A Critical Review of the Historical Development
of Ministry Order in the Christian Church

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Abstract

Church Management is an important factor in the success of the ministry of the Church. The historical development of a 'ministry order' in the Christian Church demonstrates its possible contribution to, and effect of this system of Church administration and . management on, Church Ministry. This article presents a critical review of the 'ministry order' throughout the Apostolic, Patristic, Medieval, Reformation and Post-Reformation Periods of the Christian Church, in an attempt to discover insights which might enhance Church Management initiatives in response to the post-modern challenges of the present day.

After Jesus' ascension, the coming of the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8, 2:2-4) on Pentecost, in Jerusalem sparked the beginning of the ministry of many generations of Christians to fulfil the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20). The Church grew in Jerusalem (Acts 2:41, 47; 6:7) and Antioch (Acts 11:20-21) and spread quickly across Asia Minor and Europe during the

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first century. This growth and development of the Church brought it to a stage where more structured and systematic administration was called for, to support the advancement of its mission. The first such instance can be observed when the Apostles enlisted administrative help towards the care of the believers' general welfare, in Acts 6:1-4. This administrative support enabled the Apostles to focus on their mission-critical tasks, and led to positive growth in the Church (Ac 6:7).

Up to the present day, church management still remains an important factor for the success of the ministry of the Church. In his book, *Becoming a Healthy Church: 10 Characteristics*, Stephen A Macchia acknowledged "wise administration and accountability" as one of the characteristics of a healthy church.[1] In Malaysia, right leadership and church structure(both being elements of church management) are among the proposed responses to the observed trends and challenges of the 21st century.[2]

The Church as an Organisation

Management practices are often associated with organizations – corporate or otherwise. According to G A Cole's definition, an organisation bears the characteristics of being *people-based*, having relatively *structured collaboration*

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[1] Macchia, Stephen A. Becoming a Healthy Church: 10 Characteristics. (Chinese Edition). pp24, 223-256.

[2] Ho, Daniel K.C., "Into the 21st century: Challenges facing the Church in Malaysia." In Thu, E.Y.; Burfield, D.R.; del Rosario, R.L.; and Chong, T.L. (Eds.). Christian Reflections Within An Emerging Industrialised Society. pp 21-45.

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between its members, sharing *common goals*, displaying *interdependence* between members, demonstrating mechanism of *coordination and control* for its operations, with values and practices forming the *culture* and identity of the organisation as a whole.[3] Essentially, an organisation is a social system, formed on the basis of mutual interest among its members, maintained by a commonly accepted value system that moderates ethical treatment within the organisation.[4]

The Greek word *ekklesia* used for "church" denotes an assembly,[5] reflecting the *people-based* nature of the Church. As for sharing *common goals*, the Church is called and redeemed by God for a special purpose, and is entrusted with the mission of being the salt of the earth and light of the world (Mt 5:13-14) and bringing the Good News of salvation to all mankind (Mt 28:18-19). Being described as the body of Christ (1 Co 12:12-27) illustrates the *interdependence* of the members of the Church. The characteristics of *structured collaboration* and *coordination and control* are observed in the Church, as various roles and tasks are defined for believers (Eph 4:11-12; Ro 12:6-8; 1 Ti 3:2-13). The principle of love and humility in leadership (Jn 13:5; Lk 22:26) and ministry dictates the noble *culture* of the life and function of the Church.

The Church exhibits the characteristics of an organisation, but, unlike any political, social or cultural entity, it is more than just a human structure. It is the body of Jesus Christ, drawing life from Christ himself, who instituted and continues its

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[3] Cole, G.A., Organisational behaviour. pp4-6.
[4] Newstrom, J.W. & Davis, K. Organiational Behavior: Human Behavior at Work. pp11-12.
[5] Zondervan compact Bible dictionary. p 111.

functions.[6] Nevertheless, as an organisation, the Church needs to be managed and administered effectively, in order to achieve its mission.

Functions of Church Management

Although generally considered a secular discipline, some Christian authors have observed that examples of management practices are often found "recorded in the pages of Scripture."[7] On this topic, Mary Go Setiawani commented that administration and management are only tools, and the spiritual nobility of the tool is determined by the user.[8] In support, Wilfred Su extolled Church management practices thus:

> *Church management is the application of theology, manifesting the essence of theology in a vivid and lively manner. Through planning, organizing, leading, evaluation, and so on, Church management may be the most natural form of the application of practical theology, providing a living showcase of the sacraments, creeds, liturgies, and other affairs of the Church.* [9]

The development of modern management theories and practices can be traced to the industrial revolution of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, amidst the vibrant process of

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[6] Zondervan compact Bible dictionary.   p 111.

