation. "There are a lot of people who are doing a lot of things with the public's money and we walk behind them and pay the bills."

#### Working Together

Once there is money available, Louis looks for what he terms "synergy" to activate other people to become involved and carry the project through. He avoids coercion but looks for other interested and committed people with whom to work. In the case of the foundation, expanding beyond Waldheim meant that he had to contact people from other centres, sell them on his idea and work things out together with them. He did this by identifying people "who are involved in the community", initially working with them and then working through them to their communities. In the case of the foundation, "it was decided that each municipality would name two people to the board." Louis formed an alliance with key leaders, drew in other people and facilitated their control of the situation. They had a part in setting up the constitution and therefore the running of the foundation.

When he was principal, he "always had a parent-teacher council and the third week of every September [he] had a parent's night to get the parents involved in the school." Louis wanted his school to be like a happy family with parents involved in the school.

Although he recognizes the difficulties of real life, he does not take them on personally but works within them. I asked what results made him feel that his efforts as principal were worth it.

I would say happy people. I mean happy kids, happy mothers, everybody being happy. There were incidents that were not happy and there's a couple of hair raising stories that I remember, especially at Green Mountain. I think the school should reflect the community. There are people out there that are hurting; maybe the father's in jail or who knows what, lots of crazy things going on, so you try to make the best of it. Teachers have problems with their families too, (somebody is sick or something) so you try to run it like a big happy family.

When he found that there was money for a community housing project, he got five people together to form a board and got the project under way. It is his expectation that different people will contribute to the project in whatever ways they can whether it is by supplying a meeting place, publicity, leadership, arranging a fund raising dinner, or donating money or time. He contacts key people and teams up with them to get others involved as well.

Louis feels knowing people to be key. He takes care with people's names and records the names and an outline of information for all the people he meets each day. When he meets someone, if he has forgotten their name he will say so and take care to hear it and say it again. When he was preparing for the printing of the certificates for the sign language class, he went to each student to be sure that their names were spelled correctly. Whenever I was in a group with Louis, he would always be careful to introduce me to everyone. In one case, he must have forgotten that he had already done it and so I was introduced a total of three times!

I noticed that most people had an immediate familiarity and comfort level with Louis and that he likes all people. He greets teachers by name, says hello to everyone who walks

by whether he knows them or they are involved in his classes or not. If someone has done something well, Louis will be among the first to commend them with generosity and sincerity. His voice is "gravelly" but his manner and care come through so that people respond warmly to him.

Louis is aware that "once you destroy trust with people, you don't get it back. It doesn't matter what the situation is" and he is careful to maintain that trust. He says that leaders are

being paid to go some place and make things happen. You can go there and make things happen up to a point, but if you don't get co-operation from the people that you're working with, you're not going to be there for very long.

His own formula includes figuring "out what the needs of the group are and sort of work together to generate some benefits for the group" rather than "telling people what to do." He says that "if those people have no interest in those particular goals, then you're not going to stay with the group for very long." He feels happy about his accomplishments as a school principal.

I think that being at one school for twelve years was an accomplishment. I was there until the school board decided to move all the principals around and said, "It's time another community shared your talents," and I got sent over here. I just know that when you're sent some place, people have expectations for some leadership. They also don't want people to tell them what to do. You have to be careful how you do that, but I guess that all comes with leadership.

#### What about the Negative?

Louis conserves his energy for the positive and refuses to get caught up with the negative. He paid less attention to them because he were busy doing the positive things.

I don't know, I guess I never spent a whole lot of time focusing on that. I guess that some people were not happy but I never spent a lot of time worrying about that.

You have to accentuate the positive, go with the winners, go with the best, and do the best you can and some people don't want to participate.

When I asked about people who actually worked against him he said:

We had guys who would put sand in the machine. I didn't do anything. I mean if they wanted to pour sand in the machine ... You know they are out there. It's the same thing in the classroom, the learner always has the power of the veto. OK, so you give it your best shot to make it a learning experience for everybody and if somebody doesn't want to participate, as long as they're not being belligerent or disruptive. I tried to use the collegial approach where you get a consensus from the group. I still think that that's the best way to go. I know that some people say, "Tell us what to do and we'll do it." Others say, "If our leader wants to do it, we don't want to do it."

Louis recognizes that some people worked against him deliberately, sometimes just because he let them know that he wanted something to happen. He saw this as "just playing games" and worked around them by getting a group consensus and then ignoring them (as long as they did not directly interfere). He says there were never very many of these people and that they were not like that all the time. He wrote them off as people who had "some hang-ups about this, that and the other thing."

He did say, "I don't ever see myself as being a dictator. Some people say I'm a dictator." Because my study was limited to his own views, I was unable to check this out with other people but I observed that his general attitude to people is gentle and supportive. He takes people at their word even in connection with money. He explained that if someone told him that a cheque they had written would be good in two days, he would deposit it in two days and expect the money to be there. He said, "I believe his word is his bond. I expect that when we put that cheque in, it won't bounce."

I had the opportunity to observe Louis dealing with mildly frustrating circumstances in connection with his adult education classes. He has some long-standing teachers with whom he has a working relationship but when he is dealing with new teachers, he can be left scrambling at the last moment. At one point we made a special trip over to another school to collect some money, only to find the class being taught by a substitute and the teacher not there. This made the trip, in his words, "a wild goose chase". On the way out, he mused that his wife had left a message on the teacher's telephone at 4 PM that day. One would have thought that she would have let him know, if she was not going to be there. He then rationalised it; maybe she was in the hospital, or maybe she had gone on a holiday! Rather than berate the teacher, he began to recount stories of people who had been caught playing sick and were fired for their lack of integrity.

At another time he gave the register for a class to a student because the teacher was not there yet. Louis went through it explaining everything and the student nodded knowingly but when Louis came back later, the student and the teacher had not done anything with this folder. Louis simply repeated his instructions, to the teacher this time, without even a hint of irritation and again stated his expectations. He registered no disappointment with either the student or the teacher after we left the room.

It seems that Louis recognizes frustrations but is somehow unaffected by them. He accepts that some people are dishonest, but he does not fight it. He seems to remind people of the rules and the reasons for those rules, but gives them the opportunity to follow those rules rather than insisting on compliance. People seemed to respond well to this on the whole. He never berated anyone for their decisions, and generally seemed sympathetic to their problems even when it causes inconvenience for him. He did not spend his energy on such things but simply wrote them off or turned them around so that they became a source of interest for him. He generally likes people.

I observed that Louis respects the work he does and does not "lie down and die" when things go wrong. He will assert that he has done what he could about a problem even if he cannot fix it completely. When the room did not have an adequate number of the right computers, Louis said that he believed he had made arrangements with someone from the school to have the right computers available. When another teacher complained that the feathers from a class using down were still everywhere, Louis explained that efforts had been made to vacuum them up but were hampered by the smallness of the vacuum cleaner that the instructor had been given. The day teacher seemed satisfied that he was not being taken for granted even though the problem was not removed.

I was impressed with the detail of Louis' organization and how he did not compromise his service to both the students and the teachers. He values his efforts in adult education and says, "If people put time and effort into providing a service, they should be paid." While serving is natural to him, he feels that money in the sense of customer service is an important motivator for him and he sees this as legitimate.

It's because I know that when you are in business, the customer is always right and it doesn't take a lot of effort to smile and to let people know that you appreciate them being there and that you appreciate their business. One reason for doing this whole thing is the hope of making a couple of extra dollars at it. Sure there is service, but if you are not going to make a dollar at it, it is not being run right.

Louis sees value in things that do not work out perfectly. "Yes, right, it's something I want to do, but if you don't have success at it you just terminate it. I'd like to be a good violin player... So there are not a lot of things that I am perfect at, so I'm still struggling onwards and upwards to improve." Louis sees himself as continuing to work onwards. He still has projects that he is interested in and improvements that he wants to undertake. It is his sense that "if you work at something, it pays off. If you need money, go to work, and someone will pay you."

### Keeps Things Pleasant

Louis wants to keep things pleasant even when people are unco-operative and obstinate. While he does not give up easily, he believes that there is little to be gained from confrontation and anger and so he looks for another way. He does not want to alienate anyone even when they say no to him or disappoint him. This may come from his early experiences in his father's plumbing business.

He did a lot of work for people who would phone up but a lot of people did not pay. I would make it a point to move around and be his bill collector. The worst account was ten years and the person was quite a distance from Waldheim. I would go there and he would give me a cream check for six or seven dollars while he owed my Dad a few hundred dollars. Every time I went he would give me some money but it would take time and money to go there. We ended up straightening up the bill by a couple of loads of hay. If you are doing business, trading or bartering is the way to collect.

At the community housing board meeting, the building administrator was reprimanded and put on probation because the board could not understand the financial statements that she was putting out on her computer. This produced some understandable tension for everyone. I noticed that after the meeting that Louis made a point of passing out general pleasantries to everyone. This made it seem as if the tensions of the meeting were less overwhelmingly negative and could be overcome.

### **Demonstrates his Commitment in Practical Ways**

If the project is about getting something done, as it was in the case of the community housing project, Louis will volunteer on the board of directors even if it means that he has to drive out and make numerous long distance telephone calls. If the project is about money, as it was in the case of the foundation, Louis is willing to demonstrate his commitment with a recognizable amount of money to signal to others that he sees this as a

worthwhile project. He sees himself as a charitable person and contributes his time and money as they are needed.

Louis' willingness to contribute by doing whatever it is that needs to be done came out most clearly in his association with the Basketball Association. He says he was "asked to look after food services and hospitality." This meant that he had to arrive before seven in the morning to put on the coffee and get the doughnuts ahead of everyone else arriving, make all arrangements for their meals including planning special menus for people with particular dietary needs, and cleanup after them throughout the day.

While many people feel that these tasks are not very glorious, Louis says without hesitation that he has never considered another role in the organization because, "It has been a fun job." When I asked him about this I discovered that he interprets the mundane things as part of a positive whole and places the overall purpose up front in his thinking. The negatives become incidentals that are beside the real point. Louis sees the hospitality as fitting into the overall goals of the association. He clearly wants the officials to feel appreciated and comfortable and he sees this as integral to the association's ability to attract quality people back year after year. He resists the sense that to do menial work is degrading or stupid by seeing his interpretation as a good choice that he would like to promote for others as well. He also explained that he feels he has been well treated by the Association and so it is now his privilege to serve them. He sees hospitality as very important and responds negatively to people who neglect it.

Yes that's right. I wouldn't do it if I didn't like it. It doesn't matter what the situation is, there are good things and bad things. As long as the good things are better than the bad things, you keep doing it. Maybe it sounds crazy, but I am not stupid.

### **Leaves the Project**

Louis seems to be able to identify good ideas, work at them, get others to work with him, and then to pass the responsibility on to others. At the time of our interviews, Louis was in the process of stepping back from his involvement with the Basketball Association after a quarter of a century.

I wrote my letter terminating my function as a director of the Basketball Association. I'm still going to help with food, but I'm trying to get out of going to meetings because I've been there since day one. That means 25 years of service and it's time that somebody else stepped in. I also know that if I don't do that, it means that I have to go on doing these things that I did before.

He explained his attitudes and made it clear that he is prepared to be quite firm about the need for them to get someone else. While his tone is determined, he did not come across as being harsh. He is not about to be talked into it over and over again.

I mean, stand back and let someone else do it. I am getting older and I'm not in the school anymore. It seems to me that to keep the Basketball Association going, you should be involved in school physical education. I know that people will say that they can't get somebody. If you can't get somebody, it's too bad, but you had better get somebody because it's time for me to step aside and let someone else do it.

He does not allow his investment to dictate his involvement in that organization. He sees that he is no longer in an optimum position to be involved and so he insists that they find others. He does not accept indispensability and demands the freedom to move to other interests. "It was time consuming and I am at a point in my life where I want to spend more time playing my violin."

An organization in which the transfer has been successfully made is the regional foundation that Louis initiated. After doing all the organizational work and contributing significantly financially, Louis and the original people had a meeting in which they formally handed things over to the constitutionally sanctioned governing group and then "just walked away." Louis maintains that passing on the leadership of the foundation was a must because they are local people. They are presently on target and will, for the first time be in a position to contribute some money to the local museum.

I asked Louis about what he would do if the foundation got into difficulty. He was clear that he would not want to become involved again, but left open the door of asking someone else to do so.

It, apparently, is one of the more successful of the foundations. They have now named the ten foundations, nine are successful and one isn't. They are very happy with this one. They are right on target with raising the money. If they were to flounder, I would say, "Too bad." I was involved in setting it up. For me to go out there to invest more time and money at this time in my life would not interest me... I might suggest that somebody else do it, but even just to drive out to the community is 20 miles, it takes time and money.

He sees the investment of his time and money as over and sets a limit on what he will do for them but he leaves the door open to suggest that someone else might do it. He would probably know the right person for the task. It was my feeling that while he spoke rather boldly about getting re-involved, he would feel rather badly about it and would have difficulty staying away.

### **Conclusion**

I continue to see Louis as having a unique ability to recognize opportunities as they present themselves, to activate the commitment of others to these possibilities and then to leave the project in the hands of others. His early experiences of community living and

sharing in his town of origin form the backdrop for his entire outlook on life. He has a remarkable ability to recognize and capitalize on positive possibilities as they arise. His concern with hospitality (even when he is the one who must make the arrangements) was striking. I was challenged by both his vitality and his acceptance of his own mortality.

I see Louis Lafrance as a leader for whom service is a paramount motivation. He also suggests that the reasons for service can be good and useful even though they also serve the leader's personal needs and interests. Thinking about what service will repay and wishing to be positively remembered do not negate his servant leadership. Rather, it is an example of how the two can be combined to the benefit of both the servant leader and the community at large. For him, serving his community is a way of life; he could not imagine living in any other way.

## Chapter Six - FATHER LEONARDO

### Introduction to Father Leonardo

Father Leonardo<sup>4</sup> was nominated by two people who had known him through his work with a Catholic schools organization. They said he was a person who went well beyond duty in both the Catholic school where he was the principal and the Catholic school organization and that he was an interesting person with whom to discuss issues of service within leadership. Given that strong recommendation, I wrote and then called Father Leonardo. I found that while he was clearly committed to serving as a leader, he was unsure that the things that he really felt to be central to that attitude would be observable. He wondered if I would not learn more from talking to others about him than from observing and talking to him. I explained that that was outside the limits of this particular study. When he decided to proceed after thinking it over for some time, it was gratifying to notice that his comfort level grew as we went through the observations and interviews. Several times he expressed surprise at what I was able to pick up on and in the end he thanked me for the exercise which he enjoyed and which had helped him know himself better.

The impetus for St. Joseph's School came initially from the Catholic community. When Father Leonardo came twenty-five years ago, he was seeking (and received) a new challenge. When Father Leonardo began, he was in the classroom eighty percent of time and had to do the administrative work on weekends and over the summer. His hard work has paid off, however, in that today the school has grown to an enrolment of approximately

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<sup>4</sup> Not his real name. All names of people, places, ethnic and religious groups and organizations have been changed.

450 from Kindergarten to Grade Six. They have a good complement of teaching and administrative staff and are housed in a beautiful facility. At present St. Joseph's School has lost some of its original character in that it is parentally controlled and only forty percent of its students are Catholic. Father Leonardo stresses that he has always enjoyed his work. He recognizes a desire to serve and then delights in the tasks that carry this into action.

Four years after becoming principal of St. Joseph's School, Father Leonardo added an involvement in the Catholic schools' organization. He described this organization as his current passion because he feels that more can be done to strengthen the position of Catholic schools. To this end he and its Education Committee drafted an identity statement, wrote up a brochure, and prepared a media package designed to address common misperceptions about Catholic schools. He has many other ideas of things that can be done and he wishes to do.

When I first began interviewing and observing Father Leonardo, my impression was that he was too sure of himself as a servant and that I was getting a facade of idealized service (perhaps a smattering of Father Leonardo's prior thoughts about servant leadership) rather than a picture of a real person with struggles and difficulties and shortcomings. I wrote extensively about these impressions in a memo I entitled, "I am Uneasy". As the observations and interviews went on however, those initial concerns fell away and a real picture emerged as he willingly answered my questions frankly and openly, sometimes exploring things that he had not thought about in those terms previously. I am grateful to him for his willingness to be open with me and thereby to allow me to see and understand the meaning service and leadership has for him.

### **A Service Mentality From Childhood**

I found Father Leonardo to be a thoughtful and articulate person who seems to be deeply committed to service in his leadership and who has given considerable long-term

thought to how it works. His dedication to service began very early in his life. "As a child I already had a strong feeling of wanting to teach, believe it or not. I thought that was how I could serve the Lord best." His commitment to this goal was tested when, during his eighth grade, his family immigrated to Canada and he was put back into Grade Four. His "dreams and hopes faded away" when, after he had worked himself back up to the grade eight class, his parents decided that he was to leave school and help on the family farm.

I always had this desire to teach and ... I really resented the fact that what I was going to be was sort of predetermined by my parents when I sensed very clearly that the Lord had something else in mind for me. When I look back on that, that is even more clear today than ever.

His reaction was immediate.

I sort of made up my mind that as soon as I was eighteen, I was going to leave home. And I did just that. The day after my eighteenth birthday, I left home, went to the city and found myself a job for thirty-five dollars a week. I was determined to make something of myself. In due time I worked myself up to be the manager of a very large clothing store where I had ten people working for me, but there was always this underlying desire to be of greater service somewhere within education.

He now sees God as having overcome their short-sightedness and having brought him into the original plan in a very good way. It happened when he was able to talk to his father about their choice of his vocation as he experienced it and, with his encouragement, he was able to enter the priesthood and then train as a teacher. He was assigned to the role of principal after two years in the classroom. His entire twenty-five year career in education has occurred within one school setting.

Father Leonardo sees the comfortable fit between himself and his work as a result of Divine intervention in his life. He takes a lot of pleasure in this process and while he works within it, there seems also to be a sense that he stands outside and watches it with

great excitement. This assurance now gives him energy and life. He sees life as planned by God from the "cradle to the grave," and he wants to share this view with the school community.

### **Service and Faith**

The notion of service is deeply tied into how Father Leonardo perceives of himself and his faith. In his words, his service "stems from [his] gratitude for what Christ has done for me." He sees three basic questions in life: 1) Who am I? 2) Why am I here? 3) To Whom do I belong? When he entered the teaching profession he wrote the following statement in his autobiography and he stands by it today - "I believe that I am saved to serve and that I can do this best by serving children." He says "there is something very humbling about that statement" but presents service as his motivation - serving students, serving parents, serving the entire educational enterprise.

Service comes through the leading of God in one's life. It's rooted in what you see your life's calling to be. To be of service to others. I personally see my life as being in service of God and service of other people. That is not necessarily conscientiously thought about every day but that is part of who I am and where I come from.

Father Leonardo takes for granted that to serve is the best for himself (but also for others generally). He says that while he is working, he tends to see things as merely a task that he delights in, but when he looks back later he sees his work as a service to the "schools whose goals and objectives I believe in." This would be true of things like a media package he designed to address some of the common misperceptions about the funding and populations of Catholic schools and the identity statement he drafted in his evenings and passed through various channels for the Catholic schools organization. When Father Leonardo gave his twenty-fifth and final principal's report, he took pleasure in recounting the change that had occurred during his time at the school. In his twenty-five

years at the school a great amount of growth has taken place in terms of student and staff numbers, resources, and relationships with both the government and the school division. Father Leonardo seems glad about how things have developed.

### **Unhurried**

Given his determination to serve I was interested in the fact that Father Leonardo never gave the appearance of being hurried or harried by his work. Father Leonardo says serving is not equivalent to burning out.

I never have allowed work to dominate me. I think I am always in control of my work and I guess that is part of my organizational skills. I plan things well and right now there is only one item on my desk that I have to take care of yet for next week ...

It has not always been like this. He says that at one time he was putting in eighty hours a week but that he has "gotten wiser over the years." He explains this development this way:

When I came here, this school had very little. It didn't have a teacher's handbook. It had a little handbook for parents, but it was very thin and it lacked what I felt was substance. So, I worked on some of those things ... I also taught 80 percent of the time, so most of my administrative detail was attended to in the evenings... I would spend the better part of my summer holidays here writing curriculum, doing this handbook and redoing it. I wrote up a nice thick teacher's handbook so the teachers knew what the expectations were of them. I enjoyed it, I really did. I didn't mind coming to school and working here. To me this was my life where I would give all I had.

That changed over the years. Probably about ten years ago, I began to feel that there is another life, that there was your family and that your life is short - back off. I began to feel that the school would run without being totally dependent on me,

and lo and behold, it did. I didn't spend my summer holidays here anymore. I think the feelings over the year became, "Don't be a slave to the school"... There are some very competent people here [who] have been able to pick-up a lot of slack.

It seems that he has sifted through things to find the kind of lifestyle he desires and then has worked to create it. He sees it as his role to keep the "big picture in focus" and for him this means that he keeps abreast of "the day-to-day activities from which you get a comprehensive idea of what is happening at the school level as well as the classroom level." It also means that he relates what happens at the school to the mission of the school. He continues to work on this.

### **Service at St. Joseph's School**

St. Joseph's School shares Father Leonardo's interest in service. When I observed a board committee meeting there, the desire to provide service was a motivation for their decisions. I heard about the value of introducing the students to positive service opportunities in the hope that the students will come to see themselves as generous people who can and want to help and serve. The school looks for positive service opportunities for its students in hopes of cultivating a service mentality in them.

Father Leonardo feels good about service being a given at his school and clearly articulates the expectation that everyone volunteer without apology. They have formed "a whole network of committees." He says:

There are extracurricular activities and we expect every teacher to get involved in some way. Right now, we're busy getting ready for a coffee house production next Thursday. One teacher who looks after the theatre arts program has devoted innumerable afternoons to the coaching and directing of the play that he's doing. Some other people have said they would chip in with some backdrops.

There is the recognition that everyone has a tendency to slip away from work but they continue to work making the volunteering fairly equitable even when it means pointing out to a particular individual that they have not volunteered as much as someone else. While this may make their service less voluntary in that they are, more or less, required to "volunteer," the school culture has a volunteering mentality and it has become an organizational theme. At the staff meeting I observed that there was a spirit of openness and co-operation among the teachers in that they would speak openly to one another and volunteer to work together. Father Leonardo explains how most think about it: "This is something over and above what we regularly do and we should be pleased to serve on this committee. This is how most people would look at it."

Father Leonardo's role in the Catholic school organization is one of facilitating the work of others. He takes the minutes, cares for all correspondence and circulates whatever materials he feels to be of interest. He keeps up to date on how government regulations apply to Catholic schools and how issues of funding and government relationships are being handled by Catholic schools in other provinces. Father Leonardo maintains a broad picture of their purposes and uses this information to the advantage of Catholic schools. They are confident in his representation on their behalf. Father Leonardo serves by taking such care of the mundane details that everyone else can do their jobs.

## Caring

### **Care for Students and Families**

Father Leonardo's purpose in his work at the school is summed up when he says, "I am here for the children." He says that "the bottom line should always be what's best for the student, not what's best for me." When they hired a janitor who shouted, "Get out of here! Or, "Hey, I just cleaned those steps. Don't walk on them." Father Leonardo would not allow him to come in until 5:30 [PM] when all the students were gone.

We're here for the children. You're not here for me or for yourselves even though that pay cheque is very important to you. We're here for the students. That's what the whole school centres around. It wasn't built for you; it was built for the children.

I perceived Father Leonardo as affecting student's lives for good. This gives him a great deal of fulfilment in his work.

I feel very fulfilled. I feel successful and I feel very fulfilled in what I am doing and what I have done. That is a very short definition but I think you are successful in something when you are satisfied and feel fulfilled.

Father Leonardo expresses his care for people by serving them. Father Leonardo was a friend even to the janitor who did not know how to deal with children because, in Father Leonardo's words, "He's a human being. He's troubled, he needs help. He needs a friend and he doesn't have many." Father Leonardo says, "It is always difficult for me to say 'No' because then I sense I am denying someone something." This came out especially clearly when he described the process of writing a letter to a mother whose special needs child could not be accommodated by the school. The letter was only two paragraphs long but required "numerous rewrites" because of its sensitive nature and negative message for the mother.