[7] Anthony, Michael, "Biblical Perspectives of Christian Management," In Anthony, M.J. & Estep, J. Jr. (Eds.), *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries.*   p 13.

[8] Setiawani, Mary Go,   Christian Administration and Management.   p12.

[9] Su, Wilfred W., Management for Effective Church Ministry.   p17. (Translated from Chinese).

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industrialisation in the western societies.[10] Bartol and Martin defined management as "...the process of achieving organizational goals by engaging in the four major functions of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling." [11] In this definition, they outlined four general functions of management – planning, organizing, leading, and controlling.

Authors of books on church management such as Setiawani [12] and Xia Zhong-Jian[13] agreed with Bartol and Martin's ideas on management functions, listing planning, organising, leading, and controlling as the functions of church management. In the context of Church ministry, Setiawani defined Christian administration and management as "...the process of executing church ministry in the most effective manner, through the help of the Holy Spirit with set objectives, plans, methods, efficiency, leading and controlling, in order to achieve outcomes expected by God."[14].

Setiawani's[15] and Xia Zhong-Jian's explanation[16] of these four functions of management is similar:
- *Planning* is the function of determining the process of actions to be taken.
- *Organising* is the function of systematically assigning people to fulfil set objectives.

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[10] Bartol, Kathryn M. and Martin, David C., Management. p38.
[11] Ibid. p5.
[12] Setiawani, Mary Go,   Op. cit.   p.8
[13] Xia, Zhong-Jian 夏忠堅，教會行政與企業管理   p5.
[14] Setiawani, Mary Go, Christian Administration and Management.   p6 (Translated from Chinese).
[15] Ibid. pp8-9
[16] Xia, Zhong-Jian 夏忠堅，教會行政與企業管理.   pp5-7.

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- *Leading* is the function of inducing people to act effectively.
- *Controlling* is the function of ensuring that actions are taken according to plan.

The success of church ministry is affected by the effectiveness of church administration and management, as defined by Setiawani,[14] through the running of these four functions.

The Ministry Order of the Christian Church

Church ministry is essentially the collective service of Christians to fulfil God's purpose. In his article, Meinert Grumm discussed words commonly used for ministry in the Old Testament.[17] After analysing Grumm's work, Tsang concluded that words used for ministry in the Bible refer generally to any form of service offered, and particularly to the work of the Church in accordance to the calling of God.[18] Throughout history, the ministry of the Church has been managed by the organisation of Christians into functional levels, which Tsang referred to as Ministry Order.[19]

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[17] Grumm, Meinert, "Ministry: The Old Testament Background," Current Theology of Mission, 16, 1989, pp104-107.

[18] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of church Ministry. p29.

[19] *Ibid.* p80 By "Ministry Order", Tsang means the structural system or levels by which church ministry is ruled, managed, and administered.

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The Apostolic Period (1st Century AD)

Schaff described five ministry offices during the Apostolic Period, namely those of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Presbyter, and Deacon.[20] Each office had a specific role and function,[21] but they may have, simply, been roles and functions of service for God performed with love and humility (Lk 22:25-27),[22] rather than a "position" or "status". The Church at that time may not have operated under a strict administrative system and structure, and the Apostles were most probably helped by groups of believers in ministry, with no clear distinction between ministry offices.[23] In this environment of shared ministry, based on 1 Corinthians 14:26-31, Gordon Fee contended that believers during this period might be participating actively in ministry, even in preaching and teaching.[24]

The Patristic Period (2nd-5th Century AD)

From the "shared ministry" environment of the Apostolic Period, the organisational structure of the Church became more formalised during the Patristic Period.

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[20] Schaff, Philip, "Chapter X. Organization of the Apostolic Church". In Volume 1 First Period: Apostolic Christianity AD 1-100, History of the Christian Church. S60-62.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Tsang, Rennie L., Op. cit. p102.

[23] Marshall, Howard, "The ministry" p14.

[24] Fee, Gordon D., The First Epistle to the Corinthians, The New International Commentary on the New Testament. p696.

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Clergy and Laity

One major characteristic of the Church during the Patristic Period is the distinction between clergy and laity. Tertullian (AD 150-230) used the term "sacerdotium"[25] to denote the special position of the clergy in ministry towards God. Clement of Rome (fl 96) introduced the concept of Apostolic Succession, [26]hence the view that clergy were necessary for access to God. [27] Further, Cyprian (AD 200-258) accorded all the duties, responsibilities, and privileges of the Aaronic priesthood to the ministry offices of the Church.[28] Christians holding ministry offices began to be referred to, exclusively, as "clergy," as opposed to "laity" for the general Christian population. The tradition of solemn ordination, or consecration, by which Christians were admitted into the ministry offices or "sacerdotalis" by the "laying on of hands" probably began during this period.[29]

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[25] Schaff, Philip, "Chapter IV. Organization and Discipline of the Church," In Volume 2 Second Period: Ante-Nicene Christianity AD 100-311(325), History of the Christian Church. S42-43.

[26] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry. p121. Apostolic succession presented the bishops as successors of the Apostles, authorized and responsible for the establishment and administration of the Church.

[27] Schaff, Philip. Op. cit. This view is supported by Ignatius of Antioch.

[28] Ibid. On Cyprian's assertions regarding 'sacerdotium', Schaff commented that he may be called "the proper father of the sacerdotal conception of the Christian ministry as a mediating agency between God and the people".

[29] Ibid.

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Hierarchy of the Ministry Order

Following the concept of sacerdotium, in Schaff's records, [30] the clergy were classified into two Orders – the *ordines majores* (Major Order) and the *ordines minores* (Minor Order): the *ordines majores* being a divine institution, and many minor offices, the *ordines minores*, ministry offices such as sub-deacon, lector or reader, acolyte, exorcist, precentor, janitor, catechist, interpreter, protobishop, and the like.

Elevation of the Offices of Bishop and Deacon

In the Apostolic Period, Bishop and Presbyter refer to the same office. [31] In the Patristic Period, the office of bishop rose to becoming an office that topped the presbyter, holding the administrative authority of the church. [32] Below presbyters, deacons were gradually entrusted with more duties and responsibilities in service, such as that of "...confidential advisers, sometimes even delegates and vicars of the bishops"[33].

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[30] Schaff, Philip, "Chapter IV. Organization and Discipline of the Church," In Volume 2 Second Period: Ante-Nicene Christianity AD 100-311(325), History of the Christian Church. S42-43.

[31] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry. p100. Supported by 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.

[32] Schaff, Philip, Op. cit.

[33] Ibid. Schaff added that the responsibilities quoted here are true "...especially of the 'archdeacon,' who does not appear, however, till the fourth century".

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Acceptance of Lay Preachers

During this period, it is interesting to observe that teaching by laymen was permitted as an exception. The Fourth General Council in Carthage (AD 398) prohibited laymen from teaching in the presence of clergymen, implying that this could be done with permission from the clergy.[34] Some of the most notable teachers of this period were laymen or, at most, presbyters.[35]

The Medieval Period (AD 476-1517)

The conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine paved the way for Christianity to become the Roman state religion in AD 312.[36] This contributed to the significant expansion of the Church, hence its increasingly more complex hierarchical structure.

The Patriarchs and the Papacy

The position of bishops of churches in strategically located metropolises became increasingly more significant, and eventually rose to the office of Archbishop – the bishop of bishops – of their respective vicinities. By the sixth century,

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[34] Schaff, Philip, "Chapter IV. Organization and Discipline of the Church," In Volume 2 Second Period: Ante-Nicene Christianity AD 100-311(325), History of the Christian Church. S42-43.

[35] Ibid. Schaff named "Hermas, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Arnobius, and Lactantius".

[36] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry. p148.

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the Archbishops of five major cities – Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Rome – were named as Patriarchs, to overtop the other Archbishops.[37]

The Patriarch of Rome advanced to becoming the Pope in the seventh century, during the Medieval Period.[38] With that, the Church began its active participation in state and secular affairs, such as the crowning of Charlemagne (AD.742-814), in AD 800, which inevitably endorsed the power of the Papacy over kings,[39] and the prosperous business ventures of Pope Gregory I (AD 590-604).[40]

Basic and Theological Education

In this period, theological education faced many obstacles – intellectual, religious, social, and political.[41] However, Schaff observed that some of the prominent church fathers and teachers of the fourth century received a secular education, based on classical culture and general scientific knowledge, before studying theology with prominent church teachers or by private learning.[42] This suggests that basic training in literary, and in scientific knowledge and skills, may have had a positive impact on theological and scriptural learning.

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[37] Ibid. p149.

[38] Ibid. p158.

[39] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry. p158.

[40] Ibid. p158.

[41] Schaff, Philip, "Chapter V. The Hierarchy and Polity of the Church". In Volume 3 Third Period: The Church in Union with the Roman Empire from Constantine the Great to Gregory the Great AD 311–590, History of the Christian Church. S48-49.

[42] Ibid.