I sensed, in Father Leonardo, a caring concern for students and their families. After one of our conversations, Father Leonardo was en route to a Grade Six Special Interest Class in which he was teaching financial management. His purpose was to teach these students about take-home pay, credit card management, taxes, mortgages, debt management, and different income levels through simulated incomes. One student, the son of a wealthy family, had drawn the \$19,000 per year family income and was "ticked off" about it. Another was surprised at the tax bite into her family's \$78,000 income as an attorney. Father Leonardo recognizes that there are families in his school who have

difficulty with financial management, students who have bank cards in Grade Six, and he wants to help them bring that aspect of their lives under control.

Father Leonardo offers understanding to the students even when it is inconvenient. When spring run off had created a tempting lake on the playground, Father Leonardo asked his teachers to be kind about the children's "accidents". Father Leonardo acknowledged that children are attracted to water "like magnets". He wished them to be accepting of the nature of children, even though he also arranged for the removal of several boards that were exacerbating the problem and worked on getting the lake drained. He was open to patiently working within the situation.

Much of Father Leonardo's fulfilment comes from affecting student's lives by his teaching and being there when he is needed. Another side of Father Leonardo's caring is firmness. He said that the students should "know yes is yes and no is no and that is good for them to know." Father Leonardo is serious about education because he is convinced about its importance.

### Care for Staff

There is evidence that Father Leonardo cares about his staff as individuals and cultivates a caring community among them. "When a staff has a birthday, we draw a name out of the hat and on that day somebody will bring a cake for the staff." Father Leonardo appreciates the "nice times" when the staff sits around a table and visits.

When Father Leonardo gave notice that he would be resigning in fourteen months, there were several requests that he write policies for things like acceptable student language, student attendance, the para-professionals, and staff dress code. He feels that this may have happened because there was a desire to have some of these things secure and predictable during the transition phase. He wanted to address this and so wrote up several policies for the school in his last year there.

Father Leonardo looks for ways to build up the staff. When he saw that a teacher was not in a position to benefit from criticism, he devised a less confrontative approach that had the same final result. On the other hand, when he received a letter confirming his teachers' suspicions that a certain student was suffering from food allergies, he made a point of letting all the staff know they had been right. The outcome of Father Leonardo's work is a trust relationship between himself and his staff. He was thinking about trust when he said:

The fact that the majority of teachers will very readily come to me and share a frustration or ask a question about something that they were not too sure about, tells me that they feel very comfortable with me, that I am a good listener, and that I will try to provide them with answers. I sometimes will pick-up some of the dirty work with them as well, and sit in on meetings with parents, just to give them the assurance that I am with them.

Father Leonardo relates trust to accountability. He says, "I think the principal has to stand behind his staff, but staff also needs to know that the principal has to do a job, and that incompetence is just not acceptable as a norm to operate on [because] it's not fair to the children." To this end he has his teachers hand in monthly reports on what they are going to cover so that he can "check how that matches up with the curriculum, and an outline that they present to me in the fall."

Father Leonardo cares for the staff by listening to them either directly or through the team leaders. When he proposed teacher evaluations by the students it was on the premise that he "would like to sit down with the teacher and go over those, not just sit here by myself and make my own conclusions. We would do that together." He gives the impression that he really does want to hear the teachers and that what they say influences what he does and how he goes about it.

It seems that he supports the teachers and wants to give them as much freedom as possible within fiscal responsibility. Father Leonardo had a concern about the field trip budget that was getting low. He asked how many teachers had field trips planned. When there were a goodly number he simply said that they would have to dip into general school funds to cover these and asked the teachers not to "over do" it. It seems that he wants them to be able to go, but that he is asking them to voluntarily look for ways of spending less money.

This support also extends to unorthodox teaching practices and lifestyles. Father Leonardo talked about how he has come to accept a teacher who dresses and acts somewhat out of the ordinary because "his heart is in the right place." There is acceptance and freedom here that Father Leonardo offers to other people.

He is a little bit of a rebel perhaps, but one that I could live with because I knew his heart was in the right place. He's an artist and artists tend to look at things differently... I can respect that.

I also noted a mutuality in Father Leonardo's relationship with the staff in that he invites critique by talking about things that he knows are unacceptable to them. For example, he shared the story of when he had made an inquiry about a person's faith and was told that they believed in the Trinity. His response was, "So does the Devil!" When he shared the story, everyone laughed and said, "OH, OH, that was not NICE!" He explained that he had not been able to resist that line (and he obviously also could not resist sharing it) but that he had already straightened it out with the person involved. When Father Leonardo further stated that any teacher who did not accept a student evaluation was obviously afraid of something, the teacher representative on the committee pointed her finger at him and said, "That is the wrong place to start!" He accepted that from her. He seems to open himself to criticism even in fairly public circumstances and is not embarrassed or put off by it.

## **Father Leonardo Values Complete Honesty**

### **Full Disclosure**

It seemed to me that Father Leonardo wants people to understand and to act on the basis of that knowledge. Not only was he exceptionally open with me in his explanations, I also saw him being open with his staff and the school community. When a truant student missed so much school that she lost all her credits and therefore had no academic reason for coming to school, Father Leonardo told the staff what was happening, not because there was a decision required but because they were a part of the community.

Father Leonardo also told the teachers about how a new government regulation that allowed them to suspend students from the classroom for up to two days would be processed in their institution. Other principals I observed at the meeting for the leaders of Catholic schools saw it as a negative development for themselves and were hesitant to tell their teachers about it. Father Leonardo said, "I think they have a right to know. I think the easiest thing is to not say anything. Most teachers wouldn't even know what regulation comes across, but I think it's best to be above-board with them." Father Leonardo communicates a policy of full disclosure that implies participation in community and a shared responsibility for one another.

He values openness because it "removes a lot of speculation and rumours" and builds trust and confidence that then lubricates all the interactions at the school. When I asked how he has come to be so open, he explained, "I think that's always been me. I think that's part of my personality." He regrets that "there are certain things, of course, I cannot reveal to the staff, but what they should know, I think they have a right to know and they ought to know. In that sense, yes I'm very open with them."

Part of his openness is not being afraid to be quite directive in his leadership. He sees that there are issues for discussion and issues for direction. He felt that he did not have to consult his staff about a certain policy statement because it was "too insignificant

and it was something that we have talked about already before many, many times." He does not think he needs to explain something of which they are already fully aware.

One of the big headaches that we have had is that everyone travelled through here to the staff room which used to be right next door. It was like nothing had changed; everybody was kind of marching through here with their cups of coffee and what have you. I just put out a directive this morning that this corridor is not to be used by staff as a short cut to other areas of the school. They are to use the main hallways or go through the gym... I know it will be talked about, "Father Leonardo doesn't want anybody walking through and so on." I don't, because it is too distracting.

I saw Father Leonardo as also prepared for the staff to be angry with him over isolated issues and for periods of time. He says it is a natural reaction. When he introduced a discussion on a dress code for staff it became a "hot topic" in the staff room. Father Leonardo explains that "it was a storm that passed by very quickly" and that "principals have to expect that to happen from time to time." Father Leonardo sees this kind of process as a normal part of leadership and rides it out with confidence. When a certain mother refused to have her child served by a particular paraprofessional because she had applied for and been refused that position at the school, Father Leonardo said, "She has to swallow her pride. I was not prepared to assign another paraprofessional because of that and I haven't." When the board bungled a personnel case, he is determined that they will need to acknowledge their error and say "Yes, we goofed" even if that is very difficult.

He acknowledges that he occasionally becomes angry with them and that, after taking "a day or two to sort out how I will want to approach it in my own mind" he will initiate a conversation in which the goal is resolution of the conflict. He sees apologizing and forgiveness as an important part of living with one another on a day to day basis.

Father Leonardo seemed willing to deal with human failings as they arise. He challenged the teacher who had begun prioritizing extra-curricular activities over the academic work.

I think he felt very badly about that, not in terms of having been caught but also in terms that I made a report up on that and put it in his file for one year. I was very open about it and said, "This is going to be in file for one year and you can request removal of that from the new principal a year from now." He signed it. He was somewhat reluctant to sign it, but I felt we needed to keep a record on file and it should be a wake-up call for him that, "You're here to do a teaching job. All other becomes extracurricular."

Father Leonardo sets limits and holds people to those expecting that they will come around to his view of the situation given some time. He wants the staff, rather than considering "How is this going to effect me – negatively or positively?" to share his commitment to the children. It is to this end that he holds them accountable and is accountable to the board himself. He and the staff serve a common purpose. Taking people to task is part of his role and he will do it.

I think today he will say, 'You were right to say what you said.' In fact, he acknowledged that actually very quickly. 'You were right what you said. First things first.' He's quite enthused about it now.

Father Leonardo does not back away from difficulties but takes "the bull by the horns" to do whatever needs doing. Within that process, however, he is careful to provide support, prepare meticulous documentation, provide many opportunities for remedying the situation, and involve a group decision making process. When a teacher needed to be told that her contract would not be renewed after a couple of years of attempting to work things out, Father Leonardo put a substitute in place so that she did not have to return to her classroom that afternoon. He also ensured that there was someone with her who could

spend time talking to her and notified the staff of the situation so that they could also be sensitive to this teacher's needs.

In situations where some consequences are necessary, Father Leonardo would like to see those occur "right then and there" while the whole issue is clear in everyone's thinking. "But then," he says, "we forgive, we forget, and carry on." After the consequences, there is forgiveness and Father Leonardo will make every effort to remain in contact, even when that demands walking "a thin line" because the person has been rejected by the school community. Of one situation he said, "He and I will remain good friends. It's been very painful along the way and this is not how I want it to end."

When involved in a long-term controversy Father Leonardo refuses to draw up battle lines and if the other side insists on setting up an opposing camp, he will seek out ways to build bridges even though he will, however politely and respectfully, "set the record straight". There was the example of the agency that had traditionally opposed the Catholic schools organization and had recently published some information about them that was untrue. Father Leonardo's approach was to take issue with it privately in a telephone conversation. He also arranged to take the editor out to lunch and then used that as an opportunity to request a lunch with their president. While he was aware of their differences and possible political motives, he was working to establish dialogue. He also builds bridges by inviting political leaders to his school so they know just what happens there. He attempts to be fair, to be understanding, to leave the door to negotiation open and not to alienate even when the other seems to do that.

#### Relationship to the Founding Church

I also saw Father Leonardo's honesty in his assessment of the relationship between the school and its founding church. He explained that even though St. Joseph's School was originally founded by parents of Catholic origin, at present only forty percent of its students are from that church and it has a diverse staff. Moreover, St. Joseph's School is

parentally rather than church controlled and the board has ultimate responsibility for the school. Father Leonardo seemed adamant about the Christian nature of the school. "This is a Catholic school but everybody has to be treated equal here. Whether they go to an Alliance Church or whether they go to a Reformed Church or whether they go to a Mennonite or a Lutheran Church, shouldn't make any difference."

He says, however, that the reality is a little different. He knows that because the board is afraid of offending the founding people and losing their financial support, they retain the freedom to make exceptions for families who have been associated with the school for a long time but who do not conform to the school payment and attendance policies. Father Leonardo disagrees with these exceptions and, even though he is not involved in finances, he takes whatever opportunities arise to point this out to board members.

We talked quite a lot about the relationship between the school and the founding church. They still identify with the school as important and they continue to raise special funds to help the families who have difficulty with the modest tuition. In fact, he said that when grandparents see their grandchildren graduating from the school, they see in that an expression of God's faithfulness to them throughout the generations. The commitment of the founding people to the school outlasts their children's involvement with it and they form the informal core group. The constitution states that sixty percent of the board members are to be founding church members but Father Leonardo says that it is becoming more and more difficult to find those members.

By contrast, families from other denominations tend to be education consumers who go through the "school routine" while their children are at the school but then leave the school behind. They are less incorporated into the informal network at the school. Change is inevitable and their new principal is not of Catholic background and many of the teachers have not trained at Catholic colleges. Father Leonardo sees that what is offered in the

classroom is no longer as "pure" as it once was. My impression is that Father Leonardo feels that it is unfair for the board to be sixty percent Catholic while the student population is only forty percent Catholic and the teachers are very diverse because it is a parentally operated school rather than a church operated school.

### **Leadership by Vision and Persuasion**

Father Leonardo describes himself as a visionary who likes to pursue his visions. "I tend to be a bit of a visionary, I think. I see something down at the end of the road and then I like to go after it." He identifies things that would serve people's interests, articulates them, finds ways to accomplish them and to bring people on board. "So yes, I see opportunities of service and I think I have the ability to see what that can be and also get people involved to do those things." He has numerous ideas on things that he would like to do for Catholic schools. When the government instituted school plans, Father Leonardo recognized them as "a very intensive and extensive process" with which smaller schools might have difficulty. As a result Father Leonardo suggested that a seminar for the principals be set up with someone from the Department of Education to distribute material. He did this because he "felt this would be great service for our principals and our schools." Other ideas range from putting out a newsletter for Catholic school teachers to providing people with specific expertise to work along side teachers from smaller schools to help them deal with specific challenges. Father Leonardo is looking for ways to support Catholic schools and place quality education within their reach.

### **Sharing the Vision**

I asked him a lot of questions about how he pursues his visions for service. I found that it frequently involves building a foundation by the dissemination of information and communication to bring people of similar interests in contact with one another. I saw Father Leonardo as interested in a deep and steady kind of development rather than a faster but more superficial type. An example might be his idea of forming a support group for

teachers in Catholic schools because of the common ground they would have. Rather than setting out to establish such an organization directly, he proposed "a quarterly newsletter which is not now available for teachers in Catholic schools." He feels that this is feasible because he has already identified one principal who is very eager to help him with this. He is hopeful that "from that, bigger things may happen." I was interested in the fact that he would proceed only after receiving support from another person. I did not see Father Leonardo as one to push things that others are not ready to buy into.

Once the ground work of information is in place, he watches for the development of "bigger things" in the thinking of other people. Father Leonardo listens for indications that others are really ready to commit themselves to an innovation. He feels that he cannot sense everything that needs doing but depends on others to make him aware of things that are lacking. When this comes he will assist them in moving ahead or he may become personally involved working together with them.

An example of this might be the formulation of the appropriate language policy for his school. When the original request for it came, he did not pick it up for a year or so. He explained that he had not known what to do with it. It needed time to stew in his mind as he is "not one to rush into things." When it came up again, he first initiated a discussion about it with a board committee that is concerned with "the well-being of the staff and the students" and took notes on that discussion. Father Leonardo uses this group of parents, board members, and teachers as a safe place to work on and test ideas because it is representative of the larger setting in which the school operates. He used their responses to formulate a draft that he circulated to the staff. After the staff responses were also incorporated into his draft it was circulated to the committee once again. From there it went to the entire school community before it was adopted by the board as policy. Father Leonardo set down his ideas, but an extensive process of interacting with and being influenced by all affected groups followed before it became an official policy of the school.

## **Persuasion**

Father Leonardo sees the need for something and works by persuasion to get others to see the wisdom of it and only when that is accomplished does it become instituted. In the negotiation of a government funding agreement for the Catholic schools, pursuing his vision involved persuasion. He felt very strongly that some type of a clause to the effect "that Catholic Christian schools should never be forced to teach a part of the curriculum that would be contrary to the religious beliefs or Christian philosophical perspectives or the values of the community" should be included. Although his two colleagues in the negotiation did not feel as strongly, he won them over and persuaded the government negotiators of the value of his position. As a result, the regulations state

that we are expected to follow the [provincially] prescribed curriculum but that exceptions will be given to anything that might be in conflict with the values and religious convictions of the school and that permission to not to teach something may be requested from the Minister.

Sometimes persuasion takes a considerable amount of time. When Father Leonardo asked the teachers to extend their teaching day by ten minutes so that their students could go to another school for a certain class, he sensed there was a bit of reluctance because he was asking for their time. Father Leonardo felt that his request was reasonable but the teachers who had to give the time were not persuaded, so rather than work against them, he gave in for a year.

I could consult with them but I was unable to persuade them. They had to experience it. Now they are persuaded. I did not force it.... I have never been one to say, "Do as I say." I always hope that by talking it out with them they will realize that what I am trying to sell to them has merit. But if I cannot sell them, I am not going to twist their arms. They persuaded themselves to give the extra ten minutes a day because they could see that it wasn't working.

While Father Leonardo seems prepared to persuade, he seems reluctant to oppose anyone directly. When he joined the Catholic schools organization, it was, in his estimation, a loosely run organization that was dominated by one very strong individual who was the president. Although Father Leonardo admired the president for what he was, he saw him as "very much in control in that what he said, sort of went." Rather than attacking the president directly, Father Leonardo worked with the group and eventually there were bylaws passed to prevent any one individual from dominating the president's chair. This method allowed the organization to continue to benefit from the extensive experience and dedication of the former president and avoided the rancour that would have hurt both the person and the organization.

Father Leonardo depends on persuasion and sees himself "as being able to persuade people" even though he is "not always sure how persuasive" he is. He also does not force things. He sees himself as a consultative type of leader rather than a directive one who works for consensus by dialogue in which he attempts to make others see the wisdom of what he is doing and to be influenced by their points of view. He feels that if there is consensus, there will also be ownership of the results.

I was interested in this combination of persuasion rather than manipulation or coercion, because it falls in line with Greenleaf's prescription for leadership and I asked him how he had come to this position. He explained that when he started he "acted and was the boss" and "called the shots." At times he would decide things "to the dissatisfaction of the others." He feels that the change came very gradually and that he was influenced by several factors not the least of which was the realization that he needed to work together with rather than against his staff.

I do know that part of me sometimes would say, "Well whether they like it or not, this is the way I want to do it" but at the same time I would feel that I'd better get

them on my side, so I will consult them and make them see the wisdom of doing what we're doing or what I would like to do.

When he considers this change, he recognizes that he also had a growing awareness that "teachers are different than they were fifteen years ago" and that he may have been influenced by the practices and attitudes of board members who dealt with personnel in large companies. In addition he feels that having been in the classroom for eighty percent of his time when he first came to his school may have opened his eyes to the potential of working with the staff in a collaborative way. "Being back in the classroom and being one of the group may have been a contributing factor." He says. "It wasn't a conscious decision. I think it just evolved with the changing environment that we live in the eighties and certainly in the nineties."

He does not seem impatient with this process but I asked him whether he ever feels that collaboration takes too much time.

Whether it takes a long time, I don't know. It has to be sort of digested - often they will talk about it amongst themselves before they come up with an answer. I suppose it does. It's probably easier to say, "Listen, I want you out there two minutes before the bell rings, so that when the children come out at recess time, you are there. I don't want you thirty seconds late; I want you out there." Now the approach is, "How can we be sure that you are out there when you're supposed to be out there? Give me some ideas."

He recognizes that "it does take more time, but in today's environment, it's the approach you have to take. There's no room for dictatorship in the school. A dictatorial attitude from principals is just not acceptable." He sees it as "more effective in the long run, there's no doubt about that." He chuckles as he recalls his work with his staff. "I think I have a very good team to work with and I don't think I have many enemies on staff."

He accepts that others will have different views and uses those views to temper his own. When there is disagreement about something he will look for opportunities to talk about it in light of their common commitment to the children, challenging them to "change my mind." He avoids digging in on his position because he says "it doesn't accomplish anything."

Sometimes I'll say, "You know, you make some good points. Why don't we, at the next staff meeting, get some more input on this." My mind has been changed by other people's ideas who in the end had better ideas than I initially had. I'm very open to that. If you can prove to me... Or I'll say, "Go to the team leaders"; let the team leaders discuss it with their primary group, and the intermediary group. Let's talk about it and report back to me.

Father Leonardo will not simply push something through, even if that means that it does not happen at all. He proposed a bylaw "that one cannot serve as a Board member when the spouse is in the employ of the school, or vice versa, the spouse cannot become an employee of the school. That has not been passed yet and I see the logistics of that." When it did not pass because some others felt that it would only make the recruitment of board members more difficult, Father Leonardo was content to wait and rethink his position. He sees this as a part of his expression of service within his leadership.

### **Father Leonardo Gives Up Power and Control**

Father Leonardo does not see service and power or control as being against each other but he sees that they "meld very well together." He feels that he probably exercises "a great deal more service than of power" because in the "consultative process" that he likes "to operate under, one does not have to exercise a great deal of power" in the sense that "I am the power, so you'd better do as I say." He summed up his feelings on power when he said, "I like to think that together we make up the power."

Our conversation returned to his earlier statement: "I believe that I am saved to serve and that I can do this best by serving children." Father Leonardo feels that there is something very humbling about that statement. It certainly does not speak of power, it merely speaks of serving and I think Christ has been the best example for me of what it means to be a servant. I refer to him as the suffering servant.

While he sees himself as "a servant to the children" he also recognizes that as principal he is given some power in terms of safety rules and curriculum requirements.

I also see myself as having been mandated by the board to manage the facility which is here on behalf of the children. People and staff members are accountable to me because I am accountable to assure the Board that what's happening here is within my mandate so that they can report back to the parents and say, "The school is running well." The whole line of accountability speaks of that.

Initially, I was somewhat hesitant about Father Leonardo's assertion that he did not want control, but over the course of several observations and interviews I became convinced that this was indeed the case. He seems to be seeking to build a group of people who can work together toward a shared goal. I asked him a lot of questions about how this works out in his school and the Catholic schools organization. I found that his view of the parents and the board as having the ultimate responsibility for the school coupled with an active committee structure had the effect of placing the power and control in the hands of others. I found that while Father Leonardo has an important role to play, he respects the limitations of his role and does not usurp the control and responsibility of the others. This became a most interesting study for me.

### **Parentally Operated**

I observed that there were many people who had parts to play and that they were both willing and able to do those things for the school. They could perform their tasks without reference to Father Leonardo and he made no effort to be included or consulted.

Father Leonardo seems very clear about the organization of the school and his role in connection to that of the board and, for that matter, all the other people who work or have some role at the school. Father Leonardo wants everyone to have a meaningful place and to fulfil that place with freedom.

This is a parentally-operated school and not a principal-operated school. I think I need to keep in focus that things can't all be done and shouldn't all be done and driven by the principal... If you want to do everything, you're going to get yourself in trouble because you usurp the role of the school board... You can also get yourself in trouble by taking on everything that comes along and then finding that you're unable to do everything that you take on. People hold you accountable, and when you can't deliver, then they say, "We don't need a principal like this."

He does not want to usurp anyone's place and to that end, he tries "to work very much out of the task description that has been given" to him and "not to cross paths" into other people's areas. He thinks that "if you know what is expected of you and you do that, it can be very, very successful for you."

#### Ultimate Responsibility for the School!

When he says that the school is parentally operated he means that he sees the parents and the board rather than himself as being ultimately responsible for the school.

The ultimate control, however, lies with the school board which has been elected by the parents to oversee the affairs of the school on their behalf. I think I am very keenly aware that it is the board to whom I am responsible and that the board is responsible to the membership.

He does however, also recognize that he has a measure of control as well in that the board depends on him for insight into what is happening and also to implement the decisions they make. He explains it this way:

I am a manager in essence and I am doing the board's work on their behalf because they can't be here. In that sense I am in control on their behalf but they are the controlling body of everything that really takes place, financially, educationally.

I guess I am in a sense very much in control. I am the manager of this facility, I am the one who implements policies that the board and boards past have passed and I am also the educational leader who is supposedly an expert on matters educational. I do believe that, in my advisory capacity at the board of directors, I am looked to from the board as well as from the committee to provide the answers to the questions they might ask.

He, however, says that sometimes his "advice is sought and not accepted, other times, my two cents worth seems to be very valuable to them and it is followed up" and is quite content to have the board say "no" to him. "Yes, they can say "no" to me and I respect that." They do say no to him. For example, he has long felt that the fees should have been raised incrementally each year but, [he gestures] he explained his point of view, they did not make gradual increments, and now they, not he, will have to live with the results. There are times when his advice is not accepted.

#### Accepts Errors

Father Leonardo does his best to make things work smoothly while leaving the board in charge. For example, he was left to deal with an unpleasant staffing problem even though he had foreseen it and suggested a different path "because we have an interview committee and the committee carries the vote." He also allowed the board chair to make errors in judgement for which he then had to mend fences. It came out most clearly in a situation that arose when a serious misjudgement on the part of a teacher initially came to Father Leonardo's attention. Realizing the seriousness with which this action was regarded by the community, Father Leonardo discussed it with the board chair.