Democracy and Election

By this time, the clergy had become rigidly distinguished from the laity through special rituals[43] and other special features such as celibacy, sacerdotal vestments, and so on,[44] such that clergy were distinctively above laity.

It is noteworthy, however, that the consent of the people in choosing clergy had not yet been entirely suppressed during this period. During the election of bishops, for instance, the popularity of some bishoporic candidates was instrumental in eventually placing them in the office.[45] The practice of formal voting was still observed, especially when there were three or more candidates before the people.[46] Regrettably, power and political struggle, driven by selfish passion and other worldly corrupting practices, contributed to much abuse of the system of the appointment of clergy, including the democratic process.[47]

The democratic exercise of election vanished entirely from the Church during the Medieval Period. By the eleventh century, the ordination of bishops was entirely in the hands of the clergy, or even princes and rulers. Believers would

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Schaff, Philip, "Chapter V. The Hierarchy and Polity of the Church". In Volume 3 Third Period: The Church in Union with the Roman Empire from Constantine the Great to Gregory the Great   AD 311–590, History of the Christian Church. S48-49. A few of such bishops named include Ambrose of Milan, Martin of Tours, Chrysostom of Constantinople, Damasus of Rome under various circumstances.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

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eventually have no say over who should, and would, lead the Church.[48]

The Reformation and Post-Reformation (AD 1517 onwards)

The virtue of the "Priesthood of All Believers", strongly upheld by Martin Luther,[49] was finally restored during the Reformation. Luther criticized the sacerdotal concept, and contended that clergymen were merely performing ministerial functions.[50] Although he acknowledged the authority of the ordained clergy to teach and exhort the congregation, he also upheld the right and responsibility of the congregation to call and appoint clergymen.[51]

Regarding teaching and preaching, Luther asserted that all believers are individually responsible for performing the duty of teaching and preaching God's Word to others – believers or non-believers.[52] John Calvin shared this concern. Both Luther and Calvin contributed significantly to the establishment of the Biblical Preaching Tradition in the Christian Church.[53]

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[48] Ibid. Schaff recorded Chrysostom's lamentation on this matter, "that presbyters, in the choice of a bishop, instead of looking only at spiritual fitness, were led by regard for noble birth, or great wealth, or consanguinity and friendship".

[49] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of church Ministry. pp165-170.

[50] Ibid. p166.

[51] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry. p167.

[52] Ibid. p169.

[53] Ibid. pp173-174.

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The reformers promoted the pastoral and teaching offices. The offices of priest and bishop were somewhat abolished, and ordained clergy were generally called Pastor or Preacher[54]. Luther recognized the pastor's symbolic authority over the congregation, especially in the function of teaching and the administration of rites and sacraments under "normal" circumstances. [55] Calvin proposed a fourfold ecclesiastical ministerial order, namely pastor, elder, teacher, and deacon, where Pastor and Elder were commonly addressed as Presbyter.[56]

Subsequently, the administrative structure of the Church developed along various denominational lines, influenced by social, cultural and politico-legal trends through the centuries. Tsang observed four major administrative structures in the evangelical Church today, namely Episcopal, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Independent.[57]

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[54] Ibid. p174.

[55] Ibid. pp174-175. Members of the congregation may take part to perform these functions when the need arises.

[56] *Ibid.* p175 The Pastor preaches, teaches, and administers rituals and sacraments. The Teaching Elder teaches but does not administer rituals and sacraments. The Ruling Elder administers church affairs and conducts disciplinary procedures. The Teacher (whom Calvin interestingly addresses as "Doctor") studies the Bible and theology, teaches, and trains young believers who have committed themselves to serve God. The Deacon can be male or female, and may be be a specialist in a particular ministry or area of need.

[57] Ibid. pp184-193.

Analysis and Discussion

The development of a systematic knowledge of the discipline of management formally began only in the 16th and 17th centuries.[58] Before that, management practices in the world, and in the Church, were plausibly dependent on arbitrary leadership and societal culture and norms.

During the Apostolic and early Patristic Periods, the leadership of the Apostles was the main thrust of management direction of the Church. Towards the end of the Patristic and early Medieval Periods, the Church was driven by a strong culture of submissiveness to ordained spiritual authority. This would develop later into a state of "monarchical episcopate"[59] in the Papacy.

After Christianity had been instituted as the Roman state religion, the *Pax Romana* contributed to the substantial and steady growth of the Church. This led to increasingly more sophisticated hierarchical church structures. Eventually, all leadership and administrative authority of the Church shifted to the clergy, and laymen would have no place in church leadership and management. In the later Medieval Period, political influences crept into the Church, with rulers and princes attempting to monopolise the influence of the Church to strengthen their political rule.

The virtue of the "Priesthood of All Believers" was revived after the Reformation. Following that, the community of Evangelical Christians established itself amidst the social,

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[58] Bartol, Kathryn M. and Martin, David C., Management. p.38.
[59] Tsang, Rennie L., An investigation of renewal of church ministry. p.141.

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cultural, and politico-legal challenges of its days, and formed denominational institutions with Church administration structures, based on convictions regarding the Biblical principles related to Church governance.

Through all these, the Church had held on to its ethos of collective and consultative decision-making, especially in dealing with doctrinal issues, apologetics, and polemics. Since the Apostolic Period, the Church had often held meetings, or convened Councils, to deliberate on pertinent issues such as the aforementioned.

The above analysis is intended to lead into the following discussion of various recommendations for church management practices in the Church today. This discussion will be presented along two main lines:
- theology of church management, and
- directions for professional Church management practices.

Theology of Church Management

Hwa Yung, in his work entitled *Beyond AD2000: A call to evangelical faithfulness*, exhorted today's evangelical Christians to restore their commitment to the Supremacy of Scripture, since "...the *sola scriptura* principle is the outstanding distinguishing mark of historical evangelicalism" [60].

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[60] Hwa, Yung, Beyond AD2000: A Call to Evangelical Faithfulness. p13. To his dismay, Hwa Yung observed clear signs of today's evangelicals losing their grip on sound Biblical depths.

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In matters of church management, however, the Bible only provides a broad and general description of ministry offices such as overseer, presbyter, and deacon. There are no specific management guidelines regarding structure, policy, procedure, and so on. But one has to acknowledge that the Church, as an organisation, needs to have a systematic approach to management, to ensure that it effectively achieves the purpose of its existence. Awkwardly, some fundamental evangelicals, being conscientiously anti-intellectual[61], are skeptical about practicing management science in the church, regarding it as "secular" and "unspiritual."

Regarding this, Tsang argued that the Church should strive to achieve balance between the awareness of being a spiritual communion with a mission, and the over-readiness to accept the influence of modern and scientific management practices.[62] By constantly and reverently submitting itself to the Spirit of God, the Church should seek to implement professional management practices which are godly and edifying.

A systematic theology of church management is an immediate need. The Church should incorporate Biblical principles, understanding derived from the historical development of the administrative practices of the Church, and the knowledge and discipline of professional management, to develop a theology that would explain and guide the process of professional management practices in the Church. As an

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[61] Hwa, Yung, Beyond AD2000: A Call to Evangelical Faithfulness. p9. Anti-intellectualism was pointed out as being one weakness of fundamental evangelicalism.

[62] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry. p274-280.

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example, James Estep proposed a model of a systematic theology of administration, explaining that administrative practices are to be guided by administration theory that is built upon several essential components of theological concern:[63]

- Centred on God: God as Leader,
- Responsive to His Revelation: Scripture as the core document,
- Formation of a distinctive community: the congregation as institutional context,
- Redemptive in purpose: transformation as its mission and motive, and
- Responsive to humanity's needs: humanity as a valued participant.

Further such effort is needed to develop a theological framework for church management, to guide sound and professional management practices in the Church.

Directions For Professional Management Practices in the Church

This section explores possible directions for the implementation of professional management practices in the Church according to the four Church management functions identified earlier – planning, organising, leading and controlling.

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[63] Estep, James, "A Theology of Administration," In Anthony, M.J. & Estep, J. Jr. (Eds.), Management Essentials for Christian Ministries. p39.

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Planning

It has been observed that a culture of collective and consultative decision-making has always been maintained through councils and conferences. This culture should be upheld as regards ministry planning at all levels of the Church.

Mission-Oriented Planning

During earlier periods of the Church, deliberation and decisions on doctrinal issues appeared to be the main topics of concern in councils and conferences. The Church should continue in this spirit of unity towards the fulfilment of the Great Commission entrusted to it by our Lord (Mt 28:18-20), and do so with more systematic planning involving all members of the Church, beyond the boundary of denominations. More thought and actions needs to be put into the work of evangelism and cross-cultural mission, [64] as the focus of all ministry planning, at all levels of the Church – local, denominational and ecumenical.

Professional Strategic Planning

Management practices of the Church, in the past, depended more on the capability and subjective group dynamics of Church leaders than on a systematic discipline of management and

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[64] Hwa Yung, Beyond AD2000: A Call to Evangelical Faithfulness. pp29-34. In this chapter, Hwa Yung challenges Malaysian evangelicals to leave their comfort zones and take a more active part in cross-cultural mission.