The chair and I discussed it and I suggested to the chair that we take this to the board because, I said, "If we don't and try to cover it up, someday the roof will cave in on us." There were a few people who were aware of it and I was afraid that this would eventually spread through the community. The chair, in his wisdom, decided that he was not going to do this. I felt that I had no right to insist that he do, but I did reiterate that there could be consequences down the road.

In allowing the chair to make a decision against his advice, Father Leonardo warned the chair, and then left it. That was five years ago but apparently, "the roof did cave in" and not only is the current community increasingly unhappy about the teacher's continued presence at the school, the board is also irate because the information was kept from them initially. When the current board could not come to agreement on how to handle the issue, a committee was formed but they bungled it so badly and the climate became so sour that the teacher decided to resign. As this was a teacher whom Father Leonardo valued highly he explained his reaction to his suspicion of a personal vendetta this way:

I decided not to go to that one board meeting (which I now regret) because I just didn't know how I would be able to contain myself emotionally and I didn't want to leave on a sour note... It was such an emotional issue for me. Actually, behind the scenes, I've done everything to bring this to a resolution. I've pleaded with the teacher to allow me to find a mediator so I can bring both parties together. She declined that. Now, after the fact, we will try to get both parties together because there has to be reconciliation and there has to be an admission from the board, "We handled this thing terribly."

Father Leonardo had very strong feelings about the board's mishandling of this issue and pleaded (passionately, I think) with both sides to find a resolution. He allowed the teacher to refuse his request for a mediator but remains convinced that "there has to be reconciliation" and now he has arranged for a "mediator who will try to bridge some of the

chasms that are there." Father Leonardo would have liked to be able to explain the board's point of view to the teachers to counteract some of the rancour that this incident has caused but he has not because he says, "I don't think I can say or speak for the board. I have to know my place." He says he is hoping that this will come out through the mediator and that "by the time school starts in August again, that this will have come to an amicable conclusion for everybody."

One may or may not agree with the choices that Father Leonardo made, but his position in regard to the board being ultimately responsible is very clear. Father Leonardo, himself, is very certain about what the problem is and who is at fault. He allows people to make mistakes but he does not accept their blame. I also see here an attitude to moral dilemmas as human problems that need to be solved, not by intellectual puzzling that results in abstract principles of ultimate rights and wrongs, but in living them through with the individuals involved (Noddings 96).

### **Committees**

To facilitate the involvement of as many people as possible, Father Leonardo has set up a network of committees to assist the school board, to plan extra-curricular events that enrich the school's academic program and to do the work of the Catholic schools organization. The board is facilitated by a number of committees who do the groundwork and make recommendations for board decisions.

The model works fairly well in terms of committees being the arms and legs of a school board as the school board doesn't have to do committee work but acts on the recommendations the committees make with good, solid grounds.

Father Leonardo's job, then, is to facilitate the work of others by the provision of information, the co-ordination of efforts, the recruitment of committee members and so on. Father Leonardo idealizes an organization in which everyone works and he seems quite

prepared for the giving up of control involved in this arrangement. He talked about how the committees work in the Catholic schools organization.

Yes, you can't just be there once a month. We want to them be involved almost on a monthly or a bimonthly basis with a committee as well. To me, that makes the organization thrive when everybody does their share... I think setting up all the various committees; the annual conference committee, the education committee and a public relations committee ... were put into place more less by my insistence that, "For us to function well we need good arms and legs on the body and we shouldn't expect one person to do it all but that we should have as many people as possible working together to make it work." These committees work together very well.

Father Leonardo likes a system in which everything has a place, a proper way of being dealt with, and everyone knows their place clearly. He thinks it is important to spell out exactly what the mandate of each committee is and to hold the committees accountable to report on that. He explained that "out of crises and frustrations, policy is developed." When he found that a number of last minute details for the school graduation were "dumped" on his desk, he dealt with the situation as best possible. However, he also wrote those things into the responsibilities of the graduation committee so that this would be better handled in the future. When he realized that many of the committees in the Catholic school organization were working without adequate job descriptions, he prioritized it in his planning.

What strikes me now is that we have never spelled out the precise mandate for any of these committees and that's something that I will probably work on this year. It's something that needs to be done... Unless that's there, our committees can easily flounder if the leadership is somewhat weak.

Father Leonardo's plan for maintaining the committee structures and accountability includes every committee knowing precisely what they are to do, either because it is spelled

out in the by-laws or they make a statement to that effect early in their term. It also includes reporting on their progress in fulfilling that mandate to the overall board regularly and preparing motions for the board. Father Leonardo has similar expectations of the teachers in their responsibilities at the school in that the committees work independently and then report to the staff meeting about what they are doing so they can co-ordinate activities and ask for help as needed.

### Hands off Position

When I asked Father Leonardo how he keeps himself from interfering with the work of the committees he gave me three different ways in which he does this. The first was that he has learned to expect only a reasonable standard that they can attain without his intervention. He is not looking for perfection, merely for effort and appropriate standards.

It might have been more so in my earlier years as principal where I tended to be a bit of a perfectionist and everything had to be just right. I've gotten away from that completely; everything can't be just 100 percent right and we have to live with errors that happen during a program. I'm quite content with that. I think it's quite natural to see such development.

The second way that Father Leonardo keeps from doing other people's work is by trusting the people who volunteer to carry through and to have good judgement in their choices. He knows the people he is working with and while he may not always understand their choices, he trusts them as individual people and therefore leaves them alone.

I take a very hands-off position. I would check. For example, with the Christmas program I will check how things are going with the music director. Do the kids know the words by now? I just get a bit of feedback of what's happening and I've never been disappointed really. When the final product was presented, it was very, very good. I have to trust the people who volunteer to be on the committee that they also will carry their weight and make sure that it is a very presentable program.

Not surprisingly, Father Leonardo's desire to trust his staff is reflected in the kind of people with whom he prefers to work. He likes people who are "always brimful with ideas and enthusiasm," and who will initiate things that are useful and bring higher profile to the school.

There has to be a trust relationship between principal and staff and vice versa. I have to be able to trust that they will do a good job in the classroom because I can't be there everyday to check up on them.

The third way that Father Leonardo keeps from doing the work of others is by refusing to impose his personal biases on to other people.

I had some questions about the play initially... It's not one that I would have chosen. It's not one that really appeals to me, but the director thinks that it's just great and it will be well received. I'll trust her good judgement in that... It may be a personal bias I have against that type of play and I can't let a personal bias stop her from doing what she thinks is going to be wonderful. The kids enjoy doing it, she says.

His "hands off" position means that he depends on persuasion to accomplish things. It gives him the time to allow persuasion to work.

#### Does not want Control or Dependency

He will offer some help to committees in their work. For example, when the board was working on finding a successor for him, Father Leonardo wanted to remain out of the process and stayed away, but he did compose a list of fifty questions based on his experience in interviewing. His motives in writing the questions were twofold; he wanted good questions to be asked and thereby to contribute to the process and he felt that this list of questions could be offered to other Catholic schools when they faced a similar situation. He sent these questions to the people involved saying that he wanted them to have them but

that he would not be hurt if they chose not to use them. In this way he sees himself as having served the process without controlling it.

It seems that while he will pass along ideas to a committee, he has chosen to spread himself and his commitments around so that no one organization becomes unduly dependent upon him. He clearly states that he does not want to become the sole driving force of anything. He has carried this out both at the school and in the Catholic schools organization by limiting the committees he is active on.

When I came to [this school], I made a commitment to myself that I was only going to serve on the Board and on the Educational Committee, and beyond that, I really did not want to serve on any committees because I did not want to give up all my evenings, and secondly, I did not want to give the idea that nothing will go well without me. That's the long and short of it.

He expressed his feelings about the Catholic school organization this way:

I am not on the Membership Committee or on the Public Relations Committee, although I have a few ideas for that committee which I can pass on. I would again feel that if I was on that committee, I'd probably become the driving force and I don't want to feel that that's the way it should be.

#### The Vision/Mission Statement for the School

His determination to operate on this basis came out particularly clearly in connection with a committee that was struck to work on a vision/mission statement for the school. This was a situation in which his decision to limit his committee involvement has resulted in tremendous disappointment in the fact that the vision/mission statement for the school has floundered and not been completed before his retirement. He began to talk about the need for a vision and a mission statement as long as five years ago. "We need to know who we are, why we are, and where we're going with that." He still feels passionate about it.

It is my view that unless you have a clear focus on where you are going as a school, you don't quite have the entire picture, the big view in mind. Your curriculum has to fit very clearly into that mission and the teachers have to really feel plugged into that mission, and it's just not there. I think that's a weakness in this school yet and it's not for lack of trying; it's just that the powers that be somehow don't see the urgent need for that kind of thing.

Father Leonardo sees "the powers that be" as other than himself. Although they frustrate him because they lack the view that the school needs a vision statement, he has decided to work within that structure. He laid the groundwork for the process carefully. After years of persuasion at the board level and discussing the concept in detail with one teacher, they used a professional development day to introduce it to the school staff. Father Leonardo says, "We had a wonderful time working through some of the questions, looking at the weaknesses, the strengths, where we would like to be five years from now, and so on." It was then discussed by a board committee and a recommendation made to the board, "Yes, we should develop a vision and a mission statement for the school."

At this point an ad hoc committee was appointed to develop the statement but Father Leonardo explains that it floundered.

I chose not to be on that committee. That committee has never met. It's sort of fallen apart as people's appointments expired, and another committee chair was appointed. They've been treading water the entire year.

In an attempt "to keep the whole thing alive" Father Leonardo developed what he thought was "a very nice mission statement" that he then passed over to the committee. They, however, "decided to just let it rest" and to first get feedback from parents through a questionnaire. It seems that the committee was free to make a decision to consult the membership even after Father Leonardo went to the trouble of developing a vision statement and handing it over to them. Father Leonardo recognizes that hearing from the

"grassroots" is important but he also recognizes this as yet another delay and fears that the vision/mission statement may never happen because other people do not see its importance.

### Conclusion

I am grateful for Father Leonardo's contribution to my research because he represents servant leadership that grows out of a religious commitment. As such he represents a way of life that Christianity not only sanctions but also commands. Father Leonardo is a positive example of the fruit of that model over a life time in an educational setting. This is what he has verbally presented to me and how he sees himself. I found him to be a thoughtful person who was willing to explore uncharted ideas with me in-depth and, in doing so, to articulate his practice so that I could better understand.

Father Leonardo was interested in more than simply modelling servant leadership within his organization. He wanted to see it institutionalized throughout the organizations because he saw it as something he wanted everyone to experience. Father Leonardo's school was in tune with him in emphasizing service and looking for ways to promote this among the staff and the students. It was the nature of his entire milieu in which the more and the less able served one another.

## **Chapter Seven - BETTY MACNEIL**

### **Who is Betty MacNeil?**

I initially heard about Betty<sup>5</sup> during my undergraduate days at the university; she performed two piano music with her husband Stanley who was one of my music professors. She frequently attended our social events but spent her days taking care of their three children. Although Betty was originally from Toronto, she and Stanley had moved to our city from Vancouver where they met during their undergraduate music studies.

During our first interview she explained how she had rapidly tired of housework and began teaching "just a little bit" so that she could pay someone to come in to do her house cleaning. From that beginning Betty has become one of our leading piano instructors and has numerous award-winning students.

She is now a grandmother but she continues to teach piano and for the last nine years, has been the half-time co-ordinator of the Maritime Music Conservatory. More recently I have also become active within the musical community and have heard about and observed Betty in several contexts.

### **The Premier Music Conservatory**

Approximately ten years ago two similar music institutions were founded in order to enrich music education through teachers co-operating together; the centrally located Music School was first and the university affiliated Music Conservatory came one year

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<sup>5</sup>I remind the reader that this is not her real name and that all names of people, places, ethnic groups and organizations in reference to Betty have been changed.

later. The Music School held the opinion that to be associated with the university was to be vulnerable to the whims of changing directors and administrators so after some initial discussions aimed at co-operation, the two institutions became competitors for a large, but finite, number of music students. The two institutions offer fairly similar programs.

Betty taught at both the Music School and the Conservatory when they opened. While the Music School was going well, the Conservatory ran into severe difficulties with the university administration during its first year of operation and seemed doomed to fail. Its co-ordinator resigned and the teachers were disgruntled because they had never been paid. At this point Betty, who had a knowledge of the university music faculty in that her husband Stanley and was comfortable in the university setting, was called in to rescue it.

Betty recognized the difficulty of the task but also saw potential in that the facilities were essentially without cost to the Conservatory if the university's administration could be navigated and the teachers paid regularly. Free facilities meant money for student enrichment, so Betty persuaded the teachers to try again, recruited students and persisted with the university administration. Her work has paid off and at present the Conservatory is well established with well over 1500 students. Betty co-ordinates the Conservatory (half-time) and teaches students within the Conservatory and the university.

The Conservatory offers private lessons for every conceivable instrument and group lessons for adults and children in piano and guitar. Young children can take Kindermusik, Music for Children or Suzuki. Particular needs are addressed through their Music Therapy and Special Needs programs. Student interests are reflected in the Jazz Improvisation, Musical Theatre, Choir School, Speech Arts, Composition, and Enrichment programs. In summer they offer Theory Classes and a Music and Drama Camp.

Betty has many ideas on things the conservatory can do. Currently she is considering a special program to introduce children who want to enjoy music but not study

it seriously. She would be able to incorporate the services of both the Fine Arts and Physical Education faculties to supplement the "fun" aspect of this program. Betty also continues to seek for a way to provide music instruction to children whose families cannot afford either instruments or lessons. She participated in such a program during her university training but so far, has not been able to do it through the Conservatory.

### **Betty Places Service Ahead of Self-Interest**

There is ample evidence that Betty places service ahead of self interest and practices a measure of self denial. The evidence I present here has to do with her hours, her attitude toward money and her personal safety.

#### **Betty's Hours**

Most immediately observable are her extremely long work hours. I asked her about a typical day in order to assess just how much she works and how she thinks about it. I found that she generally arrives at work by 10 or 10:30 AM and as her co-ordinator position is half time, she is meticulous about giving four hours to the administrative work of the Conservatory. These four hours are interspersed with the piano lessons she teaches students from the university music faculty and the Conservatory until approximately 10 or 10:30 at night. She then goes home, visits with her husband for about one hour before practising from 11:30 PM until 1 AM. On good days she gets about seven hours of sleep before starting over again in the morning.

Her work also spills over into Saturdays and Sundays. The weekend I did my first observation, Betty casually mentioned that on the Sunday she had had a family birthday party and at least two students into her house, one to "do" a concerto. My rough estimate is that "doing" a concerto could take two to three hours because this would not simply be a once over and finished, but a reworking and discussing and trying things out together. This means that after working a full week previously, and spending 1-11 PM Saturday on a masterclass and its related obligations, she worked for much of Sunday. When I spoke to

her on Monday morning she saw it as her chance to do lots because everyone else was at home and the faculty was supposed to be closed.

I asked just what she does during the four hours each day that she gives to the Conservatory. The formidable list included things like phonecalls, student placement, problem solving, recital and workshop programming, ensuring pianos are tuned, and budget planning.

There are a million things. All those things... Whatever has to be done to deal with all these students, and all these parents, and all these teachers and problems in classes.... The last thing I did last week was putting together 36 chamber groups. I got coaches for those, organized them and got the music. [laughs] I can get on with things like that. Coming soon will be the orchestra workshop. That means that I have to get the orchestral music all straightened out so the orchestra will have all the things they need to work with. All those kinds of things come all the time.

If the work does not fit into the day time, Betty does it at night so everything can run smoothly in the morning. She seemed unwilling to talk about her extra hours but diverted the conversation into how bad it used to be and how much better it is now. She gives no recognition to the fact that others work many less hours in a less pressured time frame than she. When I called the work that she did on the weekends unpaid, volunteer, she said,

Well, the Saturday and Sunday are all extra things but there is so much that is extra. There was a time when I was here at three in the morning all the time. I was always here at three in the morning. It got to be funny with the police. The police used to come in and say, "Are you here again? Your husband will never believe us!" [laughs heartily]

It would appear to be in Betty's self-interest to work less but there is no observable evidence for this. She always appears rested and enthusiastic about the things she is

doing. She has an indomitable spirit and, rather than looking for ways to slow down, she is constantly seeking out new projects. She appears to enjoy a robust constitution that flourishes in her work.

### **Betty and Money**

Betty's placement of service ahead of self interest is also evident in her lack of concern about money for herself. While this may be all right for her life situation, she recognizes that the other teachers really need their lesson fees and goes to considerable lengths to see that her teachers get paid.

### **Betty's Pay**

Betty was a teacher at the Conservatory during its first year when it was being co-ordinated by someone else. Through a lack of proper planning and support to the person co-ordinating it, the teachers at the Conservatory, one of whom was Betty, were never paid for the lessons they gave. She said, "We never got paid. I never really worried about it. I knew, eventually, I would get paid and it did not really bother me."

She continues not to bother herself about getting paid for everything she does. When I observed that she was not getting paid for the things she did on the weekend she said, "Oh no. Well no, I just have a salary. It just goes in. It is just part of my job. I just consider it as part of the business of running the Conservatory. Just what I have to do."

I confirmed that it comes to more than the twenty hours a week for which she gets paid. "Oh, yes, OH YES! ALWAYS. There is never a week that is twenty, ever. No, that is impossible. No!" She allows this to continue and does not seem to spend any time or inward energy on it. She says, "It [her salary] is not very high, but at the same time it is what I feel is just and right." Betty presents herself as having thought about what she should be paid and come to some decision.

### The Teacher's Pay

While Betty may be somewhat relaxed about the money she receives, the other teachers who were not paid during the first year of the Conservatory felt very differently. Betty explained, "They were highly annoyed. Rhoda Hiebert said to me, "My goodness, my credit card is at the hilt! It won't take another thing. Would somebody please pay me!" [laughs] I mean, she had twenty students in the program." Betty recognized this as a problem and addressed it.

When Betty took over the leadership of the Conservatory, her first task was to persuade the teachers to try again. In response to their demands for "a reason to come back" Betty promised they would get paid and developed a program that was interesting enough for them to feel that they would be missing something if they did not return. Her approach has worked and from a beginning of 450 students ten years ago, the Conservatory now has well over 1500 students each year. Betty told the teacher's that she understood their hesitation because she was also one of the teachers who did not get paid, but she talked them into coming back. The thing she promised was that they would get paid.

Betty feels that she has kept that promise but it surely was not easy to do. In her words, "Those first years were horrendous, just horrendous!" Even getting the teacher's contracts signed so they could be paid was a challenge. She would literally carry them from office to office herself, waiting in each one for the necessary signature before personally carrying it to the next official and repeating the process there. The university's bureaucracy did not make her life easy. Since then, more feasible arrangements have been worked out and she no longer couriers between offices, pounding on desks all day, and working until three in the morning. These changes were precipitated, however, only when some "important man" resigned because it was "too stupid for words"!

She says it was horrendous because the Conservatory's needs ran counter to the way the university operated its cash flow system. Betty was constantly running into administrative problems.

I would try very hard but I was always closed down and I was always over there pounding my fist on the desk saying, "It is Christmas, so and so has not been paid and they must." ... Because of the cash flow thing. For instance, "He has taught these lessons but because of your cash flow thing, you are going to close it down. You are going to say that he cannot be paid until this cash-flow thing flows. We haven't got the time to get this cash-flow thing to flow because the money actually is in the bank, and the man actually has taught the lessons, the parents have actually paid. Your problem is a paper problem. It is not a real problem and I want you to pay that man today because it is Christmas and he has got to be paid today whether or not this cash flow problem seems to be a problem.

Betty committed herself to the teachers of the Conservatory being paid and she stuck by that through considerable difficulty. Although it was very arduous for her to deal with the administrative tangles of the university, she persisted and people got paid. "That was one thing I went in on here. This was my thing that said, "Everybody will be paid or I will die!"

### **Betty's Personal Safety**

Pounding on administrator's desks all day meant that Betty's other work had to be done after hours. Even now she frequently stays out at the university into the wee hours of the morning and she told me about some of her experiences.

One night a screaming mob "grabbed the side door on the side where I was and the whole building shook. They were going to break the doors." The police came before the door gave way. Another night, during the time she was inside teaching, there was a rape out in the parking lot where Betty parks her car. Others have expressed their concern but

Betty continues to work until two and three in the morning very frequently and then walks out to her car alone.

"This is a very lonely place at night. As a matter of fact one of the caretakers who came in to close up the building said, "Have you got a gun?"

I said, "What would I want with a gun?"

He said, "Don't you think you need a gun?"

I said, "What would I do with gun? Tell me that! I wouldn't have the foggiest idea what to do with it and I certainly would never fire it.[laughs heartily] So, no thank you, I do not think I need a gun!"

"I don't know," he said, "I feel uneasy about you out here."

I know of very few people who would put up with things like this because they had committed themselves to some teachers getting paid on time. Did Betty really mean that she would die if they did not get paid? Her laugh implied that she would not go to that extent, but she does take grave physical risks by working in her office until three in the morning. Recently, she purchased a home computer that allows her to do more of her work at home and she says this has helped.

It would be in Betty's personal best interest to work less hours, to get paid for the work she does and to have a safe work environment. Instead her commitment is to the work getting done and the teachers getting paid on time in spite of administrative hassles. Betty places service ahead of self interest as it is usually thought about.

### The Conservatory as a Tool to Serve

Betty sees the Conservatory as a tool, not for its own sake or her own, but for service to the music students and teachers. Betty accomplishes this service in two ways: First, she scans the musical community to identify needs and resources so that she can use the Conservatory to bring them together for mutual benefit. Second, she identifies people,

such as her husband, her secretary and an university administrator to help her in her work at the Conservatory.

### **Betty's Service to the Students**

When I asked her specifically who she was doing it for, her response was unequivocal. For her, service to the students underlies everything. "But who am I doing it for? I am doing it for the community, for my students, for all the students around that are interested in growing and developing." Betty delights in their individual learning. At first, I thought she might be interested only in those students who were totally and fanatically dedicated to learning to perform, but Betty shows a love for all children no matter how varied their interests. She enjoys them and feels that experience in music can make them richer, better people. She looks for a sincere musical performance at the student's individual level, no matter what that is.

She does not require the children to dress formally for their recital performances. A few teenage boys wore suits complete with ties but the majority of the students dressed very casually. The impression was that they perform in-between non-musical kid's activities such as hockey, tobogganing, birthday parties and school assignments.

She follows each student's progress and by considering their prior learning, puts everything they do on stage into context. She was happy with nothing more than a sincere effort from them. After the recital she not only remembered what piece each student had played, but something special about each one. The students (and parents) responded well!

"You phrased the Bach beautifully. Each phrase had a beginning and an end!" [To a younger sibling] "And when will we be hearing from you? Soon, I hope!" "Now this girl really came to play! You had an idea and you communicated it. That is the main thing about music, of course, having ideas and communicating them to the audience." "You are a true musician! You have an inward excitement that comes through when you perform music!"

Betty does not expect the students to be anything but learners, and delights in the imperfections of a learning situation. All special activities (such as opportunities to play with the university orchestra) are planned with potential for student learning in mind.

Oh, we had great fun with that [playing Sonatinas with the orchestra], oh yes, we did, and it was really good for the kids to find out how strong their rhythm has to be.... how strong that beat has to be. They can't muck around the way they do. Boy, did they ever find that out. Because on a two piano your teacher will adjust you know. Orchestras won't, they can't adjust. It was wonderful. All those things are great.

When she shares her excitement over these things one can only conclude that student musical and personal development is a motivator for her. She delights in seeing students take on the challenge of learning and then growing through it. It is the growth that excites her.

#### Betty and the Students Work Hard

Betty works hard but also gets an amazing amount of diligence and dedication from the students. This would be true of whatever program the students are enrolled. At the beginning of each year Betty sits down with each student and they plan the year's recitals, competitions, masterclasses and examinations together. Betty then works with them to achieve their own plan, albeit with flexibility.