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administration. Now that knowledge of sound and professional management is available, the Church should seriously study the possibility of applying it, to improve ministry effectiveness.

The Church should clearly and explicitly word its mission statement to have specific relevance at all levels, set specific and measurable goals, formulate and implement strategies and programmes to achieve these goals,[65] and as faithful and conscientious managers of God, dervise systematic plans to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the programmes implemented.[66]

Organising

The Church had developed from a "shared ministry" model to a state of centralised and authoritarian bureaucracy, before the Reformation took place. Some valuable lessons on organisation can be acquired from this experience.

Centralised and Authoritarian Hierarchical Bureaucracy

From the late Patristic to the Medieval Period, the Church upheld an centralised, authoritarian culture, where believers were expected to be submissive to the authority above them, with the administrative authority of the Church ultimately

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[65] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry. p279.

[66] Simpson, Mark, "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Programs," In Anthony, M.J. & Estep, J. Jr. (Eds.), Management Essentials for Christian Ministries, pp411-420. and Su, Wilfred W., Management for Effective Church Ministry, pp117-145.

centred on the Pope, the supreme leader of the Church in the world.

In such a structure, absolute power is held only by several individuals, running the immense risk of compromising the mission, integrity, and dignity of the Church.   Effective organisation in church management should dwell on the humble submission of church leaders towards God, and a commitment to serve God's people. The Church should realise the danger of an extremely centralised and authoritarian, hierarchical bureaucracy, and design administrative structures that will advocate the spiritual and social accountability of ministry personnel, rather than the "authority" and "status" of ministry office.

Pitfalls of Over-Liberal, Republican, Democratic Practices

Up to the Medieval Period, democratic practices were still observed in the election of bishops, and popularity of candidates could have significance influence on decisions   about appointments[67]. After the Reformation, democratic practices in the election of church leaders were common, especially among churches following the congregational tradition.[68] However, it is noted that republican practices, implemented too liberally, are not faultless. For instance, the system of appointment of clergy

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[67] Schaff, Philip, "Chapter V. The Hierarchy and Polity of the Church".   In Volume 3 Third Period: The Church in Union with the Roman Empire from Constantine the Great to Gregory the Great   AD 311–590, History of the Christian Church.   S48-49.

[68] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry, p175.

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during the Medieval Period was negatively influenced by desire for personal gain and corrupt, worldly practices.[69]

For effective organisation, the Church must acknowledge the importance of disciplined liberty. On the one hand, the Church should uphold the Biblical principle of the "Priesthood of All Believers," allowing all members to participate in determining their leaders; on the other hand, the Church must seek to exercise appropriate control over the process of appointing Church leaders so that the system is not arbitrarily abused.

Objective-Oriented Team-Ministry Structure

This article argues, from history, that an objective-oriented team-ministry structure is more desirable for church management than a centralised authoritarian structure. Just as a flexible, but purpose-driven, structure was maintained by the Church during the Apostolic Period,[70] the Church today should strive to establish a structure that optimises team synergy by continual focus on the mission and purpose of the Church. Dick Iverson lauded the concept of team ministry for church growth, and acknowledged several related benefits, including the following:[71]

- optimum use of various gifts for various ministries,
- improvement of productivity,
- generation of new ideas, and

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[69] Schaff, Philip, Op. cit.
[70] Marshall, Howard, "The Ministry", p14.
[71] Iverson, Dick, Team Ministry: Putting together a team that makes churches grow, pp51-76.

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- checks and balance measures.

Such a ministry-organising model, for example, would allow laymen gifted in teaching to contribute to the teaching ministry, as in the Apostolic and Patristic Periods, [72] and after the Reformation.[73]

Leading

Consideration of the leading function of Church Management, the principle of leading as servants (Lk 22:25-27; Jn 13:1-16), should be undertaken with reverent commitment.

Perfecting Biblical Servant Leadership

Biblical servant leadership is built upon principles of compassion in the process of fulfilling God's purpose (Is 42:2-3), meekness and humility in doing God's will obediently (Php 2:5, 7-8), and a service-oriented attitude in leading (Jn 13:14-15). Even secular authors and researchers in leadership have listed numerous universal qualities related to servant

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[72] Schaff, Philip, "Chapter IV. Organization and Discipline of the Church," in Volume 2 Second Period: Ante-Nicene Christianity AD 100-311(325), History of the Christian Church. S42-43.

[73] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry, pp169, 172. Martin Luther and John Calvin were open to the idea that teaching and preaching ministry is not exclusively for pastoral ministers, but also for all believers.

leadership,[74] and recommended them strongly, as opposed to directional and transactional leadership approaches.