One example might be her interest in raising the standard of performance. For those really into performance, Betty has developed a series of recitals and masterclasses that are included in the fees all the students at the Conservatory pay. There is only a relatively small group that regularly take advantage of these options and I asked Betty what would happen if all the students who qualified chose to participate all the time. She replied that it would put her into deep trouble but that she does not worry about it because the

amount of work involved for the students, their families and their teachers is prohibitive. Many students, parents and teachers are unwilling or unable to do this.

There is really not much danger because it requires so much effort on both the part of the teacher and the student. There are so many extra lessons to be given and things to bring the children to. Then there is the extra practice the children must do.

There are additional services Betty provides for her own private students. For example, Betty practices from 11:30 PM to 1 AM in order to give her students the extra perk of her accompaniment for their concerto performances. It costs at least \$45 each time a student hires an accompanist for either rehearsal or performance. With a concerto the costs would increase because the pieces are very long. Having your teacher on stage with you rather than a comparative stranger is also very reassuring. Not all teachers are able or want to take this role for their students.

Betty also gives a lot of extra lessons to many of her pupils. While Betty says she does not worry about them in-between lessons it sounds as if she takes a lot of responsibility for preparing them for their performances.

When so and so walks in the door, then, "All right, you were getting ready for such and such, where are you at?" Then we work very hard at where they are at. "Okay, you have this commitment, what do you have to do to get there? Now let's make a plan and let's get to work here because we have this and this to do." I have to put in lots of extra lessons, lots of extra lessons because if they are not ready, they have to get ready. If they are not ready, they have got to have enough extra lessons until they are ready. That is the kind of thing... I deal with it when they are here, and then I've got a place for them. When I say, "That is not ready yet, you need another lesson, come at such and such a time. Can you do this? Fine, I can do it."

While she asks a great deal of the students, Betty also recognizes and deals with the pressures they face. She does her best to accommodate her musical demands with other parts of the student's life.

Students are under enormous pressure these days as well. In my day, we did not go to school at all during the music festival. We would stay at home and practice in-between our classes. Now, David had to play on time because he had to go for a Calculus exam right after. Jeanette came in saying that she was feeling light headed because she had been up until two the previous morning preparing some report for her school. She had all kinds of exams during the time of the Festival. The school does not care about anything apart from their own demands.

The students are at the hub of Betty's interest. For her, the Conservatory is a tool to help the students learn and grow through music studies. She uses the Conservatory to present them with opportunities and challenges that stretch them and prepare them for further work. Their growth is her delight.

### **Betty's Service to the Music Teachers**

Serving the students means serving the teachers and Betty does this in four ways: 1) offering support 2) offering learning opportunities to both teachers and students, 3) opening up the Conservatory to as wide a range of teachers as possible, and 4) allowing them considerable independence in their work with the Conservatory.

I had anticipated that there might be considerable competition and possibly some bad blood among the teachers because their students compete against one another constantly. My observations, however, suggested warmth, support and admiration as well as an absence of competition. Betty confirmed this in the final interview.

We support each other. They phone and say, "What do you think about this?" and so on. For instance, I was doing something for festival a couple of years ago and I did not think the piece made sense, so I phoned and said, "do you have a change of

tempo on the top of the third page?" She said, "Yes," I said, "Wonderful, my kid has cut that bit off!" [laughs] I said, "What is the tempo?" and she told me. I said, "Thank you, you just saved my life!" My kid went in there and two days later she won that class and Rhoda's was second. [laughs] Rhoda phoned me and said, "I shouldn't have told you about..." See what I mean, we do support each other.

For Betty, support includes helping teachers deal with the disappointments they feel when their students fail to meet their expectations. Betty was discussing student performances with another teacher, Lorne, after a recital. Lorne's keen disappointment showed in comments that were clearly out for blood but Betty tempered his bitterness with positive observations. She would frequently say, "Yes, but..." and then go on to point out that the student who Lorne was complaining about was also musical, or that she had voiced certain chords successfully, or that she had realized the essence of the composer in this or that part, or that she was a true performer in that she had a real idea she was presenting to the audience. By the end of the conversation Lorne had simmered down considerably. Maybe the half bottle of whiskey he threatened to drink stayed on the shelf??

Betty's support also includes the promotion of relationships within the musical community. She wants people to know and support one another and she sees the Conservatory as a tool that can facilitate that. Betty speaks enthusiastically about the musical community and sees the Conservatory as contributing to its supportive networks by introducing students from various teaching studios to one another.

I think this is a great musical community, it is absolutely exceptional. Oh yes! In Vancouver they tell me that the teachers are not talking to each other... Well, it is not like that around here. You will see our kids standing out there by the stair well chatting away... What I love about this whole thing is that ... they come to the workshops and they talk and they all know each other... I didn't know how much they knew each other until one of the kids came in and said, "Boy, is so and so ever

stressed out! They are getting cold sores because they have this to do and that to do!"

Second, Betty is committed to serving the students and teachers by offering a menu of learning opportunities from which they can choose. I have already alluded to much of what is offered the students so here I will merely mention the fact that there are also professional development opportunities for the teachers alongside their students. Betty does not expect every teacher to participate in all the offerings but feels that if they do not, they have really missed something that she considers important.

So often I find that the teachers and the parents go for the idea that if their child or their student is going to be directly involved, they will come. For the teacher, if one of her students is performing at a masterclass, she might come, but not often, they often don't. But they have to be directly involved. If they are not, they don't want to come... I don't know why they did not come, but they sure missed it!

Third, Betty serves the music teachers by inviting as broad a base of teachers as possible to participate in the offerings of the Conservatory. In addition to their needing basic under graduate teaching credentials Betty wants to be sure of their ability to work with students.

I would also have to know that they are a good person and they can do a good job. Aside from that I have to trust that they are going to be a person who really is conscientious and would try hard to be really nice with the kids and do a good job. So I won't just take anybody but at the same time, as wide a group as possible is welcome. I think that shows in the 200 teachers we have already.

Teachers are at the Conservatory for a variety of reasons: 1) They use it as a way of motivating their students to work hard and get increased experience in performance. 2) The association is useful to them in their career building and advertising. 3) They know Betty

and respond to her requests for help. And finally, 4) There is a tax benefit for those that have advanced students.

There is also a group of teachers that see considerable benefit in teaching at the Conservatory but are unwilling to fill in the forms required by the university administrative machine. Betty retains an openness to this group of teachers and cajoles them about joining but does not change the requirements to accommodate them because she feels it would "kill" her program for every one else if she did.

Fourth, Betty serves the music teachers by allowing them considerable independence in their work. As a music teacher Betty identifies with them, is concerned about their feelings and looks to them for directives in deciding which artists to bring in for the students. She is determined not to anger them and insists she does not control them as they are very independent. She says that "blow[ing] it up by getting everybody mad" would make it "unwieldy and awful".

She defends the teachers to the parents when they want to demand that each teacher be responsible for certain allotments in fund-raisers. She sees the teachers as generally helpful and says that she understands them.

That is why, with that Parent's Committee thing they get so mad. [they say]"Tell your teachers to....." [and I say] "No, I don't tell my teachers to do anything. I ask my teachers if they would wish to do such and such.

Betty serves the teachers by providing a support group, by offering professional development activities alongside the student offerings, opening the Conservatory to as broad a spectrum of teachers as she can, and by respecting and insisting that others respect their independence. They are generally grateful for her work.

### How Betty Accomplishes Her Service

Betty uses the Conservatory to serve the music students and teachers of the musical community in two ways: First, Betty identifies needs and resources and then brings them together for mutual benefit and second, Betty enlists the help of other committed people.

#### **Betty Identifies Needs**

When Betty began at the Conservatory, the first need she addressed was the performance standard. "You see, I am really interested in raising the standard of performance and a lot of what I have done is in that direction." She addresses this through the recitals and masterclasses in which serious students at the Conservatory are invited to participate. There can be no doubt that the students who participate over a period of ten years before they graduate from high school reap the benefits of their dedication in the competitions they win. The small minority who decide to pursue music professionally have a good basis from which to work. Betty provides a useful service to these young students.

For Betty and a small number of other teachers, these performances also provide a significant source of motivation. She tells her students, "Next month you have this workshop and that recital so you had better hurry up and get this piece going." She gets students to work by giving them this reason to do it and her confidence about this aspect of her work shows when she talks about these students. "They would not be who they are today if they didn't have it because that is how they learned."

"But," Betty says, "we are doing it for a wider reason than that, too." When she goes on to enlarge on the second, wider reason, she talks about the things students are learning through programs like Fun With Music in which young children learn basic musical concepts such as pitch, rhythm and creativity. A wide selection of programs such as Orff, choir, Suzuki, jazz and the Big Band aim at a fundamental musical base in

understanding in a wide variety of musical experiences. Students with particular musical interests can gain enjoyment as well as musical skills.

These programs were all started in response to needs that Betty perceived in the musical community. In the case of the choir she had to be persuaded of the need by leaders of the choral community.

I never thought the choir was going to do what the choir has done because we already had Halifax Girls' choir and Halifax Boys' Choir and I did not think there really was a need for another choir.

I did not want to put it in until Dr. Michaelson and Leonard Giesbrecht came along and said "Look, you have got to do this. There is a need out there!" I said, "Is there really?" They said, "Yes, there is. NOW DO IT because we want a choir that is not just taught to sing by rote but a choir that can sight-read and a choir that understands style and theory. We want to mix the theory in with the choir. We want to mix in a style study. We want to mix in sight reading so they can take a piece of music and read it right off the top.

I said, "Well, okay, you want to do it. Let's do it!" And we did and gee whiz, has that choir ever grown. It is getting huge. They had to divide it and now they have two choirs and both choirs are good. So there was a need.

These programs, while not centered on perfecting solo performance, take music relatively seriously. Betty is, however, also aware of a third need; students who want to learn about music only for enjoyment. For these children Betty would like to introduce a new program that would be fun, possibly incorporating both physical education and fine arts. Her purpose here would be two-fold: First, helping them grow as people through understanding and knowing music and, second, preparing them to be a discriminating audience in the future.

So, I think I'd like them to have a chance to know what music is all about and maybe make a better audience later on. Even if they are not going to be performers, they could be a really nice audience if they grow to love what exists. In that way I think it could be a useful way to build audiences.

Finally, there is a fourth need Betty continues to seek a way to address; she spoke about her long standing wish to make serious music study available to children whose family's cannot pay for lessons and/or instruments.

Yes, there is another area of service we need and that is .... and we have always said this.... and we do it anyway.... but that is for the people that cannot afford music lessons. That is the other area that bothers me. That is the other area that needs help because there are kids that can't have....

She had one experience with this in another location in which she "had a ball" but has not found a way of doing it here. In fact, she has been discouraged from trying it because people who have some experience say that it would not work here because the motivation of these children in our city is too low and their family life too turbulent for consistency. She says "I would not necessarily want only talented students. I would be looking for students who would actually do the work and that would be my only criteria." She realizes, however, that it is difficult for students to "do the work" without family supports.

Under Betty the Conservatory Parent's Association has responded to small individual requests from time to time but Betty would like to see something more formal in place. She has made some attempts at co-operation with the university Pedagogy class but has been stymied by the fact that this class is only offered every two years and therefore does not allow for continuity. Betty continues to dream, continues to talk about it and look for a resource that could address this need.

### **Betty Identifies Resources**

Betty not only scans the musical community for needs, she identifies resources that are available and seeks out ways to fully utilize them for the good of the students through the Conservatory. The Conservatory owes its very existence to her perception that the university music facilities had unrealized potential. The Conservatory was in deep difficulty when Betty was asked to leave her teaching at the other Music School and lead it. I asked Betty why she had made the move from an institution that was flourishing to one that had very little hope.

Yes, this was dead and the Music School was fine. I made the move because I thought that there was a resource over here of a building and people that was not really being used to its maximum because it was not being really used after four o'clock.

Under Betty, the Conservatory has grown from a very troubled beginning to become a success story.

So, that is how it started but it has gone way, way beyond that because it used to be, we had all these profs do the workshops. Now, we very rarely have the profs do the workshops... Now, it has gone way beyond that, too, because it is the visiting artists like Mary that come in and do the workshops, which is just wonderful. So... it has gone beyond that.

Betty's interest in the students also influences how Betty uses the resources of the Conservatory. Last year was one of two years in which they ran a deficit, about \$2500 on a \$500,000 budget. When she describes the situation, she repeatedly emphasizes quality "for the kids". It comes across as her central motivation.

"Yes, we had 1700 students and we had a deficit. This year we have less and we are fine. We are up. This is what we want to be because we want to be able to offer quality to the kids. The surplus is what gives us the quality because we use it.

We put it right back into the program, whatever surplus we get, so that means we can do other things for the kids. So, that's the way we want it. It is fine this year. We will be able to do lots of things next year because we will have a good thing to work with this year.

Betty initiates recitals, chamber groups, masterclasses, theory classes, enrichment classes, whatever she can dream up and distributes the costs involved in them throughout the entire Conservatory student body. When a person with a Ph.D. in jazz arrived, Betty decided there must be someone out there that would benefit from jazz instruction so she started to advertise. She describes her joy at what they are now accomplishing.

Bert takes groups of kids and they go play over at the student centre at noon hours. They go over and play little sets. Are they ever learning to improvise! And you can really see the difference if you take a Junior, Intermediate and Senior group. The little Juniors are just learning to play their little melodies and getting enough confidence to make something up in front of a big audience and then the Seniors.....WOW!

Betty uses the Conservatory as a tool to serve the music students and teachers of the musical community. She has worked to raise the performance standards, offer a wide range of musical experiences for students with different interests, and is even now seeking for a way to make musical training available to students whose families cannot afford lesson fees and instruments. Her approach is to find the resources within the community and to use the Conservatory to bring them together with the needs and interests they can best serve. She delights in the results.

### **Betty Finds Others to Help Her**

Betty enlists the help of other committed people, such as her husband, her secretary and an university administrator to help her in her work at the Conservatory. Betty works

together with these people but also credits them with much of the success the Conservatory enjoys.

### Stanley

The most obvious of these people is her husband, Stanley. She explained that he has an absolutely crucial support role for her. He makes meals for her, chauffeurs guest artists around, and hosts masterclasses for her when she is occupied with other simultaneous events.

Yes! [laughs] Stanley is the one that makes it all happen. Without Stanley, I would be dead in the water, absolutely dead in the water. Well, for instance, I come home at night, flying home at night.... so I usually get home at about ten after seven, quarter after seven, maybe twenty after seven. I have a student at seven thirty. What would I do without Stanley? He has got dinner on the table! Right on! I come in the door- EAT! without a problem. He is delighted to do that. What a sweetheart he is! So there it is, that is why I can go ahead and finish teaching!...

During the initial phases of Betty's work at the Conservatory, she credits Stanley with having helped her find her way through the administrative tangle of the University. Even now Stanley acts as a sounding board for her ideas and tempers her ambition.

I was talking about it [a new idea she has] to Stanley this morning and he said, "Be careful! " He said, "That thing could be so popular that you know, that would be another school and," he said, "and you don't have time! Now just remember that!" I said, "Yes, but I would not do it, it would just be just like the music camp, I would get it started and then it runs. I would hire somebody to do it and then it is done! But I don't run it." I set it up but that is it.[laughs]

There is evidence of affection between Betty and Stanley. They portray a unity that I have seen only in couples that have given each other freedom within a stable, unending commitment. He is also a music teacher and shares her excitement about music as well as

her commitment to the Conservatory. They seem to enjoy doing this together in spite of the fact that it sometimes takes them physically apart for long hours. Betty could not say enough about him.

It is absolutely fabulous! So I finish teaching at about ten and then we have a good visit and see what the day was like and so forth. At about 11:30 I start up again and practice.

Tessa- Betty's secretary

Betty credits Tessa as one of the reasons the Conservatory can be under control. Betty tells both me and Tessa that she is wonderful!

The great thing about Tessa is.... When I have other people on that desk I can't count on them and I end up doing all kinds of things, extra such as, "We did not get the phoning for the recitals done, sorry!" ..... ummmm and they walk out the door. So what do I have to do? and I have students all evening and I have to get this phoning done and that is A BIG PROBLEM, [laughs] but with Tessa, she would never do that. Never would she do that! She would take it home with her and she would do it at home but she would never leave me with a big mess on my hands and say, "Sorry we did not finish this today, can't do it by....." She would do it at home.

The former office staff obviously kept the job within the confines of the hours allotted to their work and then left. Betty expects and gets more than that from Tessa.

Well for instance, Saturday, she was in there putting out chamber group letters. I said, "Tessa, what are you doing here on a Saturday?" She said, "I realize it is going to be closed on Monday and this really should go out." So she said, "I want this out!" and so she was doing all this stuff extra.

Sally Wong

One of the reasons Betty has been able to keep her promise regarding the pay of the teachers, is that Sally Wong over in the administration office took a special interest in the plight of the Conservatory after its first year.

She just was interested and was very sorry and did not want to see it fold. Very interested and said, "All right, we can do something about this. We can make it a priority, people will get paid." And she did it, and she has done it all along. She is absolutely super. I am really grateful to her for that. So anyway, she is the one who made it go! Now the people got paid.

Sally made a commitment to Betty that if the information for the paycheques was in her office by the third of the month, the pay cheques would be in people's mailboxes by the fifteenth.

Well, dear Sally, she has really stuck by that all these years. If we get the stuff in, she gets the stuff out. She makes a day of it and her staff has to give that first priority before anything else. That is wonderful, absolutely wonderful because before it was like throwing it in the sea. It might come on the other end anytime in the whole year. And that was hopeless, but this way it...

Betty seems to base her evaluation of others on her reading of their heartfelt intentions. Sally was "interested", "very sorry" and "did not want to see it fold". These qualities are important to Betty. She identifies others who will support or share this fervency to create a working dynamism and move mountains! It seems that Betty then commits herself to particular people who she sees as sharing her commitment to the Conservatory.

### The Parent's Association

Another group that Betty has brought along side to complement her work at the Conservatory is the Parent's Association. When I asked whether their most important function was fund-raising Betty concurred but added that they also provide her with enormous help with the Christmas party and help keep her in touch with what people think, thus allowing her to respond to those needs. Betty uses the parent's group to stave off the isolation of leadership.

Last year they raised about \$2,000, and I asked what significance this had for a budget of \$500,000. Betty explained that it could mean the freedom to pursue a new initiative when, at the end of the year, she considers what she will be able to do the following year. This contribution is meaningful to her.

Betty sees the Conservatory as a tool for serving the musical community but realizes that she cannot do it all by herself. She enlists the help of other committed people such as her husband, her secretary, a university administrator and the student's parents.

### Betty and Self-fulfilment

Betty suggested to me that while servant leadership may involve elements of self-denial, for her it is essentially self-fulfilment. Betty works long hours, her salary compensates her for only a part of what she does, and sometimes her personal safety is threatened. She can do this only because she is well matched with her work and receives a large measure of fulfilment from it. Betty loves her work and is one with it.

### **Betty's Love of Music and Learning**

For Betty, the love of music and its expression in music teaching, is the highest calling and she feels privileged to have a part in it. She responds to both the technical intricacies of music and the beauty she experiences within it. Betty said that the visiting

artist who did the teacher's workshop played so beautifully that it made Stanley cry! There is a response to beauty here that sensitive people find strengthening.

When Betty talked about what she hoped to accomplish through her music appreciation classes for students who want to do music as recreation, her observation was that "They could be a really nice audience if they grow to love what exists." Betty is all about the love of music and she wants everyone to have an opportunity to learn to love it too. She wants to open the children's minds to a wider understanding and thereby lend meaning and credence to all their musical experiences. Betty loves music and combines this with her love for people.

The second thing that she loves about her work is the continual learning she does. When a particular teacher's workshop is poorly attended, rather than feel that it might not have been worth the expense and planning she put into it, she feels absolutely certain that for her it is an incredibly wonderful opportunity. Before she would ever think about cancelling such an event she would want to consider how much she learned.

For me, I mean, it was worth it if I was there by myself. I learned so much from that because I just asked her all my questions. I had a million questions and it was an open mic session and she said, "Just keep coming in. What do you want to know?" Well, I had a million things I wanted to know, and I just kept asking these questions and, my goodness, I got my answers. I got my answers in her playing also.

Betty recognizes that the other teachers are busy but is so impressed with the richness offered that she finds it hard to understand how they can stay away. For her, music teaching and learning is over-riding, her very life. These priorities are not shared or shared only to a limited degree by the other teachers.

I benefit more than anybody because I am at all the workshops and I just sit there and learn and learn and learn and learn all day long and that is wonderful. It is

absolutely fabulous. I have learned more from those workshops than anywhere else. [Reflectively] I shouldn't say that, I have learned a lot from a lot of people in a lot of areas. It is not fair to say, "Only there".

Betty has the ring of a child with a wonderful new toy; she is happy and fulfilled by what she is doing. Yes, there is self-denial, but in Betty's eyes, it is far outweighed by her love for music teaching and learning. The Conservatory is merely a tool that allows her to encourage an ever greater number of people to share in her experience.

### **Purpose in Life**

Underlying Betty's music teaching and learning is a belief system that relates her work to ultimate realities. Betty feels that it is important to find out "who you are and where you should be." She enlarged on this when she said,

I guess that what you spend your life doing is trying to figure out why God put you here and what He needs you to do because, you know... We are put here for a purpose. So what is the purpose? So what am I supposed to be trying to do here? So let's find out what you are supposed to be doing and try and do it.

This statement is important because it reveals the grounding of her belief system in Someone beyond herself whom she identifies as God. I was also intrigued by her choice of the phrase "what He needs you to do" that implies that God "needs" her. I don't suppose that this means that she sees God as helpless but rather that she is God's helper much in the same way as a child will be "proud" to help a parent. There is an identity there, a definition of what it means to be a person and certainly a degree of importance that connects the work she does with God's overall plan. There is meaning in the notion that what she does not do may not get done at all because God needs her to do it. This gives her a strong sense of purpose.

There is no question in her mind that "We are put here for a purpose". It is simply a matter of finding out what that is and then doing it. She finds this purpose by taking opportunities to make things a little bit better as they present themselves rather than in the grandiose ten year plans.

But in the long run, what happens is, you can have all this ten year plan and ideas in your head but each year you have only a certain amount of money and each year, at the end of the year, you find out what you've got. And then you have this much money. And then you say, "All right, I have that much money to work with, what am I going to do to make things better with this much money." And then you can do the little thing that you can do to make it better. So it boils down, really.... the bottom line boils down to what you have got to work with here.

As she goes along doing what she thinks needs to be done to make something a little better in the present she also keeps her eyes open for something else that may need doing and moves on to that next. Betty doesn't need to see her innovations as big improvements, but merely moving in the direction that she perceives of as "a little better". Betty is constantly scanning the environment for both needs, resources and the right situation in which to pursue each one. It is the opportunities, or rather, her perception of the opportunities that determines which idea receives priority at any particular time. She is not so committed to one plan that another opportunity is missed.

In this way, she is not victimized by circumstances, they are directives for her next initiative, the planning and doing of which are a source of joy to her. "I don't think there is any more fun thing to do than to find a need and do something about and then see how it worked. And to have the joy from that. That is terrific joy." She uses the word "joy" rather than satisfaction, pleasure or happiness. She is motivated when she sees the possibility of making a positive difference in people's lives. However, while Betty derives

a lot of joy from her work with the students in the Conservatory, it is not her only reason for living.

Oh, my reason for being is related to lots of things. My family. You know, I have a wonderful husband. I have GREAT grandchildren. Wonderful kids. So there are lots of reason for being outside of just here. I wish I had more time for my church, for instance, which I haven't had much time for.... I used to be Junior Choir pianist and run their Junior Choir. But I used to run a tennis camp at the beach. All kinds of stuff that I haven't got time to do now.....[laughs] There are all kinds of reasons for being and as long as there is something out there that needs to be done, then you kind of respond to that need. So, that is how life goes.

Betty has a belief in God and His ways that give her a full and satisfying purpose in life. She loves music and people and expresses these loves by relating them to the needs and resources she perceives around her. "If there is a need and you can help, that is why we are in this old world, eh, is to try to make this world a little better for our having been here." Betty views herself as one whose mission it is to improve things, to make things a little bit better.

### **Freedom**

One of the things that impressed me repeatedly is the freedom with which Betty acts. Betty connects believing that something has to be done (that is, judging the present situation as unacceptable) with doing something about it and serving. The judgement of unacceptability and the fact that Betty feels completely free in making those judgements is key to her freedom to act. She is not continually second guessing herself about what needs to be done. She observes, she judges and then acts.

It is only because you believe its something that needs to be done and then you get it started and then you have to serve.... Its a service because it is there, you have to

make things happen so it takes hours to do it. You believe in it. Therefore it is important.

She seems to take the soundness of her judgements for granted and to move forward without reconsidering her choice as she is free to act upon that which she believes. When she addresses a need through matching it up with a resource, either a program or a person, she then believes it is "good" and she does not spend time or energy on a notion of a criteria for "goodness". The freedom to make these assessments and decisions is a significant factor in her motivation.

Betty emerges as a person who is happily matched with her work that she is fortunate to share with her husband. She loves it, it nourishes her and she serves others through it. It answers her deepest awareness of her calling and fits with her understanding of the meaning of her life. Betty has found out who she is, where she is supposed to be and she embraces it with all her energy. For Betty, the opportunities provided by the Conservatory are a tailor made match with her personal desires and she is free to work. This involves self-denial but it clearly is not selfishness, it is self-fulfilment.

### Betty and Self Respect

Betty values who she is and what she does and demands that others do the same. She resists having her goodness questioned or her gifts taken for granted. My consideration of Betty's case has helped me understand how the line between servanthood and abuse can be drawn and defended. She demands respect, not so much for herself as for the work she does because it is her way of contributing to making things better and therefore it is important.

Betty told the story of one situation in which someone questioned her goodness. It occurred when an adjudicator did not show up for a competition and Betty was forced to take over that role. She managed to get someone else to do her own students but

adjudicated the remainder simply because there was no one else to do the job. Afterwards, one teacher called to say she did not like that because Betty could have held down the marks so as to let her own students win. Betty's reaction was immediate.

I said, "WHAT?" I was furious! I said, "It never occurred to me to hold the marks down, EVER," and I said, "I am really incensed that you even thought that I would, that I might do that!" Yes, just amazing! It is amazing isn't it, and you can't even believe, it would never even occur to you... you would be trying to do the right thing, the fair thing and bending over backwards to do the right thing .... It made me mad, I was furious, I let her have it, I told her I was furious. It was a difficult situation in which something had to be done.

Betty wants to be seen as right and fair. She takes for granted that she did the "right" thing in this situation and that she, in general, wants to do the "right" thing. Moreover, she takes for granted that everyone else would do the same thing. She does not see herself as unusually "good". I have uncovered nothing else that makes Betty really angry!

Betty also insists that the things she does are valued and respected by the administration. When she senses that her work is being taken for granted she deals with it immediately and forcefully. "I have never been a dish rag, I will never be walked on. I will give because I want to give, but I also won't be walked on if it comes to the administration doing things." Betty sees herself as giving because she wants to, not because it is taken for granted.

There are things that Betty will not tolerate in relation to her position at the university faculty. At one point, Betty came upon her own contract when going through the Conservatory contracts. When she noticed that it had been written on an office staff rather than an academic staff form, she acted immediately to have the form changed. She feels strongly that her job is an academic one, demanding academic expertise and she is

determined that will be recognized in her contract and official status in the university faculty.

So I said, "Well, I do not want this contract. I want a President's Number One as an Academic appointment and I will accept nothing less." And he said, "Okay, what do you want? Which form do you want? How do you want it worded? What do you want?" I put it in and he said, "Fine" and that is how it went through.

Another time Betty noticed that the head was giving several other people raises but not doing anything for her. That was when she said, "He is not recognizing anything and so I will demand recognition" She wrote in a raise for herself and sent it to him! When she felt she was being taken for granted she addressed the issue purposefully and directly.

She projects herself as strong when relating to the administration both of the music faculty and the university in general. She "made" them pay her teachers even when the situation did not fit into their normal protocol. Betty seems happy to portray herself as able to command some response from the head of the music school. She presents herself as not hesitating to stand up for herself. There is an element of power here that Betty uses as she deems necessary. She could not continue to do her work without it. She says, "I will give because I want to give."

### **Betty and Power**

Betty has power that she uses to serve the music students and teachers; indeed, she could not serve without power. What she finds meaningful is to see them flourishing, learning and growing and she uses her power to this end. Here I want to consider here what her power is based upon.

First of all, Betty has power connected with her position. She is central to her organization, taking responsibility for and making the decisions. She is the one who has information that she can choose to share or withhold. She has power based on her central

position within the organization. From this central position Betty cultivates connections. Her husband Stanley is a music professor at the university and has an administrative role. Because Betty is an acquaintance of the people she approaches for help in getting things done, she cannot be hindered or neglected as easily as others might be.

Betty also has connections with those who bring artists into the city for concerts. This network of relationships allows her to co-ordinate her masterclasses with other engagements for visiting artists. By speaking to musical friends across the country, Betty is able to select the very best artists for the student workshops at the Conservatory. In addition, Betty maintains connections with a variety of other musical organizations. Betty taught at both the Music Institute and the Conservatory as they opened. She was friendly with the teachers at both places and found it possible to straddle the two very successfully without alienating either one. A second example of this would be the piano students Betty teaches for the university music school. This is a source of power for Betty in that she thereby has connections with the day-time life of the music school, interacting with faculty and students. The bridges she cultivates into areas surrounding her work give her power.

Second, Betty has power connected to knowledge of music. As a musician and long time music teacher, Betty knows all about music from a performer's and teacher's point of view and seems to know all the repertoire instantly. In addition, Betty knows the students and their families. She remembers where each one is at musically and therefore knows what each one needs. Remembering all this represents a lot of effort, but it also gives her power.

Third, Betty has power that arises from clarity of vision. To settle any issue that arises, Betty goes back to her vision of what the Conservatory is and makes the decision on that basis. An example might be the suggestion that students be auditioned for playing in the recitals. Betty disagreed not because it would be an administratively impossible task but because this would change the entire function of the recitals that is to get the students

playing. By doing this, Betty went back to something that is foundational and has been agreed upon by everyone, thereby facilitating consensus around an issue that could otherwise be a point of contention.

Fourth, Betty has an ability to turn negatives into positives. In a conversation about how education is emphasizing science and technology over the arts, others were expressing consternation. Betty, however, asked whether there was any way we could use this trend perhaps by selling highly appealing music software for ear training, sight reading and junior theory to students and teachers. Betty was ready to explore them as a new angle on fund-raising.

Finally, Betty has power because of the understanding she offers the music teachers. When she was faced with the issue of getting them to return to the Conservatory after the year in which they did not get paid Betty recognized that she had to do two things, guarantee their pay cheques and plan a program that would attract them. Beyond that, she had to persuade them to think about the Conservatory as a promising possibility rather than as an institution that had cheated them out of their wages. She had to persuade them that it was worth trying again and that it could work.

In order to accomplish this, Betty first of all recognized that there really had been a problem and took that problem seriously. She said, "I know. I am one of the teachers who did not get paid. I am with you on this, but I think it is worth trying again. I think it can work." Having been one of the unpaid teachers from the previous year helped Betty legitimize a different way of thinking about it in the minds of the angry teachers. When she said, "I know", they knew she did know in a very real and experiential sense. Since she was one of them and it was she who was suggesting that it could work, perhaps it was worth trying again.

Betty's is a power to accomplish things rather than a power that is over people and things. It was my distinct impression that Betty's considerable and widely based power is used to serve students, teachers and families rather than to have power over them. They are there because they want to be, doing what they want to do and Betty is facilitating their success in their lives. Servant leadership for Betty is not powerlessness but power used to serve the interests of others rather than her own.

### Conclusion

Betty comes across as placing service ahead of self-interest in the hours she works, her personal safety and her determination to keep her promise that the teachers would get paid. She views the Conservatory as a tool for the purpose of serving the music students who want to learn and grow, and to facilitate this, Betty has developed an innovative program that connects needs with resources, serves the teachers and recruits other committed people to help. This service is an expression of her deeply held beliefs and brings her great joy as she watches the students develop musical interests. She utilizes her broadly based power to serve the students, their families and the teachers and to facilitate the goals they have for success in their lives. Her actions helped me understand the relationship between servanthood and power. She also challenged me to think through the difference between being in charge of an organization and being negatively controlling as a leader.

## Chapter Eight - MY INFORMANTS, THE LITERATURE AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

In my first chapter I explained that I would be exploring the meaning each of my informants gave to service within their leadership. I wanted to know how they thought about service and what difference it made. In my second chapter I identified six research questions that the literature suggested for my research and in my third chapter I presented the research methods that I used. In the last four chapters I have introduced each of my informants and written about how each one expanded my view of servant leadership. In this chapter I write about the overall themes that came out of my explorations with my informants in light of the literature and consider how these themes have influenced my thinking about servant leadership. As my sample was limited to four people, any statements made about servant leadership must be understood to be indicative of servant leadership only as it is represented by these four people.

As I considered the material I had heard from my informants, I brought it together into four overall themes that co-ordinate approximately to the six research question I outlined in my second chapter. I begin with a section, "Servant Leadership - Not an Oxymoron", that reflects mainly my first research question: How do my informants balance their self-interests with their leadership? It addresses the questions raised by the literature on service and the self. My second overall theme, "Character and Servant Leadership," centres on the second research question: How is servant leadership related to the character of the servant leader? My third overall theme, "My Informants Had an Ideal" uses material from the third and fourth research questions: How do my informants view and talk about their commitment to a better society? And, How do my informants handle their power?

My fourth and final overall theme I have titled, "Mutuality in Relationships" and it presents the information from the fifth and sixth research questions: How do my informants relate to other people? And, How do my informants handle their position within their organizations?

Before I begin with these themes, however, I want to review the influence of my methodology. You may recall that my informants were educational leaders who were nominated as servant leaders by someone who knew them. There was no further test involved. This means that I studied all who were nominated and then selected by the process described in my third chapter. They are part of my study because someone recognized them as a servant leader, not because they correspond to any predetermined "definition" of servant leadership. I recognize that it might be possible to formulate a "definition" on the basis of a majority and then to label any one informant as "less" a servant leader than the others on the basis of that definition. I have, however, opted to stretch the concept rather than do that because my exploration is in a very early stage and my sample of four is already very limited. My concept of servant leadership grows out of what I observed in them. This fact must be borne in mind throughout my research.

### **Servant Leadership - Not an Oxymoron**

When I began this research, I felt certain that service and leadership are not as opposite to one another as they seem but I had a lot of questions about how they could be understood so as to complement one another. Greenleaf's writing had suggested that they could be compatible and I set out to explore my informants' thinking about the relationship between service and leadership. My conversations and observations suggested that the concept of servant leadership is helpful in understanding and describing how my informants relate to their work within their educational setting. It is a concept that I saw illustrated in the actions and beliefs of my informants. In this section, I present, first of all, my informants views of the meaning of the term, servant leadership and second, the extent

of their altruism within their leadership. I then end with an exploration of the relationship my informants identified between service and personal fulfilment.

### **Am I a Servant Leader?**

The term itself had a range of meaning to my informants, from a community mindedness for Louis, to an daunting and unattainable ideal for the others. When I asked Louis whether my letter telling him that he had been nominated as a servant leader had surprised him, he said it had not because he has been and is involved in a wide variety of community initiatives and knows a lot of people. He took the nomination as a compliment because he sees servant leadership as roughly equivalent to community service. He sees both his professional involvement in education and his voluntary work in his community as servant leadership. Louis accomplishes a great deal to the benefit of his community through these involvements.

My other informants were considerably more daunted by the term and would consistently dodge making a statement like "I am a servant leader." Although Betty was determined that her conservatory will be a service to the community and Father Leonardo would say that others saw him as a blessing, neither one ever used the term *servant leader* in reference to themselves. David explained that he has had servant leadership "hammered into" him from childhood and that he clearly sees himself and his college as serving the denomination, but he would not claim to be a servant leader either. In his own theological style, he would say that his Baptist tradition has "always emphasized the New Testament Jesus and the servant passage", that he "would very much want to place [him]self within that", that his thinking continues "to emphasize the servant passage and concept and [that he] would hope that will always remains central"; but he never would quite say that he was a servant leader. He was also very aware that it is possible to understand oneself to be doing servant leadership and yet fall very short of the ideal. David aspired to servant leadership, was nominated as a servant leader, and I saw him as an example of servant

leadership. However, he consistently dodged referring to himself as a servant leader. These three informants seemed to be characterized by a humility that kept them from claiming to be servant leaders.

For Father Leonardo, Betty and David, service is the test of leadership - leadership that does not serve is, for them, invalid. They were very aware that, as leaders, they could fall into using their organisations and their followers as a means to shape the world in the way they wanted, with them in control and receiving the greatest share of the benefits, rather than as a means to serve the best interests of their immediate followers and their community at large (Perrow 11). They had recognized that it is unethical to treat people as a means to an end rather than as ends in themselves (William Foster 55) and wanted to serve so that their leadership would be restorative and re-creative rather than attacking and consuming the common good (Chappell in Frick 5).

David said, "Leadership should be a servant leadership in that it should be there not for itself, but for the sake of the people." These informants see leadership that expresses itself in service as the only legitimate form of leadership. There is no opposition between the two concepts, rather they complement one another in that leadership is expressed and legitimated through service.

They seem to have recognized self-transcendence as the most reliable way to promote helping and caring over time in a variety of situations (Kohn 203) and they wanted their example to encourage others to look beyond their own immediate interests because that is what they feel to be right. My informants agreed with Greenleaf's emphasis on the importance of people-building rather than people-using (Servant Leadership 40). Rather than being cynical about service, they placed a very high importance and significance on it as the test of leadership. For them, leadership was a sacred trust that they fulfil and give account for in terms of their faithfulness to service.

In summary, servant leadership is a useful concept in understanding and describing how my informants related to their work within their educational setting. For my informants, its meaning ranged from straightforward community mindedness to a rather daunting and unattainable ideal. They stated clearly that leadership is not to be there for itself but for the sake of the people and saw service as the ultimate test of leadership.

### **Servant Leadership Involves a Degree of Altruism**

For my informants, servant leadership involved a degree of altruism but it did not demand complete self-denial. Although I was open to identifying self-interest in my informants' leadership, I went into my research with the presumption that genuine altruism was also a possible motivation for their service within their leadership. I found that while my informants' motivation went beyond their own immediate interests, they all saw significant benefits in their work for themselves. For the majority, these tended to be less the material benefits such as money, and more in the area of fulfilment and usefulness (Noddings 41). While none of my informants claimed to have completely altruistic motivation, they used their positions of leadership as a servant, that is, as a conduit to empower and enable those who follow (Kiechel 121) rather than to protect only their own interests. As predicted by Sergiovanni (Reflections 310) the motivations expressed by my informants were complex, very individual and moved beyond simple self-interest.

In David, I saw a deep identification with and respect for the value of community so that his service was directed for the good of that community and its young people. For Betty, there was a deeply held love of music that she wanted to share with as many as possible and for Father Leonardo service was tied into his commitment to serve Christ in the very best way possible. For him this meant serving children through education. Louis' service was, I thought, tied into his desire for achievement and recognition.

My informants suggest that there is a difference between "self-interested" service and "other-interested" service. In the first category I would place the customer service

provided by a commercial enterprise. The fulfilment of this service occurs when the customers return again and again. While this is not a "bad" thing, I do see it as contrasting "other-interested" service. The joy, the fulfilment of this "other-interested" service comes when the recipients grow independent of the service and can themselves offer the same or another service to others. This is not to say that these are the only motivations that each of these leaders had or to imply that there was no self-interest involved; each one saw themselves as benefiting from their service. For example, for Betty, music teaching and learning was over-riding, her very life.

For me, I mean, it was worth it if I was there by myself. I learned so much from that because I just asked her all my questions... I benefit more than anybody because I am at all the workshops and I just sit there and learn and learn and learn and learn all day long and that is wonderful. It is absolutely fabulous. I have learned more from those workshops than anywhere else.

Money was a side issue for David, Father Leonardo and Betty. They required relatively little connection between the work they did and the money they received. They thought about it as an enabler that allowed them to do what they love and are committed to while fulfilling their financial responsibilities. Louis, however, was adamant that service has its rewards and stated that he was motivated not only by the money that he could make from service, but also by the wish to be favourably remembered. He was also not adverse to benefiting from his contribution to a particular project. The statement, "The more one puts into a community, the more one gets out of it!" became a kind of refrain in our conversations. Louis was putting things into his community, but he was unapologetic about his expectation that he would also receive back from it.

It is possible to see Louis as somewhat of an "outlier" in that he openly acknowledged his tangible self-interests such as a large community based funeral, free rent and compensation for his efforts. Even his "customer service" is partly motivated by the

possibility of gaining financially. He is open about his desires and some might even attribute a refreshing quality to his honesty. To imply that Louis is refreshingly honest is to suggest that my other informants were not. I do not see my other informants in that way. To the contrary, for Betty it was reward enough to see the results of her work in the growth of the students. My sense was that she wants nothing else in the way of money, perks, meals, or recognition.

Father Leonardo retired the year I interviewed and observed him and he talked about the video recorder he had received as well as the art work the teachers and children had prepared for him. I have no doubt that he was deeply appreciative of their efforts and moved by their expressions, but my sense was that he did not do it for this reward. The recognition was a by-product for him. I think he was serving as an expression of his belief that he was commanded to serve regardless of the responses he got. For him, service was about expressing himself and his inward life. It was my impression that the relationships he cultivates with the staff and the students mean much, much more to him than tangible rewards.

David serves as part of a community and expects to retain a his membership within that community. He presumes that they are interested in what he has to say and that he will remain a part of that community for the rest of his life. There is also a sense that service has been commanded by God, that he is struggling to understand its meaning, and that he wants to fulfil that command. David asks only that he be a part of the community that he loves and he submits to its dictates regarding his lifestyle, his salary, his activities, and his work. Service, for David, is part of the process of growing personally; it is something everyone should do and he expects no particular rewards.

Louis may be an "outlier" in his tangible self-interest because he seems to see service as more of a reciprocal arrangement than the others and service seems to be more closely related to rewards. Louis suggests that it is possible to make significant

contributions to one's community and to be recognized as a servant leader by others while having some very tangible self-interests. Louis was nominated on the basis of his unarguable commitment to community service and having his views in my study offered the opportunity for sharpening the concept of servant leadership through a measure of contrast.

I have stated that for the purposes of this research I am using Greenleaf's test of service to define what is good. However, because all my informants had at least a measure of "good" motivation, my research did not answer the question of whether "good" motives are essential to "good" actions. It seemed to me, moreover, that my informants thought about the purity of their motivation very little. When they were convinced that there was work to be done they concentrated on that. For example, Betty connected believing that something had to be done (that is, judging the present situation as unacceptable) with doing something about it and serving. She observed, she judged and then acted.

It is only because you believe its something that needs to be done and then you get it started and then you have to serve... Its a service because it is there, you have to make things happen so it takes hours to do it. You believe in it. Therefore it is important.

My informants were people who cared very deeply and were willing to do whatever they could. Betty asked herself, "What am I going to do to make things better?" She then did the "little thing" that she could and felt responsible to do no more and no less than that. This has an element of deciding to care in it, a choosing to be involved and to address issues from which one could simply walk away. I think that my informants served out of a commitment to care.

Betty acted upon that which she believed. When she addressed a need through matching it up with a resource, either a program or a person, she believed it to be "good." I think that Betty and my other informants recognized that if they waited until they had

completely altruistic motivation, they would wait for a very long time. The alternative to serving with some self-interested motives is not to serve at all and they seemed to have simply decided to get on with it. The result of their leadership is positive for our society and it is on this basis that I find myself able to respect them.

In summary, servant leadership involved a degree of altruism for my informants, but it did not demand complete self-denial. They all suggested that it is possible to use a position of leadership as a servant rather than to protect their own interests. The motivations expressed by my informants were complex and very individual and although each one saw themselves as benefiting from their service, they thought about the purity of their motivation very little. Rather, when they cared about the work that needed to be done, they were willing to do whatever they could and concentrated on that.

### **Servant Leadership and Personal Fulfilment**

When I considered the various motivations presented by my informants, I came to see that while servant leadership may involve elements of self-denial, it is essentially self-fulfilment. Servant leaders may deny themselves superficial things like money or prestige, but the thrust of their experience is self-fulfilment at a very fundamental level. Coles' statement that those who put a lot into service get back much more (221) is remarkably like Louis' refrain; "The more one puts into a community, the more one gets out of it!" My informants all knew where their true fulfilment lay and acted on that knowledge in such a way that they and those around them benefited. There is a sense in which the lives of my informants were all of one piece in that their work grows out of their passion.

My first example is Betty. In my seventh chapter I explained that Betty works long hours, her salary compensates her for only a part of what she does, and sometimes her personal safety is threatened. For Betty, however, the love of music and its expression in music teaching, is the highest calling and she feels privileged to have a part in it. Listening to Betty talk has the ring of a child with a wonderful new toy. The Conservatory is merely

a tool that allows her to encourage an ever greater number of people to share in her experience. She said, "I don't think there is any more fun thing to do than to find a need and do something about and then see how it worked. And to have the joy from that. That is terrific joy."

Betty emerges as a person who is happily matched with her work. She loves it, it nourishes her and she serves others through it. It answers her deepest awareness of her calling and fits with her understanding of the meaning of her life. Betty has found out who she is, where she is supposed to be and she embraces it with all her energy. This involves self-denial but it clearly is not selfishness, it is self-fulfilment.

Betty is not alone among my informants. Louis talked at length about the personal satisfaction he feels about being part of a "great school division", and constructing a building that was a "big step forward for housing" in his home town. Father Leonardo, whenever he recalled the hours and effort he had put in, always talked about his work as his delight. David looked at me quizzically when I asked him whether he had ever wanted to have a "normal" holiday; that is, a holiday to something other than a church related conference, when he was a child. He explained that even the question reflected a perspective that was foreign to his home and to his present thinking. Instead he asked a question of his own, "Why would you want relief from that which you enjoy most?" He continues to feel that he would like to have his home right on his college campus so that more aspects of his life would be in one location.

In looking back over the my literature review now, I realize a new meaning in Nouwen's statement that when a leader discovers that those she leads have a lot to offer her, she can begin to see her work as a small return for what she receives (Creative Ministry 83-84). My informants worked; they worked hard and were very devoted, but not one of them felt short changed in their efforts. They felt they were more than amply repaid by the joy they received through their work. Until I had observed the sheer joy that

my informants expressed about their service, this statement had little meaning for me. Having observed, however, that my informants love what they are doing, that they find meaning in it, that they want to do it and that they all are pleased with their accomplishments has provided me with four examples of this kind of thinking.

### **Character and Servant Leadership**

The second research question about the relationship between servant leadership and character asks about the influence of the leader's early life, religion, reflection, and personal experiences. First I present material on both the influence of my informants' life experiences and belief systems. The second section presents the individual ways in which my informants expressed their service. Servant leadership stems from character that is shaped by individual experiences and choices. Therefore, it would be difficult (if not impossible) to draw a definitive template of measurable servant leadership actions or qualities and then to apply that to any particular leader to see whether she or he qualifies as a servant leader.

#### **Servant Leadership as a Way of Being**

Because all my informants were in later stages of well established careers, it might be possible to see their service as examples of noblesse oblige; that is, as the obligation of the rich and powerful, after they have become rich and powerful by whatever means were at their disposal, to then contribute to the society around them with their wealth. It is my impression, however, that my informants did not wait until they were well established personally and in their organizations to begin serving, but that they served from the beginning before they had either money or position. Service was, for them, a way of life that they practised to whatever degree they were able, whatever their circumstances. It would be interesting to study a leader who is not yet well established and to compare that data with my present sample.

For all of my informants a deep commitment to serving others was a part of their early life that they have maintained over decades of work. Any one of them could have penned the line from Coles that I quoted earlier: "It matters ... to me and my family, [because] that's the kind of people we are, and this is what we believe in doing" (Coles 34). Greenleaf understood his entire life as reflecting the idea of wanting to serve that he saw first in his father when he was very young (On Becoming 343, 369). Louis believes in serving his community partly because he saw his father do it and participated with his father in it. He is aware that he finds it gratifying and pursues it in such a way that other people also benefit greatly. Servant leadership has to do with, first, a person's life experience and, second, with their belief system.