In church management, church leaders must be committed to practicing Biblical servant leadership. Instead of the commanding, dominant and authoritarian leadership style observed in the Church of the Medieval Period, the Church today must dedicate itself, before God, to exercising loving and humble leadership service for God's people, thus perfecting the servant-leadership mandate given by our Lord.

Christian Holiness and Character

In a pastoral bulletin published in Hong Kong, a pastor shared his observation that pastoral workers serving in churches hold grudges against dissenting members, are vindictive, and harbour an intention to hit back.[75] Such behaviour is most unbecoming of servant leaders.

To demonstrate leadership as servanthood, it is necessary for Church leaders to maintain a holy and righteous lifestyle. It is shameful to be reminded of the deplorable moral state of the clergy during the later Medieval Period, known as the Dark

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[74] Spears, Larry, "Practicing Servant Leadership." The modern concept of Servant Leadership was introduced by Robert Greenleaf in his 1970 essay entitled "The Servant as Leader," in which he coined the terms "servant-leader" and "servant leadership". Since his death in 1990, the concept has been further developed by other writers such as William W George, James Autry, Ken Blanchard, James C Hunter, Ken Jennings, Kent Keith, George SanFacon, and Larry Spears.

[75] Yip, Dai Wai 葉大為，"為教牧把脈處方".

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Ages (between the sixth and thirteenth centuries AD), before the *Renaissance*, and this is certainly not the state we want for the Church today. However, as Hwa Yung observes:

> "Yet the sad fact remains that at all levels of church leadership today we find in varying degrees idolatry of money, gross abuse of power of position and office, and even serious sexual sin. Only that some of these are blatant and obvious, others are subtle and often unseen."[76]

Therefore, church leaders should be cautious of temptation, and endeavour to build up holy and righteous character, true to the calling of Christ-like servant leaders.

Professional Qualities and Competence in Leadership

To improve ministry effectiveness, Yip Dai Wai 葉大為 emphasised the importance of professionalism.[77] Professional leadership requires, and can be developed through, formal training and education.

For this reason, Tsang suggested that theological education institutions should consider including modules related to leadership and management skills, to better equip pastoral workers of the future.[78] Pastoral ministers, and church leaders in service, should be provided with such training and education, to improve their leadership and management competence.

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[76] Hwa, Yung, Beyond AD2000: A Call to Evangelical Faithfulness, p45.
[77] Yip, Dai Wai, Op. cit.
[78] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry, p279.

Controlling

The Bible defines various tasks and roles for believers, such as apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, leader, elder, and deacon (Eph 4:11-12; Ro 12:6-8; 1 Ti 3:2-13). These ministry offices can be observed in the Church throughout various historical periods. These levels and functions of ministry should be systematically controlled to ensure that all activities are properly coordinated to achieve overall synergy.

Authority and Responsibility

In the Patristic and Medieval Periods, the hierarchy of offices was so distinct that a high degree of "specialisation of labour" [79] was observed, for example, the highly specific ministry offices of church doorkeeper and gravedigger.[80]

For effective control in church management, a clear definition of authority and responsibilities is essential. [81] Simpson deliberated on the process of preparation of

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[79] Specialisation of labour is one of the elements of Bureaucratic Management, a school of thought from modern management science, whose main proponent is Max Weber (1864-1920), a German sociologist and political economist. The main thrust of the specialisation of labour is to break down job tasks, and have different personnel focusing on a specific task in order to promote and develop specialised expertise and competence on the job.

[80] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry, p148.

[81] Ibid. p279.

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comprehensive job description documents for ministry personnel.[82]

The Church should be watchful, however, of being over-anxious about defined of authority and responsibilities. Having job descriptions written within an unyielding framework, revolving around only specific job tasks, would bring the Church back into the trap of centralised bureaucracy and the obsessive "specialisation of labour" of the past.

To promote an objective-oriented team ministry structure, certain degree of flexibility is required, to allow ministry personnel to continually focus on the ultimate purpose of the ministry of the Church. Their job descriptions should not prevent them from providing loving and humble support to other team members, towards the fulfilment of the mission of the Church. The Church must cultivate a culture of being mission-oriented in ministry, yet not being limited by the official structure for doing so. This policy should be made known explicitly, in the job descriptions of all ministry personnel.

Communication and the Dissemination of Information

One of the elements of effective control is communication. In the past, the Church conducted collective and consultative decision-making through councils and conferences. This tradition should be maintained with the support of modern technology, and techniques for the dissemination and sharing of

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[82] Simpson, Mark, "Preparing Job Descriptions," In Anthony, MJ & Estep, J. Jr. (Eds.), Management Essentials for Christian Ministries, pp174-189.