### Life Experience

Coles wrote about an iterative relationship between the leader's identity, beliefs, and purposes and her leadership experiences (143). David and I conversed at length about the leadership he had observed in his father and his denominational community while he was growing up. David continues to consider these influences as he moves into his new role as president of his college, carefully seeking out similarities and differences and practising putting those into words so they can be tested out with his colleagues (and a researcher such as myself). While he has many ideas about leadership, David continues to consider his leadership experiences in an iterative way.

Father Leonardo might serve as another example. His early ambitions for an education and work within the church were frustrated by his parents immigration to Canada and the need for his help on the family farm. His determination led him to leave home as soon as he turned eighteen and become the manager of a clothing store. He was then able to talk things over with his father and gain his support for entering the order and training as a teacher.

By the time he graduated and took on his first teaching position, he was so convinced about the importance of education for children that he dedicated himself to serving in that particular area throughout his life. His dedication deepened as he went along and increasingly brought him into contact with other people who shared his convictions. After only two years in the classroom, Father Leonardo became principal of his school and took delight in seeing his work with the others result in better educational opportunities for children.

While I have no doubt that Father Leonardo was increasingly dedicated to the education of children from the beginning of his education career on, he explained that he had developed his consultative style of leadership as he matured. When he started, he "acted and was the boss" and "called the shots". As time went on, he realized that he needed to work together with rather than against his staff and he sought out collaborative strategies for working with them. He remembers this process as a very gradual one in which he had plenty of time to try things out and then evaluate them as he committed himself to this leadership style.

These examples suggest that perhaps young servant leaders are those who are developing a life-long commitment to an ideal and are learning how to effectively bring themselves and others into the service of that ideal. Commitment to the ideal arises out of the early life and personal experience of both the leader and the followers. It is not an overnight transformation but a series of slow steps that culminates in a deep commitment to put aside self interest for the sake of a cause or an ideal. These steps typically allow for exploration of the ideal and lesser commitments along the way.

Because all my informants were well advanced on their career paths it seems reasonable to ask whether people attach the appellation of servant only after watching a leader for a very long time, perhaps even a lifetime of work. This would mean that younger people can strive toward servant leadership, but that they are unlikely to be

recognized as such. Asking for the approximate ages of all my nominees at the nomination stage would have allowed me to know whether any younger people were nominated. It would be interesting to research younger perceived servant leaders and to contrast them with my informants. Until such data are available, my four informants remain my only basis for constructing the concept of servant leadership and they seem to indicate that servant leadership may be best recognized in those who have worked in a single community for a significant length of time.

### Belief System

Coles also pointed out that many who serve view themselves as agents of Someone above themselves (143). There was a striking similarity between a lady Coles described and Betty. The lady explained how her service came about: "Now maybe it was the Lord Jesus putting that idea in my head, or maybe it was just me trying to get myself closer to Him - I'd be in His favour. Or maybe it was just my momma in me talking to me..." (Coles 218) Betty said:

I guess that what you spend your life doing is trying to figure out why God put you here and what He needs you to do because, you know... We are put here for a purpose. So what is the purpose? So what am I supposed to be trying to do here. So let's find out what you are supposed to be doing and try and do it.

At one point in this research, I was asked about the relationship between servant leadership and Christianity. As mentioned in my first chapter, I am coming to my research from a Christian orientation, and I am interested in this question because of its importance in the Christian faith.

Although I did not plan it this way, three out of my four informants turned out to be more or less committed to the Christian church. Betty MacNeil, David Daniels and Father Leonardo were avowedly Christian in their thinking and talking about their leadership, ascribing great importance to the Christian ideal and striving to work towards it as best they

could. Father Leonardo said, "I believe that I am saved to serve and that I can do this best by serving children." This is a powerful statement of motivation that has guided him through decades of service. David stated clearly that his entire view of life is informed by the presumption that God exists and is involved in his life. He wants others, including his students, to recognize the involvement of God in their lives and to learn to serve in light of that recognition. Their stories are firmly set within the Christian tradition and suggest that servant leadership can happen within the Christian faith, but they do not comment on whether a deep Christian commitment is necessary for servant leadership.

It could be argued that Louis Lafrance and possibly Edward Smith of my background study offer a slightly different perspective because, while they were nominally Christian, their faith was less central in our discussions. When I did my background study of Edward Smith I found that although he was obviously understood as a servant leader, his faith was very private and had no outward expression in terms of conversation or church attendance. Louis was somewhat active in the church but saw it as "a social club". While he stated that God may exist, I did not get the impression that God was a large part of Louis' life choices. It seems that Louis' service stemmed from his father who was originally recognized by the doctor as having something to contribute to the community. He was then given an opportunity to move beyond his place as an orphan who was there to receive an education from the community to one of contribution and value within that community. Louis has embraced this view of life and takes all opportunities to contribute to his community in any and every way. Louis and Edward suggest that leaders with a more nominal Christian commitment can be recognized as servants. In the case of Louis and Edward, it would appear that the cultural influences in combination with their particular life experience was sufficient to influence their choice to serve.

That is as far as I feel my data take me. They do not address any questions about servant leadership outside of the Judeo-Christian tradition because I had no informants who

represented that for me. A complementary, and very interesting, study might be designed to look at this question by seeking nominations of perceived servant leaders as informants from a diverse variety of religious faiths (or no faith at all) for comparison to the present data. I speculate that any religion that fosters a sense of community and a sense of service within that community would be amenable to the development of a way of thinking that combines service with leadership.

Whether there was a deeply religious commitment or not, I observed in my informants a striking knowledge of who they are "deep down inside" (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 8) quite apart from their roles as leaders. Father Leonardo expressed clearly that he began with a natural desire to serve in the very best way possible and then only out of that came the desire to lead. He explained that even now he does not feel more than the motivation to serve when he carries out each individual task. It is only in retrospect that he recognizes service within the tasks he has done. At that point, the effort and time expended and the money he received (or did not receive) become incidental because his purpose of service has been accomplished.

My informants suggested that servant leadership is an expression of their individual background, early life and belief system. For three of them this involved a tie into their religious commitment and understanding. My informants impressed me as people who had gotten to know themselves well and who were now making their unique contribution through their leadership and service. They had thought carefully about what they found meaningful and were acting on those beliefs.

### **Servant Leadership is Expressed in Individual Ways**

While they were all serving something other than their immediate self-interest, the expression of servant leadership among my informants was as individual as its source in their experiences. Some of the individual ways in which they practised servant leadership were related to the literature.

In David's love of dialogue and argumentation within the trusting relationships of his college and denomination, I saw something of William Foster's approach to leadership that occurs when leaders and followers evaluate the present and the past in a dialectical process in order to make good decisions about their future direction (52, 53). Both within his primary role at the college and his leadership role within his denomination, he was respectful of past leadership and eager to build on its strengths, but also prepared to seek out better and more emancipatory ways. In his contributions to the consortium discussion, David showed his determination that innovations continue the basic mission, goals and objectives of received tradition, that is, to nurture young people into the church, but also to incorporate future possibilities (Foster 54).

Louis' story may be an example of Burns' transformational leadership that allows the leader and followers to combine their efforts towards a common goal that is in their collective best interests (425). Louis worked together with those who shared the vision he originated for each project he undertook and when they were ready to take it over, he would leave it in their hands. This means that they must have both understood and embraced Louis' vision. Louis was pleased that he had been able to identify values and goals that resulted in group decisions and real, intended change (Burns 415). Louis is a person who makes things happen by working together with others whether it is in education, a housing project, a foundation, or a musical performing group.

There is a sense in which Betty was also a transformational leader. She worked with people who shared the goal that was in their collective best interest (Burns 425), be it enriched musical experiences or enhanced performance. She did this partially by demonstrating its possibilities but mainly by inviting people whose personal goals coincided with hers to avail themselves of the services she was offering. By identifying needs and matching those needs with available resources, Betty ensured that everyone who was interested in music had an opportunity that matched their interest. She then made

certain that those who wanted to put in more effort would have increased opportunity, that is, more instruction, more masterclasses, more lessons, and more performances. In this way, Betty worked together with the people who shared her goal.

When I thought about Father Leonardo's way with his students and staff, I related it to Greenleaf's concern for a just and loving society that provides greater creative opportunity for all its people. Greenleaf sees this as realized when the more able and the less able serve each other (Servant Leadership 49). He says that we need to make the care we have for all people touched by our institutions count (Servant Leadership 55). As I have written in my sixth chapter, I saw this in Father Leonardo's serving the students and staff and in his teaching them to also contribute whatever they could.

The school janitor who was unable to get on with children serves as a case in point. When Father Leonardo found that he could not alter the janitor's manner with the children, he insisted that the janitor work after the school day was over and the children were out of the building. I saw service in this action, not only for the children who are Father Leonardo's prime concern, but also for the janitor who he views as a troubled fellow human being who needs a friend. Had such a compromise not been available, Father Leonardo would have put the needs of the children first and, perhaps, helped the janitor look for more suitable work elsewhere. I saw Father Leonardo as leading his school to be an organisation of support rather than of fear.

For the sake of this discussion, I have presented the individual expressions of servant leadership by my informants as mirroring the literature of William Foster, Burns and Greenleaf. I would, however, like to reiterate that all my informants are their own unique mixture of leadership style. In addition to Foster's dialectical model, David also sought to work together with others toward a common goal of a just and loving society. Father Leonardo seeks out those families that share his commitment to Christian education and they work together on their common goal through extensive dialogue. Louis is

motivated by his concern that his home town have housing that allows its citizens to live creatively throughout the winter season. Each of my informants is an individual who has learned to know themselves, their interests, their abilities and has found a way in which to work together with other people to the benefit of a larger group.

### **My Informants Had an Ideal**

While many, if not all, organizations have a goal or a purpose by which their success can be measured, all my informants had something outside of themselves that they were passionate about and that transcended their self interest. They felt that their ideal was more important than they themselves and so they gave themselves to its service together with others who shared their conviction. My informants saw their ideal as an opportunity to participate in something that went beyond themselves and had a greater importance than they could ever have as an individual.

My informants ideal and their dedication to their ideal had several implications for their leadership. In this section I explain first that the value my informants placed on the ideal allowed them to respect the work they did towards accomplishing it. Their work was important because the ideal was important. Second, they were passionate about their ideal and, whether it was the education of children, community housing in a rural town or the denominational community; they identified with it and sought out others to work together with them. Third, although they respected the right of other people to make their own choices, they were there to persuade as many as possible about their ideal. Fourth, my informants shared their power with those who shared their ideal and directed it at building up the ability of the group to better achieve their shared goal. Finally, I write about how having a shared goal affects the followers' perception of the leader's use of power.

### **Self-Respect Arises Out of the Ideal**

The shared ideal was the basis for the confidence of my informants in the work they did. Because they saw the shared ideal as being very important, they respected themselves

and their contribution to it as significant. They thought of their work as important not because they themselves were important but because they were convinced of the importance of the ideal.

Louis' work in education was based on his belief that education was important and that his was a "great division" that offered a quality education to its students. Louis believes in what he is doing, whether he is acting as the principal of a school, making arrangements for adult education, cultivating a garden or setting up a foundation. This belief is reflected in the importance that he attaches to each task.

The same thing could be said of each of my informants, but it was my consideration of Betty's case that helped me understand how the line between servanthood and abuse can be drawn and defended. She demanded respect, not so much for herself as for the work she did because it was her way of contributing to making things better and therefore it was important. Betty wants to be seen as right and fair and projects herself as strong when relating to the administration both of the music faculty and the university in general. She tells them what kind of contract she wants and she "made" them pay her teachers even when the situation did not fit into their normal protocol. She does not hesitate to stand up for herself because she has a personal respect for her work and she says, "I will give because I want to give."

My informants "knew" their work was important because it fit with the ideals they believed in and shared with others in their organization. In the same way as the ideal was important, their work was worthy of respect. They were ready to insist on it because they were convinced about the validity of their ideal, and therefore they respected themselves.

### **The Ideal is Shared**

My informants' personal ideals were reflected in the goals that lay at the heart of their organization. These were shared by the other people in the organization partly

because my informants insisted on it. These common ideals became the basis of their community.

When I was talking to David about inclusivity within the context of his college, he explained that every organization must have some non-negotiables that define what that organization is.

Well, it seems to me it's not a question of essential or non-essential. It's a given. Baseball teams are not open to people who have no interest in baseball and who do not want to play baseball, and so they might be open to anyone who wants to do what that group has defined itself as being.

It is true that each of my informants had an ideal that they were working on together with other people and that this ideal was at the center of their organization. For David it was Christianity as expressed within the Baptist community, for Betty it was music, for Louis it was his school division and his home town, and for Father Leonardo it was the service of children through education. Sergiovanni suggested that "servant leadership is practised by serving others, but its ultimate purpose is to place oneself, and others for whom one has responsibility, in the service of ideals" (Moral Leadership 138). All my informants placed themselves together with other people whom they cared about, in service of the shared ideal that was the defining thrust of their association.

My informants felt that their ideals were worthy of sacrifice, time and work and they would defend them without compromise, not because it made them more comfortable, but because they saw the ideal as being important. They worked hard to bring the goals of others in line with the ideals they held and would defend the ideals in the event of a conflict with the personal goals of a follower. For them, accountability is an important component of trust.

I think the principal has to stand behind her staff, but staff also needs to know that the principal has to do a job, and that incompetence is just not acceptable as a norm to operate on. I think they sense that very clearly.

When Father Leonardo found a teacher neglecting his teaching responsibilities in order to work on the school yearbook, it was a serious matter that he dealt with very forthrightly. He said that the children were in school to be taught and that the teacher's primary responsibility was to plan and teach them well. He stated that the year-book was extra-curricular, and while it had to be done, the teacher could use neither preparation nor class time for it. He did this on the basis of the ideal of service to children through education that he did not defend, but simply insisted the teacher accept.

That becomes often my point with them. We're here for the children. You're not here for me or for yourselves even though that pay cheque is very important to you. We're here for the students. That's what the whole school centres around. It wasn't built for you; it was built for the children, and there is accountability.

My informants were constantly looking for others who were prepared to share their ideals. Betty sought out those people whose goals included serious music study, Father Leonardo looked for Christian families to come to his school. Louis worked hard together with those who were prepared to get on board and simply ignored those who "put sand in the machine" as long as he possibly could because they were "just playing games". Some may feel that ignoring those who were not persuaded contains an element of exclusiveness, but my informants did not see it that way. They were quite prepared to spell out their non-negotiable criteria up front, often in a vision statement or as prerequisites for joining an activity, but beyond those guidelines they made efforts to be as inclusive as possible. They wanted everyone who shared their interest to be included and they saw all who agreed with their goals as potential allies with whom they were prepared to work. What they were not

prepared to do was to lose their purpose by pandering to every wish that walked in the door.

When a group of people work together on a shared ideal over a period of years, a community forms. David's experience within his college and denomination suggested how the shared ideals of servant leadership can operate within a community context and how, to a large extent, community ties can become substitutes for external controls such as rules and the power to enforce decisions (Sergiovanni Moral Leadership 138). Much of what is done in David's college is based on traditions that have developed over years of association in the community around a common commitment to the ideals of Christianity as expressed in their Baptist community. David explained that one of the things that the consortium discussion is bringing to light is the fact that "so very, very many of the things that now need to be negotiated have never, ever been said here." It has been their style to operate on the basis of a common understanding of who they are and what they are doing in serving the students and the denomination. These community ties have carried them for fifty years.

My informants, then, had a goal, an ideal that they were passionate about and they diligently sought for others to work together with them. This was not because it made them more comfortable but because they saw the ideal as important and worthy of dedication. The shared ideal was the basis for their group interactions as membership in the group was premised upon support for the shared ideal.

### **Persuading Others About the Shared Ideal**

My informants were seeking to persuade other people about their ideal because they were concerned with higher values, purposes and forms of self-fulfilment and they sought to foster those in contrast with a narrow, egocentric self-actualization (Burns 452). Rather than simply using coercion and manipulation that might get a particular short term result but that also violate the person and therefore strengthen resistance, my informants used conviction, dialogue and example to persuade (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 42). They

were not neutral about the decisions reached by others because they were personally convinced about their views and wanted to share their views with others.

Some were interested in more than simply modelling servant leadership within their organizations; they wanted to see it institutionalized throughout their organizations because they saw it as something they wanted everyone to experience. Father Leonardo's school was in tune with him in emphasizing service and looking for ways to promote this among the staff and the students. While he wished service to permeate his school system, it is interesting that Father Leonardo did not attempt to alter the hierarchical system itself. He left the board and school administrative structure unchallenged.

I observed this quality of persuasion, first in connection with students, and second, with the staff. The approach, predictably was somewhat different but there was always the sense that something was right or better or ideal and that they wanted the other person, whether student or colleague to come to see it that way, too.

### Students

My informants' interest in their students was reflected in their concern that the students be, first, positively impacted by their service and, second, that the students themselves develop a positive view of serving. Their concerns for the students were the same as Greenleaf's test for service: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?" (Servant Leadership 13-14 italics in the original)

Betty clearly wanted her service to have positive results for students. She worked hard to make the necessary arrangements, to find stimulating workshops, to provide performance opportunities, to support the teachers in their preparation of the students, to

cultivate ensemble work, to sponsor parties and so on and on. When I asked why she does all this, she explained her thoughts about just one aspect of her ambitions. She is clearly wanting to elevate the student's potential for musical experience.

I'd like them to have a chance to know what music is all about and maybe make a better audience later on, even if they are not going to be performers, they could be a really nice audience if they grow to love what exists.

Betty wants the students to know about and learn to love music so that their lives can be richer. She would argue that this has the potential to make them healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 13-14). I saw a similar concern that students be positively impacted by his work in a story that Father Leonardo told.

It is the story of a boy named Scott who was "always getting himself into something annoying" and whose parents had to be called frequently "about some complaint or something that wasn't done." Father Leonardo says that when Scott left school, their relationship was such that he and Scott continued to have a cup of coffee together somewhere at least once a month just to talk. At one point Scott got into some difficulty with the law and when his parents did not want to go to court with him, he asked Father Leonardo. Father Leonardo not only went along for the hearing, but he helped Scott follow up on the advice of the judge during the two years he was without his driving license. In their conversations, Father Leonardo would affirm Scott by saying sincerely, "I think there is a lot of good in you."

It was only recently at Scott's wedding, that Father Leonardo began to see the good person that Scott had become. Father Leonardo says, "I look back on that as a very good experience" because now he sees Scott as "a fine young man of 28 years" who has left behind the "annoying silliness" and is showing evidence of the good that Father Leonardo recognized all along. For Father Leonardo, Scott is a prime example that "you can affect a

person's life even though you have to be quite firm with him in the classroom." This is what challenges Father Leonardo and gives him energy.

Second, my informants were also concerned that the students themselves develop a positive view of serving. For example, the staff and parents in Father Leonardo's school talked repeatedly about whetting the students' appetite for service. Their mindset was that it was important to pass along to the students a positive experience with and commitment to serving other people. They wanted the students to experience and embrace being helpful to their community and the larger society in which they lived (Noddings 41). Part of David's goal in nurturing young people into the church was that they would become equipped to find a place of usefulness, that is, service, within that community and the world at large. To this end, David teaches them but also demonstrates leadership and service for them.

#### Staff and Colleagues

My informants recognized that persuasion was more effective with their staff than coercion and manipulation. They were willing to give extra time to get heartfelt support rather than begrudging compliance. When I talked with David about how he dealt with his colleagues, he explained that he had very little formal power and that in his eighteen years as Provost, there were "virtually no regulations that [he] had the official right to break." Rather than complaining about this, he always felt that it protected him from accusations of abuse of power and so he worked on the basis of persuasion. He explained, "the power I have developed has never been in my right to do things, but rather in the recommendations I make to the faculty, the way issues are presented, information I have in certain areas and so on." He prefers to have it this way.

Father Leonardo also used a consultative leadership style. When I speculated that he had not done it that way when he began leading twenty-five years ago and asked how the change had occurred, he said: "I think you're quite correct. I don't think that's how I started out. I think, in that sense, I acted and was the boss. I called the shots. If

something had to be decided, I decided, at times to the dissatisfaction of the others." He then talked about how he would sometimes vacillate when thinking about the approach to take.

I do know that part of me sometimes would say, "Well, whether they like it or not, this is the way I want to do it" but at the same time I would feel that I'd better get them on my side, so I would consult them and make them see the wisdom of doing what we're doing or what I would like to do.

He sees the change as having been "very, very gradual" and connected to the awareness that "teachers are different than they were fifteen years ago." He said that "at a certain point, I did sense that a collaborative approach is far better" although "it does take more time." He sees it as "more effective in the long run" and the right approach in today's environment. The following example was interesting to me.

It has to be sort of digested - often they will talk about it amongst themselves before they come up with an answer... It's probably easier to say, "Listen, I want you out there two minutes before the bell rings, so that when the children come out at recess time, you are there. I don't want you thirty seconds late; I want you out there." Now the approach is, "How can we be sure that you are out there when you're supposed to be out there? Give me some ideas."

It was by consulting and working on problems together with their colleagues and by providing positive opportunities for their students growth that my informants persuaded rather than manipulated. They are convinced that their personal example in addition to consultation and their verbal persuasion are the right and most effective approach. While I was unable, because of the limitations of my study, to confirm that their followers also saw them as consultative and mutual, they are convinced that their personal example in addition to consultation and their verbal persuasion are the right and most effective approach. I saw David and Father Leonardo as working in a consultative fashion, but this was less true of

Betty whose situation was different in that the people she works with, work in their own homes for much of the time. Therefore I write more about Betty in the section titled "In Charge Versus Controlling."

### **Shared Ideal - Shared Power**

Once my informants discovered that they shared their goal with others, they began seek out ways to share power with them. This shared power occurred within their community relationships and was based on a mutual regard between the leader and the followers. It seemed that my informants were looking not so much for ways to increase their personal power as for ways to increase the power of everyone in their organization so that they could all place their power in the service of their shared ideal (Blackmore 122).

It is the shared ideal that makes possible the power of transformational leadership of Burns (425) in which the follower and leader motivations are brought together in the service of a common goal. Burns recognized that there is a great deal more power to accomplish things in transformational leadership than when the agreement between the leader and the followers is merely transactional; that is, based on individual goals that are not mutually shared. Louis, always aware of his need for the support of others for his projects, caught the difference between transactional and transformational power of Burns when he said:

I think you have to be careful how you use power, so don't abuse it. I would say, as a school principal, you're being paid to go some place and make things happen. You can go there and make things happen up to a point, but if you don't get co-operation from the people that you're working with, you're not going to be there for very long. You've seen principals come and go, right? ... So I think you need to figure out what the needs of the group are and sort of work together to generate some benefits for the group. Maybe that's a different perspective of leadership.

Louis worked in a collegial approach to get as many as possible to agree on a goal and then to work together to achieve it. Louis always worked on his projects with other people whom he gradually empowered to take over from him.

Father Leonardo sees service as "melding" together with the power of leadership when it is shared with followers. He was very clear that rather than working to possess power himself, he wished to work together to increase the power of everyone so that the total effect was one of greater power to accomplish their shared goal.

I see them meld very well together and I probably exercise a great deal more service than of power. In the consultative process that I like to operate under, one does not have to exercise a great deal of power - "I am the power, so you'd better do as I say." I like to think that together we make up the power.

As I explained in the sixth chapter, Father Leonardo made extensive use of committees to generate ideas, test them, and refine them so that they could then be presented to the board or the community with a larger group of people having ownership in them. This way of sharing power and ownership around was also used in David's college.

We have a committee called the Academic Concerns Committee which, again, is a committee with very little power. Often it processes things and makes recommendations. When the recommendations come from that committee it is different then if it comes from an individual or myself.

My informants used rules to help their organizations run smoothly but not to keep other people in restricted roles. In fact, if it became evident that a rule did not serve their ideal at any particular point, the rule would be ignored for that time. In Noddings' terms, my informants did not allow abstract rules to overtake their caring (44, 201). My informants were interested in sharing their power with all people who shared their ideal and did so in various ways that suited the situation and the individual people with whom they

were dealing. Their power was to empower those around them in the service of the shared ideal.

### **In Charge Versus Controlling**

Early in my research I wondered a lot about my informants being controlling because I observed that many of them were central to their organizations and therefore largely in control of what happened. I noted that they made many of the major decisions and that main communication lines were routed through them. In one case, I even thought that common courtesy and effusive thanks were being used as a way of obligating the followers to the leader and as a way of forestalling their ability to criticize.

In my observation times however, I also noted that these leaders were not resented for their control and that the followers were content to let them have both the responsibility and the control that went with it. As the followers appeared to me to share the ideal of the leader, there was a sense that the leader's control was in their best interests. As long as they shared the ideal being served by the leader, they did not feel manipulated or coerced and everything went along fine.

I talked about my dilemma with Father Leonardo at length and found that he had thought about it very carefully. From our exploration that I have described in my sixth chapter, I was able to identify a distinction between "being in charge" and control. Being in charge means seeing to it that things run smoothly and as they should so that the organization's shared purpose is achieved. Control is an attempt to predict and control human action in order to justify and shore up existing power relationships such as was described by William Foster (48). The major distinction comes in whose interests are being served. My informants were "in charge" but they were not using their organization and their followers as a means to shape the world in the way they wanted, with them in control and receiving the greatest share of the benefits (Perrow 11 emphasis mine). My informants were not serving their own interests and receiving the greatest share of the

benefits, but were using their organizations as a means to serve their ideal and society at large.

Father Leonardo sees himself as "a servant to the children" even while he also sees himself as "having been mandated by the board to manage the facility which is here on behalf of the children." He is part of a "line of accountability" in which "staff members are accountable to [him] because [he is] accountable to assure the Board that what's happening here is within [his] mandate so that they can report back to the parents and say, "The school is running well.""

Betty was also firmly in charge of her conservatory and saw to it that things ran smoothly so that the conservatory's purpose was achieved because that was in the best interest of all who were served by her musical ideal. She saw herself, and was seen by others in her organization, as one who did not serve her own interests. When I observed the parent's association meeting, I noted that these people, rather than feeling controlled and manipulated, had a sense that Betty worked in harmony with their shared ideal and they were relieved to leave things in Betty's hands while they enjoyed the results of her work. I did not see anyone as wanting to take any of that over from her; they were content to let her have both the work and the control as long as the ideal was being served by Betty. Betty's "being in charge" was directed not to the service of her own self-indulgence.

The essential difference between "being in charge" and manipulation and control is its purpose. Manipulation and control imply that followers are being used, pushed, manipulated into something that they do not see as to their own benefit. My informants were "in charge" in such a way that the followers could relax and contribute because the basic purpose of the organization was one about which they were also convinced. They saw their leader who was my informant as having the ideal they shared at heart.

All my informants enjoyed long tenure at their work places and I originally thought this indicated that they were more likely to be nominated if that was the case. It seems that service is rooted in relationships and relationships take a long time to build. However, it may also be true that the quality of mutual service allows for the development of long term relationships between the leader and the led, thereby making a longer tenure possible.

The concept of the shared ideal is central to servant leadership because it lies at the heart of the organization and the relationships within it. My informants demanded respect for their ideal and work that was done in service of that ideal. My informants were passionately dedicated to their ideals and sought out people with whom to share this passion. The shared ideal became the focus of the organization in which my informants were "in charge" and used to serve the shared ideal. Power was not seen as something to be clung to, but was spread around to everyone who was working for the shared ideal. The power my informants exercised was restrained by their consideration for, their commitment to, and their love of the people with whom they worked on their shared ideal. I discovered in each of my informants a personal touch and a genuine love for people.

### **Mutuality in Relationships**

I now want to write more about the nature of the relationships I observed between my informants and the people they led. In order to assess my informants' attitudes to their students, staff or colleagues, I would ask questions about those people as they came up in our conversations. Through those stories, many of which have already been told in this narrative, I became convinced that my informants listened to and treated the people around them as truthfully valued people rather than merely as instruments for the achievement of organizational goals (William Foster 51, 59). My informants saw other people as valuable contributors with whom they were working for the shared ideal (Noddings 65, 80, 177).

I will present my discussion of my informants' relationships in three parts. First, central to their relationships was a mutual search for meaning that they shared with the

others in their organization. Second, mutuality meant that they shared in the necessary mundane tasks, and third, mutuality meant that they worked to redefine their position within the hierarchy of the organization.

### **Shared Search for Meaning**

Central to their consideration of those around them was my informants' view of their work as an opportunity to reflect and to seek out together "something bigger and more compelling; a way to live, a sign of what matters, a clue as to what this life means." (Coles 280). They did not pose as the one who had arrived, but they were willing to admit the need for criticism, to admit the things they could not do, and to ask for reminders about how the problems of the world are problems they had within themselves (Nouwen Creative Ministry 86). My informants had recognized and accepted their dependence on their followers even in personal ways (Blackmore 120) because they also needed to receive care (Noddings 41). This shared search had an effect on their relationships with those around them. "There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between the leader and the led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share" (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 36).

This notion of a shared search between the leader and the led was illustrated for me by David in his relationships with both the students and his colleagues. David wants everyone who is interested in "reflecting with us [Baptists] about reality ... on the important questions of being ... within a framework of an assumption that there is a God" to feel a welcome at his college. His purpose in those relationships is to work together on important and interesting life questions. David said, "you never learn from people who agree" when he described the vigorous academic debate that characterizes challenge among his colleagues. David loves dialogue and even argumentation on these issues with both faculty and students but it is mutual learning for the sake of the community that he seeks.

When David interacted with his colleagues and the students, I thought I detected an element of affirmation and love for them to which they responded warmly (Noddings 179).

There is a good element here that I am terribly proud of and that is the way we have been able to fight among ourselves and end up supporting each other. It is not that we always agree, so I am very pleased with that.

When Father Leonardo finds that one of his staff disagrees with him on an issue, he invites them to talk about it to see if they can change his mind.

Sometimes I'll say, "You know, you make some good points. Why don't we, at the next staff meeting, get some more input on this." My mind has been changed by other people's ideas who in the end had better ideas than I initially had. I'm very open to that. If you can prove to me... Or I'll say, "Go to the team leaders"; let the team leaders discuss it with their primary group and the intermediary group. Talk about it and report back to me.

Father Leonardo's shared search involves listening to his staff, hearing and sharing in the questions they are faced with on a daily basis. He says there is a trust that has built up between them. He perceives that the majority of the teachers "will very readily come to [him] and share a frustration or ask a question about something that they were not too sure about." This offers him the opportunity to listen and attempt to provide them with answers. This shared search implied first, an acceptance of followers as they were, and, second, a willingness to listen to them in order to hear and understand.

#### Acceptance of the Human Condition

This notion of a shared search implies something else that I saw in my informants' interactions - an acceptance of the human condition with both its suffering and its joy and a working with its imperfections to build wholeness through "adventurous creative achievement" (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 12). In the same way as they themselves were imperfect, my informants saw their followers as sometimes immature, stumbling and

inept, and they did not regard their acceptance and love as something the others needed to deserve (Greenleaf On Becoming 308, 310).

In his relationships with the board and the committees of his school that I described in the sixth chapter, I saw Father Leonardo as challenged by the vagaries of human nature. He was, however, willing to tolerate imperfection because of his interest in and affection for his people (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 21). Father Leonardo maintained a hands off position with the committees and the board even when this meant that he had to work with their errors. In an effort to discourage dependency he refused to take control even when this meant that important things did not get done as he would have liked. Father Leonardo was prepared to be disappointed and I saw acceptance and humility in these actions.

In Betty I observed an understanding of the pressure that her students and their families experience. She remembers with nostalgia the time when music students were excused from school for the music festival or when they had major performances and muses about how different it is now when the student must juggle everything simultaneously. She works to see through the family and school pressures that her students face.

Another student and her mother came in shouting at one another because the girl felt that there was something happening at her school that she could not miss and her mother wanted to call the school to cancel out her participation. Neither one was reasonable! So there I was. I stopped the mother from calling by saying that this obviously meant a great deal to the daughter. I then asked the student to calm down and give me her full attention for the time until her appointment at the school. She was able to concentrate on one thing at a time and we got them both in. Wow, this is a challenge! These kids and their families are under pressure. I do not know the answer.

This acceptance of the humanity of their followers implies that my informants, while primarily serving the shared ideal, also made room for the personal needs of their followers. When we talked about the people they worked with, it was my impression that they cared about them as people whether or not they were able to contribute to the ideal at all times. They described situations in which they did not give up on their followers and, when there was a difficulty, offered plenty of time for them to regain their ability to contribute maximally. My informants "lived through" the human dilemmas and problems faced by their followers and sought out compassionate and responsible solutions (Noddings 96, Blackmore 120). This contributed to an environment in which it was safe to experiment and even to fail because failure was not final. In so doing, my informants built the ability of their organizations to achieve the shared goal.

#### Listening and Reciprocity

My informants (with one exception who recognized this as a weakness), were people who listened carefully because they really wanted to understand. Complaints were carefully heard and acted on as promised within a short time. Longer discussions were preferred to shorter ones because they allowed more time for mutual respect to develop on sensitive issues. Special groups were formed to help relay the news from the trenches; that is, the kind of conversation that people will have with one another but would hesitate to share with the leader. One of the important functions of committees was to broaden the information base so that the leader was not operating in a vacuum.

I observed several examples of reciprocal processes in which leaders and followers listened, acted, communicated responses and modified subsequent actions to take that feedback into account (Greenleaf Servant Leadership 13-14, Burns 440, 449). As I explained in my sixth chapter, this reciprocal process was used by Father Leonardo when he formulated a language policy for his school. When the original request for a means of dealing with ridicule, meanness, obscenities and blasphemies came, he thought about it for

some time before discussing it with a parent and staff committee. From the notes he took on that discussion, he wrote a draft that he circulated to the staff. He incorporated their responses and circulated the draft to the committee once more. From there he requested the comments of the entire school community and only when it had received support at all these levels was it adopted as policy.

My informants had learned to listen in ways that modified their own attitudes, their behaviours and the attitudes and behaviours of others in their organizations (Greenleaf On Becoming 303). The basis for mutuality between my informants and their followers is their shared search for meaning and the humility with which that is pursued. This allows for leaders learning from their followers and for them all to grow together but it also demands a mutual acceptance of each person's limitations and errors. It involves a high degree of listening and reciprocity between the leaders and their students and staff. It might be possible say that by their listening and reciprocity the leaders are serving the interests of their followers rather than the shared ideal. I would, however, argue that the ideal is best served when the followers' legitimate needs are taken seriously and community is fostered.

### **The Mundane**

The second thing that spoke of mutuality in my informant's relationships was their willingness to take care of mundane things. I have already talked about the detailed care Louis takes with hospitality, how Betty works long hours so that "things can run smoothly in the morning" and how Father Leonardo cares for the correspondence and logistical details for the Catholic schools organization. In connection with his work as principal, Father Leonardo explains, "I sometimes will pick up some of the dirty work with them [the teachers] as well and sit in on meetings with parents, just to give them the assurance that I am with them." All my informants took for granted that they would do the trivial things in addition to the more ostensive leadership roles.

Doing the trivial things has the effect of communicating a value for that work and the people who do it. Leaving something behind with the expectation that someone else will clean it up for you communicates something about how you value yourself in relation to that task and the person who does that task. My informants wanted to demonstrate that they valued the people around them in such a way that it would be felt. The fact the David prepares carefully for the graduation rehearsal communicates to the students that their time is valuable, that they are worthy of such preparation and that he wants them to be comfortable in this situation. This makes the response David gets from the students less surprising.

Because of her personal example, when Father Leonardo asks for volunteers, they are willing to help, even in the mundane ways. A service mentality pervades his school. An example might be the occasion when the theatre arts teacher who had "devoted innumerable afternoons to the coaching and directing of the play" for a coffee house was supported by others who "chipped in with some backdrops", and arranged for food, sound equipment and tables. When I asked Father Leonardo about the teachers' attitudes to this "extra" work, he said that most view it as something in which they are pleased to be involved. I attributed this largess to Father Leonardo's willingness to do his share of the menial tasks like the folding of programs when everyone else was busy rather than delegate them to other "less important" people.

However, I also had the sense that one of my informants may be serving too much. By doing all of the mundane tasks, followers enjoy only the benefits without any of the arranging and background work that must go into things. My sense was that this may not be optimal for the leader in that it is too busy, and, secondly, that it may feed an unhealthy need to control. I also thought that it allowed the others to wash their hands of those tasks and decreased the ownership they felt for the organization. This could result in the sense that they need not bother; it will get done without their effort. When things do get done

without them, it merely reinforces the pattern. After this pattern has gone on for several years the organization can be weakened in that it cannot stand without that leader there to pick up the pieces because dependency has been fostered.

I saw my informants as promoting mutuality in their organizations by taking a share in the mundane tasks of the organizations they were leaders within. They worked hard to be well prepared and to provide optimal leadership. It was only when they served to the extent that the service of others was limited that I began to ask questions about whether they were serving too much. It is possible to do that to the detriment of the organization and its ideals.

### **Redefinition of Position**

The shared ideal and search for meaning that contributes to the growth of both the leader and the led within servant leadership also implies a redefinition or modification of their position within the organization. First, writers such as Burns and William Foster whom I presented in my second chapter proposed modifications within the hierarchical system and supported the idea of positional exchanges between followers and leaders. Second, this is in contrast to the *primus inter pares* of Greenleaf that surrounds the leader with equals.

### **Modifications Within the Hierarchical System**

As was suggested by Burns (425, 452), Louis enjoyed a leadership position that was "up" in the system because it allowed him the autonomy that translates into power "to make things happen". As a leader, Louis was able to identify resources, bring them into his school or his community and see that they were used for the good of that community. It gives him great satisfaction to have done that service.

I would rather be a leader than a slave and like the freedom to make things happen. Maybe all those things come with power or authority. I don't ever see myself as being a dictator.

I also noticed two examples of positional exchange in which my informant as the leader, gave up their leadership role to a follower. First, Louis would initiate a project, but he was also able to leave the project in other people's hands once it was underway and they understood what needed to be done. Louis was the initiator but he did not have to remain as its leader. Second, when Tom came to Father Leonardo's school fifteen years ago, he had no idea that he would become the principal when he retired. He, however, provided opportunities for his growth in the classroom and then as an administrator so that he is now completely confident and relaxed about having him take over in his place.

My informants seemed concerned first and foremost about their particular ideal, but also about every form of unfairness they came into contact with. While they redefined the system so as to turn it away from only bolstering their personal positions, it may be possible to criticize my informants for not going far enough. None of them was working to change or challenge the system that some might see as repressive and non emancipatory for certain groups. In their dedication to their ideals, they may have neglected to do sufficient systemic work, thus leaving their organizations vulnerable to leaders who do not serve. It is possible that the systems they modified through their service may revert to less generous forms when they leave. All my informants came from a generation in which their leadership was sought out, in demand, and they had little experience with and therefore knowledge of the socio-political issues raised by William Foster, Shakeshaft and Blackmore. It would have been interesting to check the perceptions of the teachers, the women, the followers generally about this but that was outside the scope of my study.

Louis modified his position as leader within the hierarchical system by using it to serve his community and their needs and also by preparing for and passing on the leadership of his initiatives when they were ready. Father Leonardo "grew his own" replacement and is delighted the leadership he anticipates. These actions can have the effect

of softening the hierarchical system and making it more amenable to humanity. However, none of my informants worked to modify their hierarchical system.

*Primus Inter Pares*

I found an example of Greenleaf's *primus inter pares* in David's account of the way his college operates. Greenleaf suggests that the hierarchical principle which places one person in charge as a "lone chief atop a pyramidal structure" be replaced (Servant Leadership 61) with a *primus inter pares* (Servant Leadership 67) by which he means a first among equals rather than a single chief (Servant Leadership 61). He suggests surrounding a leader with others who are equally strong (Servant Leadership 63-65) so that no single person has unchecked power but that all are both restrained and encouraged by their peers (Servant Leadership 71). *"No person is complete; no one is to be entrusted with all. Completeness is to be found only in the complementary talents of several who relate as equals"* (Servant Leadership 112 italics in the original). David describes their version of this arrangement this way:

BUBC [David's college] has often been accused of having all of us too much on one level. Maybe it is accurate, but on the basis of my experience last year, I have argued that BUBC is one of the most hierarchical places imaginable in its decision making, only at the top of the hierarchy is not a person but a group. Our Provost has very little power. Our register has very little power. None of the individuals has independent power.

I asked him whether this was different for him now that he is president, but he said that "in terms of formal power" there was "absolutely no change". The president also works through and with the faculty. David likes it that way and says, "that part doesn't bother me at all."

It remains, however, that this arrangement is somewhat unusual and that other groups have difficulty relating to it. This is suggested in the consortium discussions where

the other colleges have sent to the table those who are "basically the ones who make the decisions." David's college was unable to do that and this causes some discomfort and delay.

One of the big differences among us as partners is that ... the BUBC people who are around the table aren't [the ones who make the decisions]. Now, it's not that they are uninfluential, but our style doesn't rest that kind of power in a few people. We couldn't have had any six who could have made the decision. So, it's not that the wrong ones were chosen, but simply, that's not a way it could be done.

The examples of modifications within the hierarchical system were interesting and stimulated my thinking. It is my sense that examples of *primus inter pares* in which the leader is surrounded by equals are fairly rare in education and I was pleased to have had David articulate one example of it for me.

The shared ideal and the mutuality of a search for meaning had implications for my informants' relationships with their students, staff and colleagues. I found an open sharing of humanity with all of its exhilaration and disappointments and a serving of one another for the sake of the shared ideal. Even positions of leadership were not seen as things to be clung to but, like power, they were turned to the service of the ideal with positional exchanges and an example of Greenleaf's *primus inter pares* among my informants. I would however, also wish to remind my readers that these statements are based on my conversations with and observations of my informants themselves rather than their followers because that was outside the scope of my study.

## Conclusion

I have come to see servant leadership as a concept that can help me to understand the leadership of my informants. While its meaning ranged from straightforward community mindedness to a rather daunting and unattainable ideal for my informants, they stated clearly that leadership is not to be exercised for the benefit of the leaders but for the

sake of the people and the ideals that are shared. They saw service as the ultimate test of good leadership and suggested that it is possible to use a position of leadership as a servant.

I have identified four servant leadership themes that came out of my explorations with my informants in light of the literature: First, service provided them with a remarkable degree of personal fulfilment. Second, the concept of servant leadership helps to explain the kind of leaders my informants had become as a result of the interaction between their experiences, their personal histories and their beliefs. Third, my informants were passionate about an ideal, and, fourth, their relationships were characterized by mutuality.

First, for my informants, servant leadership involved a degree of altruism but it did not demand complete self-denial, rather, it was essentially self-fulfilment. They saw themselves as gaining from their service because they identified their individual fulfilment with the addressing of important needs in such a way that they and those around them benefited. I observed that my informants loved what they were doing, that they found meaning in it, that they wanted to do it and that they were pleased with their accomplishments.

Second, I came to see servant leadership as an expression of my informant's individual life experience and belief systems; it was an expression of their character. It seemed to have a natural element in that I found it difficult to imagine them leading in any other way. My four informants showed their individuality in the ways they led, their motivation for their service and in the ways they were fulfilled by their work. As their character stemmed from their personal heritage, their expression of servant leadership was characteristic of themselves. I do not intend to convey that my informant's leadership style was completely determined by their life experiences and belief systems, and that anyone given the same experiences and beliefs would lead in the same way. An element of choice remains. Each of my informants was an individual who had learned to know themselves,

their interests, their abilities and, through accepting this heritage, they had found a way in which to work together with other people to the benefit of a larger group.

Third, my informants had something outside of themselves that they were passionate about and that transcended their self interest. Their conviction about the validity of the shared ideal was also the basis upon which my informants respected themselves and the work they did. My informants felt that these ideals were worthy of sacrifice, time and work and they would defend their ideals to others without compromise, not because it made them more comfortable, but because they saw the goal as being important. My informants' personal ideals were reflected in the goals that lay at the heart of their organization and these were shared by the other people in the organization. Although they respected the right of other people to make their own choices, my informants were there to persuade, although not to coerce or manipulate, as many as possible about their ideal. They were not neutral about the decisions reached by others because they were personally convinced about their views and wanted to share their views with others.

My informants shared their power with those people who shared their ideal in ways that suited the situation and the individual people they were dealing with, all in the service of the shared ideal. My informants were firmly in charge of their organizations and exercised a fair amount of power in service of the shared ideal. Because they were all working toward a common goal and the basic purpose of the organization was one that the followers were also convinced about, they appeared to feel supported by the leadership of my informants when I observed my informants relating to them. Servant leadership, as portrayed by my informants, was not powerlessness; it was using power to serve and protect. It seemed that power was safe in their hands because they served and were reluctant to use their power to hurt others.

Fourth, my informants' relationships were characterized by mutuality. The basis for mutuality between my informants and their followers was their shared search for

meaning and the humility with which that was pursued. They were learning and growing together with their followers. As an expression of mutuality, all my informants took for granted that they would do their share of the mundane things in addition to the more ostensive leadership roles. The shared ideal and search for meaning that contributes to the growth of both the leader and the led within servant leadership also implies a redefinition or modification of their position within the organization. I saw all my informants as using their positions within their organizations in the service of the shared ideal and placing that ideal ahead of their own advancement.

## **Chapter Nine - THE HEART OF THE MATTER**

### **The Essence of Servant Leadership**

As I explained in my first chapter, I did not set out with a ready definition of servant leadership. Rather, my research was designed to explore the concept of servant leadership first through the literature and then through observing and talking with my informants about their service. As I conclude this study, service within leadership remains an important ideal. It is also a concept that is helpful in thinking and talking about leadership.

However, it continues to elude precise definition. This has led to difficulties in the identification of service and communication about it, and has interfered with being certain enough to bring closure to the concept. On the other hand, I suggest that perhaps servant leadership is a concept that benefits from ambiguity in that it remains open to additional alternatives and higher aspirations than those I have demonstrated in my research. There is more to be discovered and it is my sense that my study will have achieved something if it plays a part in giving direction to that ongoing process.

I can, moreover, offer three observations essential to servant leadership as I perceived it in my informants. I have organized my observations into three points that are related to the material presented in the eighth chapter, but I have begun with the passionate ideal that I feel was the source of both the mutuality in their relationships and the transcendence of their self-interest.

## **A Passion**

It is my sense that at the very heart of servant leadership is a passionately held belief or ideal that is also widely accepted as a morally good thing by others. I would like to pick up on two ideas from this statement; first, the passion with which the ideal is held and, second, the moral question of how goodness is determined.

First, servant leaders believe that something can be made significantly better and they are dedicated to accomplishing this because they feel that this ideal is worthy of sacrifice, time and work. This becomes their passion. They do this not because it makes them more comfortable, but because they see the goal as being important and this conviction carries them throughout their life time.

This visceral and emotional aspect of servant leadership arises out of their personal heritage and is therefore an expression of individual background, life experience and belief system. Servant leadership implies leaders that have learned to know themselves, their interests, and their abilities and have found a way to express those to the benefit of a larger group. Because this passion is closely tied into who they are as people, some might see it as a self-interest. I, however, differentiate this passion from self-interest in that it is not pursued for the sake of personal material benefit. Their initial interest grows into a passion throughout a life time of sifting and sorting in conjunction with others who also recognize the ideal as important.

My informants were people who had come to see their work and themselves as worthy of respect because they contributed to the important ideal. Although there was a degree of altruism, without exception, my informants were people who loved what they were doing, who found meaning in it, and who were pleased with their accomplishments. Servant leadership may have implied the partial sacrifice of things like money or prestige

for my informants, but it is my sense that this was more than compensated for in the fundamental, personal fulfilment they experienced and valued.

I am less certain about servant leadership being the central, defining element of my informant's leadership as "getting the job done" in the sense of serving the shared ideal seemed to be their focus. Perhaps it was less the leadership style that motivated them than the desire to accomplish their goals, with servant leadership being their chosen means to get it done. Servant leadership itself was not their goal, or their passion; that was reserved for the ideal that they saw as worthy of their sacrifice and respect.