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information.[83] This may include adopting rules and discipline for conducting meetings, with proper recording of minutes of high reference value, so that decisions and actions can be monitored and evaluated progressively, to ensure ministry effectiveness.

Accountability, Supervision, and Evaluation

The authoritarian structure of administration in the late Patristic and Medieval Periods may not have facilitated regular supervisory support (or admonishment), hence weak accountability and evaluation. The clergy, if in error, may not have needed to answer to anyone, or may have conveniently hidden their guilt in the event of a reprimand.

To implement effective control in church mtanagement today, the Church must seek to promote a culture of accountability. All ministry personnel should report to a higher authority, and be accountable to the congregation they serve. The superiors of ministry personnel should be made accountable for supervising the minister concerned, and the congregation served should be allowed to contribute feedback on the performance of the minister concerned. In such an arrangement, the principle of "speaking the truth in love" (Eph 4:15) can be applied in an ,open environment of mutual trust and edification.

In this respect, it is also important to consider a proper system of performance review for all ministry personnel. [84]

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[83] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry, p279.
[84] Estep, James, Conducting Performance Reviews, and Setiawani, Mary Go, Christian Administration and Management, pp150-153.

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This is one positive step the Church could take to elicit performance improvement amongst ministry personnel. All ministry personnel serving God should develop an open-minded willingness to accept constructive feedback, through such performance review exercises,[85] for, after all, it is ultimately to the benefit of the Church if their performance is improved.

Disciplinary Procedures

The Bible lays down principles and broad procedures regarding Church discipline (1 Cor 5:5-11; Eph 4:15-16; Gal 6:1; Lk 17:3; Mt 18:15-17). Under the authoritarian structure of the Church in the slate Patristic and Medieval Period, clergy would be responsible for executing Church disciplinary procedures. After the Reformation, this may have been undertaken by the elders, or the congregational council of the Church. For effective control, it is important to have established procedures to systematically administer due process related to discipline.

It is difficult, especially in an Asian context, to implement disciplinary procedures, due to the perception of shame related to discipline.[86] In today's complex conditions, the Church should, perhaps, explicitly define misconduct, in accordance with Biblical teachings, rather than leave it to the subjective judgement of cultural norms. The greatest challenge, perhaps, is to define conduct contributing to abuse of power and position, breach of trust and other similarly subtle offences.

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[85] Tsang, Rennie L., An Investigation of Renewal of Church Ministry, p279.
[86] Wong, Fong Yang, Discipline or Shame?: The Dynamics of Shame in Church Discipline.

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In addition, procedures related to how any accused person should be given the opportunity to explain himself, or herself, before an independent panel, should be established, so that no one may be wrongly accused and disciplined. Thus, with due process defined, the Church should be prepared, when necessary, to exercise its authority to conduct fair and objective inquiry, and take disciplinary action against those concerned.

Most importantly, the Church should be mindful that discipline is closely associated with pastoral care. Wong Fong Yang stressed that even after taking disciplinary action against an unrepentant member, pastoral workers should never cease to visit and exhort him, or her, to repent; and upon his, or her, professed repentance, to reconcile him, or her, to God, and to restore him, or her, publicly to the fellowship of God's people.[87]

Concluding Remarks

Direct and indiscriminate application of Western theories and principles in an Asian context may not be a wise action. Regarding theology, Hwa Yung observed that Western theology tends to be academic and speculative in outlook, and thus may be irrelevant to practical pastoral and missiological ministry in Asia.[88] On mission, for example, Thu En Yu noted the failure of the church to address several local concerns in British Colonial Malaysia, [i] leaving a far-reaching impact on ethnic and religious harmony in the country until long after its independence from British rule.

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[87] Ibid. pp75-76.
[88] Hwa, Yung, Mangos or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology, p9.

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Knowledge of modern management science originated in th West. It may be relevant and practical to Western culture an inclination, but perhaps not totally so in Asia. Furthermore, t guide its application in the Asian Church using Wester theology may not be the best solution. Therefore, carefi thought is called for, to examine the relevance of managemer theory and principle from the West, on the sound basis of Asia Theology, so that the framework of knowledge can b effectively contextualised for application to the Asian Church.

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[i] Thu, En Yu, Ethnic identity and consciousness in Sabah. p.39. Thu E Yu observed that the church in Malaysia during the Colonial Era had faile to address issues of indigenisation of Christianity, identification with th general masses, multi-racial sensitivity and economic imbalance.

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