Second, there is a moral component to the concept and practice of servant leadership. That is; to serve oneself as a leader is wrong, to serve an ideal is better, to care is good, to make the world a better place is good, and so on. I would like to remind my readers that for the purposes of this research I have adopted Greenleaf's test of service as the criteria for goodness within leadership: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?" (Servant Leadership 13 italics in the original) This statement implies accountability and listening with interest to the experience of those around the leader and therefore emphasizes serving the community's well-being.

When we move beyond the immediate community, there is the additional question of what changes constitute making the world a better place. This is a larger issue that demands thinking beyond the confines of the immediate community group to the effect the goals and values of that group have on other people and other groups. As I suggested earlier, Singer and Wooton argue that leaders must be vigilant and careful in thinking about how their group's shared ideal affects people outside their group so that their commitment to their immediate ideal and the functional matters of accomplishing it do not overtake a wider social responsibility. Singer and Wooton recognize that working together on a

commonly held ideal can be exhilarating, but also that the ideal must be repeatedly scrutinized for its moral implications and effects on all other people (99). This is a part of the moral component of servant leadership.

It is possible to ask whether servant leaders are necessarily seen as good leaders. Would I have received the same nominations if I had specified only that I was seeking "good leaders"? While it is conceivable that a servant leader may not necessarily be a good leader, when I spoke to my nominators about their nominations, it seemed that they were selecting their nominations from among people who they thought of as good leaders. Whether they would have thought of these same nominees if I specified a "good leader" rather than someone reputed to combine service with leadership, is a matter of speculation. It makes sense to suggest that many leaders have elements of service in their leadership, but that for one reason or another my informants did it more, or did it more consistently than some others and therefore came to mind when the nomination was requested.

Since my informants all had a passion for their ideals, this seems to be central to servant leadership. This ideal was pursued through servant leadership, but remained their central concern. Their ideals were accepted as morally good by those around them, and my informants listened carefully so as to know what affect their actions were having on others.

### **A Shared Passion**

Since "it is difficult for the influence of an individual to go very far without the mediation of an institution" (Greenleaf *On Becoming* 330), servant leadership, by its nature, ideally involves sharing the passion with other people within an organization that is focused on the same goal. The ideal is cultivated within the organization and influences that people decide to enter into or to remain within that organization. In servant leadership the ideal is too important to compromise, so servant leaders work for heartfelt support by personal example, consultation and verbal persuasion. They are not satisfied with mere begrudging compliance and see little benefit in coercion or manipulation. Servant leaders

are not neutral about the decisions reached by others about the ideal. However, the process of persuasion is tempered, first, by the servant leader's acceptance of followers as whole people, and second, by the recognition that the leader's views and work must be enriched by the views of others if they are to be effective. Servant leaders know that they cannot do it alone.

First, the shared passion implies an open acceptance of others; that is, a sharing of humanity and a willingness to listen reciprocally and to learn from one another. Servant leadership suggests a sharing in the mundane tasks and identification with others so that everyone grows together in the service of their shared ideal. The leader accepts the followers as they are and is accepted by them as an equal who also needs to receive care.

Second, servant leadership implies respect for the contributions and choices made by others. Servant leaders use their power and position to serve the interests of the shared ideal and to also empower others who serve that ideal with them. The servant leader is eager to see followers grow and become more able to provide leadership even if this means a challenge to their leadership. Servant leaders look for ways to increase the power of everyone in their organization so that they make up more power together. It is not powerlessness; it is using power to serve together. Power is safe in the hands of those who serve because they idealize not power, but love; not force, but example; not coercion, but consensus.

Because the shared ideal is regarded as an opportunity to reflect on and to seek out the best way together, the conviction of the leader is tempered by an acknowledged need for the influence of others who share the ideal. The use of the leader's position is restrained by not only her dedication to the ideal, but also her consideration for, commitment to, and love of the people with whom she works. My informants were people who looked beyond themselves and their personal interests to consider the total lives of the

people they worked with. They were holistic in their outlook as they worked together to accomplish the shared ideal.

I have stated here what I learned from my informants but I would also like to acknowledge that there are questions particularly about interpretation of mutuality that remain unclear. For example, one could ask whether an approach that my informants understood as persuasion might be understood as coercion by the teachers on their staff. One might also ask whether the ideal was as mutually shared and arrived at as my informants believed it was. What happens when the servant-leader's ideals are at odds with those of the followers? Can the servant leader serve those who disagree with the ideal? Is the leader perceived by his followers as truly patient and mutually interactive with those who disagree with him or do they perhaps see him as simply waiting them out? How do those who do not share the organizational ideal feel about the leader's service and their experience in the organization?

Many of these questions would be best dealt with by speaking to the followers and my study was limited to speaking to and observing the leaders themselves. I was able to identify some clues by listening very carefully to the attitudes my informants displayed in their descriptions of their relationships with their staff, students and their colleagues. I also found that I could pick up a considerable amount from observing my informants' interactions in leadership situations and the clarification I sought in subsequent interviews. However, the above questions remain outstanding and must be pursued in another study that includes speaking to followers about their perceptions of the mutuality of the leader's actions and attitudes.

Servant leadership implies the sharing of the passion with others in an organization that has the ideal as its goal. The people in the organization are either persuaded about the ideal or are open to being persuaded about it. They work together, each respecting and cultivating the ability of the other to contribute to the accomplishment of the shared ideal.

### **The Shared Passion Overtakes Self-Interest**

At the root of servant leadership is the conviction that leadership, as it should be, is not there for itself but for the sake of the ideal and through the ideal, for other people. However, just as the concept of service remained resistant to definition, its perceived opposite also remained ambiguous throughout my research. One of the reasons for this is that all my informants had high levels of self-fulfilment in their work that could be interpreted as a form of self-interest, but this did not preclude them from being nominated as servant leaders. It seems that my nominators saw a sense of personal accomplishment in work as laudable rather than distracting from the leader as a servant.

I speculate that while there are forms of self-interest that we resist in a leader, there are other forms that we applaud in that we generally desire our leaders to enjoy leadership and experience fulfilment in it. Perhaps we recognize that personal fulfilment is one of the things that allows a leader to stay the course over a life-time. What we resist is the leader who is merely self-serving, self-indulgent and seeking self-aggrandisement and doing it at the expense of others. This is why, in the following section, I suggest that it may be helpful to think in terms of leaders being individual blends of self-interest and service in their leadership. Second, I write about the relationship between the inward quality of service and other styles of leadership.

#### **A Blend**

There is a sense in which all my writing is an answer to those who say that there is no such thing as altruism, that every act is selfish, and that leaders are there only to shore up their position and to keep their advantages in tact. I feel that my informants have firmly refuted these notions and, by their actions, have suggested that it is possible to use their power and position as a servant and to have purposes other than their own power and advantage. I am not saying that this quality is either rare or ubiquitous - only that my informants exemplify it.

In my mind the opposite of the servant leaders are leaders who use organizations and the people within it only for their own ends, without regard for others within or outside the organization. Their only consideration is the most efficient way to secure their goals and rewards in the form of money, prestige and advancement. While there may be a few leaders who are totally self-serving like this, even they will eventually recognize that their self-serving orientation must be masked from others in order to be sustainable. It is my sense that it is unlikely that any one leader is either completely self-oriented or completely altruistic but that each leader is probably a unique blending of the two. It seems likely that many leaders are somewhat serving in that they want to "do a good job" and see their personal rewards as tied into enhancing the overall performance of their organization. They are essentially seeking a "win-win" situation for themselves and their organization.

My four informants, presumably, were selected as servant leaders not because they were doing something novel, but because they were seen as practising service to a greater degree than others known to the nominators. My informants were motivated less by their own rewards and more by their ideals such as education, young people being nurtured into the church, community housing, and the enjoyment of music. For them, service became (to varying degrees even within my sample) an important element of their leadership in their endeavour to reach the shared ideal. It incorporated "getting the job done" and "being democratic" in as much as those also served the ideal.

It is possible that a leader may "do a good job" efficiently and pragmatically to provide a service; to foster an ideal; to encourage others in the way that Greenleaf's test of service describes both within and outside the immediate community; and to serve something outside of themselves and their personal interests. It is also possible that these very same things can be done to build up the leader's position, to garner personal benefits, or to keep another person or group from advancing their personal growth. While motivation may be the telling factor, I do not think servant leadership precludes efficiency,

pragmatism or any other legitimate leadership activity that respects others. I am suggesting that all leaders are likely to be a blend of self-interest and service and that my informants were nominated because, in the minds of those who nominated them, they were leaders who practised service to a somewhat greater extent.

#### Servant Leadership as an Inward Quality

Servant leadership is a concept that is useful in talking about leadership, but other approaches also make positive contributions because organizational concerns like goals, persuading others about those goals, fostering relationships among the people who work together and so on, continue to be a concern. It is my sense that the inward quality of service may affect how the leader goes about accomplishing those things.

It would seem likely that the servant leader would be comfortable within any organisation or a leadership style that allows them to serve their ideals; that they can share with others; and that allows them to treat others as mutually important to themselves. They would be comfortable in a situation in which they can share the human search for meaning, can serve and be served, and can allow for mutual accountability. Conversely, they would be uncomfortable when one or more of these conditions was not met. Adverse conditions might be tolerated for short periods of time for specific purposes such as emergencies, but it is my sense that my informants would become uncomfortable over an extended period of time. That is simply not how they think about themselves in relation to other people. Servant leadership is a giving style of leadership rather than a getting or taking, restoring rather than using up - particularly of personal and community good will.

It would seem to me, however, that a determined individual on an individual basis might find creative ways to communicate service, giving and caring in any position within any system, no matter how repressive. Greenleaf says that while one may not achieve a perfect society or even a perfect institution, it remains important to attempt to be a servant in whatever situation one finds oneself (On Becoming 344). One reason I think this may be

possible is that, for better or worse, servant leadership lies within the leader rather than the system. Servant leadership seems to me to be a matter of the heart, a way of being, a way of relating, and a value system that shows who the leader thinks she is in relation to other people and the world.

The second reason is that Greenleaf himself worked within a large business for all of his working life. He describes himself as one who got inside a large institution, listened to the criticisms and then, when he found an opportunity, did something about them (Greenleaf On Becoming 369). He states that the challenges of our society will "ultimately be met by institutions: home, business, church, school, labour unions, government. But the initiating forces that bring a new level of institutional performance must come from individuals..." (Greenleaf On Becoming 297). Greenleaf was one such individual and it is my hunch that there are others like him.

I see servant leadership less as a unique style of leadership than as a way of being and relating to others and the world at large. While some leadership styles, situations and organizations are obviously more amenable to service than are others, service is an inward attitude that can be cultivated within any individual where ever they find themselves. What we need is motivated individuals who will work with our institutions to bring them to a higher level of service for the good of all.

### The Future

There is much that we do not yet know about servant leadership but it is a concept that holds promise because it is in harmony with real needs and reflects the best of what it means to be human. Servant leadership remains an ideal of what many consider best in the human species as it matches with our human nature and fulfils our needs and we are prepared to demand it of our leaders. To foster servant leadership we must pay attention, first, to our value system, second, to demonstrating and fostering the choice to serve, and

finally, to our commitment to community. Servant leadership has implications for nurture and education as we cannot simply expect servant leaders to appear.

It involves, first, a value system that is developed over time through an iterative interaction of life experiences with the belief system. Servant leaders must come to see personal gains such as money and prestige as less important than the ideal they share with others, so servant leadership challenges us to decide what qualities we wish to "nurture in people who may evolve as strong people in leadership positions" (Greenleaf On Becoming 349). Servant leaders have to learn to think for themselves against the current of popular opinion so that they can come to value their ideal and be passionate about it. Leaders who feel that personal satisfaction lies in getting as much as possible for themselves rather than in giving to others are likely to seek impatient and superficial self-fulfilment and achievement rather than to serve.

Second, servant leadership involves a personal choice to serve that, although it cannot be dictated, can be modelled. Greenleaf suggests that our overemphasis on training critics and experts discourages the kind of responsible participation that results in leadership growth (On Becoming 328, 332). He would like to see us provide a climate characterized by responsibility, research opportunity, challenge, incentives and specific goals such that true greatness in leadership can emerge (On Becoming 229-231). Service is learned by observation and guided participation in service with others who think it is important so that the novice comes to identify with the reasons behind it. To foster servant leadership, we must refine our own practice and share our service with others in such a way that they can come to understand it and embrace it for themselves as well.

Finally, optimally, the real presence and receptivity of servant leadership becomes a community in which one serves as well as receives service. Because servant leadership involves a happy marriage of a personal mission with personal ability; long-term, healthy community relationships that allow people to explore their leadership potential must be

valued, cultivated and maintained. The potential servant leader must be given ample opportunity to experiment, to try different things and to be given honest feedback about their involvement within a reciprocally trusting community. Servant leadership is about a community commitment and effort in the service of its ideals.

This stands in opposition to the radical individualism of our culture in which individuals are seen as sovereign and without obligation to one another. In such a setting, if the community meets the expectations of the individuals, they remain; if the community does not meet those expectations, they go elsewhere in search of more for themselves. In this view, community has no meaning or value except to deliver goods to individuals and the community can place on individuals only those obligations that the individual willingly accepts. This promotes the dissolution of the bonds of community and consequent isolation within which only determined and already committed individuals may practice servant leadership but it cannot be fostered.

In terms of further studies, my research was an initial look at how educational leaders think about their service and as such, it suggests a number of complementary studies. For example, my research specified leaders from the field of education even though the ethic of service may be stronger in other sectors of our society. A study that goes beyond to the hospital, volunteer, business, or religious sector could be used to compare and contrast my findings.

As I explained earlier, I would have been happy to have had a sample that was gender balanced and included a person of colour. Because women have traditionally "served" and thereby been kept in service roles even when their inclination and ability goes beyond those roles, I would like to see a study of women leaders. Is it possible for them to practice servant leadership? Another study that includes informants from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds would be very helpful in challenging the observations I have already made. In addition, all my informants were well advanced on their career

paths. It would be interesting to study leaders who are not yet well established and perhaps younger, and to compare that data with my present sample.

I would also suggest that studies incorporating the views of the followers be undertaken. It may be more difficult to find leaders who are willing to have their leadership "talked about" by others, but an effort to build that kind of trust must be undertaken so the information given by the leader can be collaborated by their followers. Not having access to their comments and views means that questions about mutuality remain largely outstanding.

Finally, by its nature, dissertation research is carried out by a single individual, albeit in a supervised setting. As such it does not benefit from the interactions of a team approach in which the impressions of various researchers from a variety of disciplines, about a single leader can be compared and contrasted.

Servant leadership involves a passion that is shared with others and that overtakes self-interest. To foster servant leadership we must learn the rewards of serving and teach their value to others so that they can learn to identify deeply with the ideal over a period of time. This occurs optimally in an honest, trusting community where service is reciprocal. While at this point the way to achieve servant leadership is by no means clear, we may be ready to make a beginning that will move us in the right direction and once we have begun, we will learn how to take those next steps (Greenleaf On Becoming 357).

Servant leadership does not imply powerlessness; but using power to serve together. Power is safe in the hands of those who serve because they idealize not power, but love; not force, but example; not coercion, but consensus. It is a way of being, a way of relating, and a value system that shows who the leaders think they in relation to other people and the world.

## APPENDIX A

### Louis Lafrance - Director of Adult Education

Interviews (These occurred in 1997)		length	
Preliminary Meeting	February 26	3 hours	9 pages
First Taped Interview	March 14	1.5 hours	38 pages
Second Taped Interview	March 31	1.25 hours	48 pages
Third Taped Interview	June 10	<u>1.5 hours</u>	<u>40 pages</u>
	Total	7.25 hours	*135 pages

Observations (These occurred in 1997)			
At Adult Ed classes	March 1,3,4,6	4.25 hours	21 pages
City wide Adult Ed Meeting	April 25	3 hours	8 pages
Man Basketball Assoc. Tourn	April 26	2 hours	12 pages
Self Help Group	May 21	2.5 hours	3 pages
Community Housing Board	May 22	<u>5 hours</u>	<u>16 pages</u>
	Total	16.75 hours	#60 pages

\* Compare to the statement from my ethics application which states: I plan to conduct three to four one hour interviews with each of my informants.

#Compare to paragraph from November 1996 memo to my committee - While the number of observations will be dependent upon my presence being acceptable to the leader, I would anticipate that I would attempt a minimum of at least three observation sessions with each of my informants.

**David Daniels - Provost and President of  
the Baptist Union Bible College**

<b>Interviews (These occurred in 1997)</b>		<b>length</b>	
Preliminary Meeting	March 25	1 hour	6 pages
First Taped Interview	April 8	1 hour	31 pages
Second Taped Interview	April 29	1 hour	32 pages
Third Taped Interview	May 23	1 hour	33 pages
Fourth Taped Interview	June 27	1 hour	38 pages
Fifth Taped Interview	August 20	<u>1 hour</u>	<u>42 pages</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6 hours</b>	<b>*182 pages</b>

<b>Observations (These occurred in 1997)</b>			
At a Student Meeting	March 27	1.25 hours	5 pages
A Graduation Rehearsal	April 26	1.5 hours	14 pages
A Consortium Meeting	June 24	<u>6 hours</u>	<u>11 pages</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8.75 hours</b>	<b>#30 pages</b>

\* Compare to the statement from my ethics application which states: I plan to conduct three to four one hour interviews with each of my informants.

#Compare to paragraph from November 1996 memo to my committee - While the number of observations will be dependent upon my presence being acceptable to the leader, I would anticipate that I would attempt a minimum of at least three observation sessions with each of my informants.

**Father Leonardo - Principal of St. Joseph's School  
Active in Catholic Schools Organization**

<b>Interviews (These occurred in 1997)</b>		<b>length</b>	
Preliminary Meeting	March 4	1 hour	7 pages
First Taped Interview	March 12	1.5 hours	44 pages
Second Taped Interview	April 9	1.25 hours	34 pages
Third Taped Interview	May 6	1.75 hours	49 pages
Fourth Taped Interview	June 26	<u>1 hour</u>	<u>32 pages</u>
	Total	6.5 hours	*166 pages

<b>Observations (These occurred in 1997)</b>			
At a Committee Meeting	March 5	3.5 hours	20 pages
At a PSPP Meeting	April 15	2.25 hours	10 pages
School Staff Meeting	April 16	1.25 hours	13 pages
School Organization Meeting	May 14	<u>2.25 hours</u>	<u>11 pages</u>
	Total	9.25 hours	#54 pages

\* Compare to the statement from my ethics application which states: I plan to conduct three to four one hour interviews with each of my informants.

#Compare to paragraph from November 1996 memo to my committee - While the number of observations will be dependent upon my presence being acceptable to the leader, I would anticipate that I would attempt a minimum of at least three observation sessions with each of my informants.

**Betty Mac Neil - Director of the  
Premier Conservatory of Music**

<b>Interviews (These occurred in 1995)</b>		<b>length</b>	
First Taped Interview	February 13	1.5 hours	44 pages
Second Taped Interview	March 24	<u>1.5 hours</u>	<u>53 pages</u>
	Total	3 hours	*97 pages

<b>Observations (These occurred in 1995)</b>			
At a master Class	February 11	2.75 hours	32 pages
At a Parent's Meeting	February 16	1.5 hours	25 pages
A Student Recital	March 19	<u>1.5 hours</u>	<u>16 pages</u>
	Total	5.75 hours	#73 pages

\* Compare to the statement from my ethics application which states: I plan to conduct three to four one hour interviews with each of my informants.

#Compare to paragraph from November 1996 memo to my committee - While the number of observations will be dependent upon my presence being acceptable to the leader, I would anticipate that I would attempt a minimum of at least three observation sessions with each of my informants.

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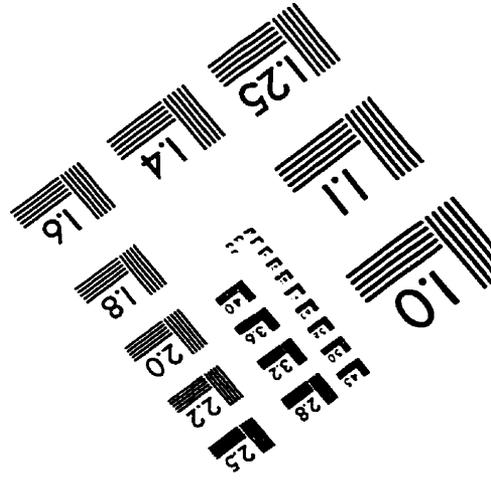
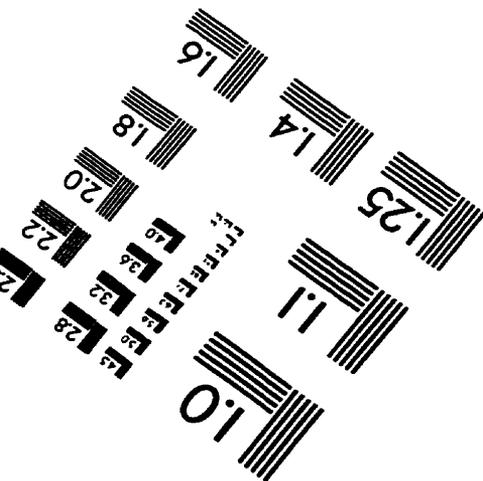
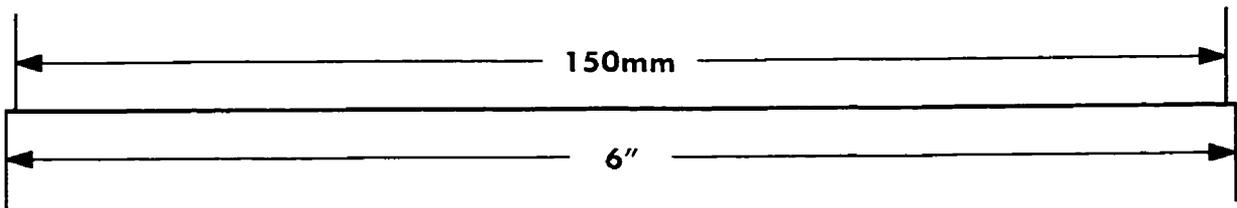
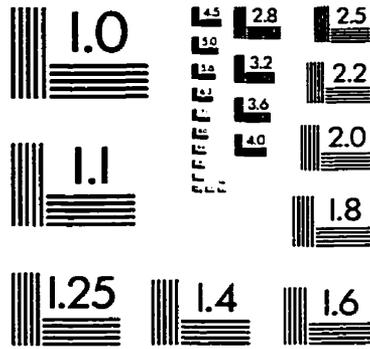
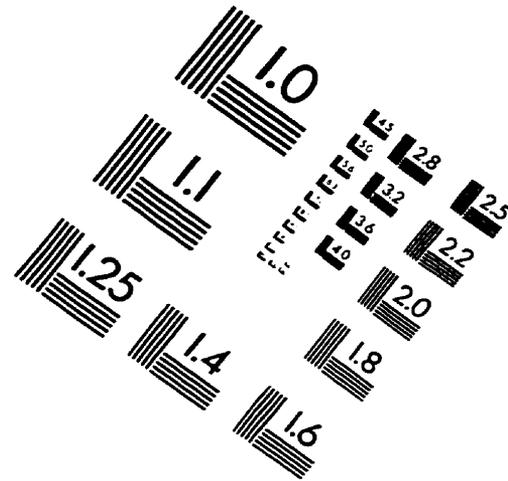
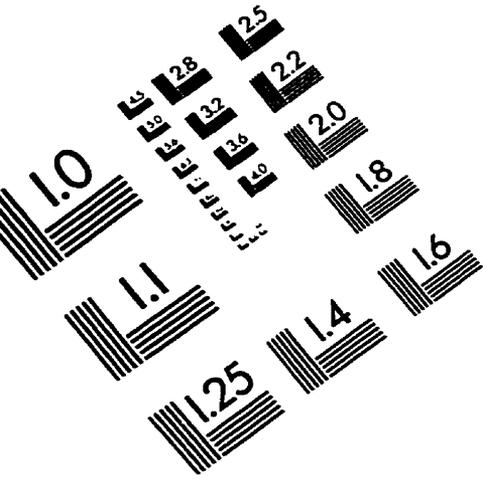
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