

# A toolbox for Ethical Pastoral Leadership

Anne Mallaby  
ANZATFE presentation, 2019



- A bit of background
- The Challenges –
  - Toolbox as a 'how to'
  - Maintaining academic rigor, theological reflection
  - Maintaining cohesion
- This unit invites a critical examination of the responsibilities of congregational leadership. Particular attention will be given to contemporary theory and practice concerning the themes and issues encountered in ministry practice: self-care and healthy practice, boundaries, conflict, change, supervision, codes of conduct, ministry ethics. A framework for theological reflection will be developed in order to discern ongoing processes for healthy leadership.

- This unit will offer an overt look at the code of ethics, with practical application in ministry settings. There will be a presentation of the *letter of the code, the principles behind it and the theory enfolded* in ministry experience. The unit is concerned with how the code shapes and influences action, with an emphasis on both prevention and intervention

- **Learning outcomes**

- Upon successful completion of this unit, it is expected that students will be able to:
- Critically evaluate concepts of boundaries, leadership and power, ethical practice, self-care, conflict, change.
- Demonstrate theological and pastoral insight into the principles behind various Codes of Ethics for pastoral leaders.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ways ministry and practice are informed and resourced by their theological, biblical, pastoral and spiritual formation processes.
- Examine the factors involved in pastoral identity and leadership responsibility.
- Articulate a theology of church leadership that integrates the elements of personal vocation and ethical leadership. (Level 9)

## Topics :

- The foundations of ethical ministry – systems of accountability
  - Code 1 Professional Standards Workshop (PSW)
- The pastor as public figure -Power & boundaries – what kind of power? Perceived? Real? Empowering Leadership
  - Code 2 & 3 PSW
- Safe & risky environments, sexual harassment, physical boundaries
  - PSW
- Case Study – sexual ethics
- The pastor as part of the BUV
  - Codes 10 & 11 PSW
- Health Practices and Self Care
  - Code 6 PSW



- The Pastor and their family
  - Codes 6 & 7 PSW
- Dealing with difference, dissent & disputes
  - Code 3 - PSW
- Finance, money (gifts)
  - Code 8 & 9 - PSW
- The Pastor & The Law - duties of care & persons of concern
  - Code 5 & 12 - PSW
- Conscientious Practice - *On what basis do you choose to break the law?*
  - Code 12 - PSW
- Character & virtues -  
*What happens when we fall?*



- Assessments
- 5 x Theological Reflection Papers
  - Dialogue with the information shared and the readings offered, tracking your responses to the readings, and noting resonances and dissonances. As a guideline :
  - highlight perspectives that most resonate with your experience
  - identify ideas or arguments you find most challenging.
  - Consider and reflect upon those aspects with which you have a strong response.
  - Identify the key elements, theologically, sociologically, psychologically, of the issue that will inform your pastoral response.
  - Given that you have 3-500 words for each reflection, keep it succinct and meaningful. This is a good exercise in distilling your thoughts and expression.

- b. Case Study presentation

- In this task, you are required to consider a pastoral encounter you have experienced that highlights a particular ethical concern. The case study is intended to launch you and the class into a conversation around the particular topic, particularly as it relates to the code. Therefore, you need to select an area that you are most interested in exploring in this way. Your task is to write a reflective critique of a pastoral exchange drawn from a pastoral relationship in which you are presently involved. It may be a formal relationship of pastoral care (eg. between a pastor and parishioner) or an informal one between friends, work colleagues, etc. We request that you do not draw on a conversation with a family member.

- Your paper will include four sections, each clearly delineated:
  - a paragraph providing explanatory background to the exchange/situation;
  - a direct transcription of the exchange, as accurately as you can recall it (not more than ½ page)
  - a critical assessment of your pastoral response to the person, reflecting upon your use of the skills addressed in the unit.
  - a consideration of the code of ethics as it relates to this scenario.
  - 2-3 paragraphs outlining the theological and pastoral questions raised in the encounter, considering the distinctives of this particular issue. You may consider : Where do you see God in this scenario? Where do you source that experience of God in our tradition and the Biblical narrative? What does God require of us in this scenario?



### 3. Essay

Under grad :

- *“The code is not intended to be an exhaustive ‘how to’ manual for ministry, but seeks to exude something of the spirit of the Biblical call to faithfulness of ministry”* (The Code). Discuss with reference to readings, examples, and theological framework.

or

- Select one section of the code and consider the theological foundations for its formation. Discuss this in relation to a specific example (briefly explained) and the Biblical narrative.

### Post Grad

- Develop a theology of church leadership that considers the connections between the development of Christian character and ethical practice. Draw upon at least 6 theological sources, and illustrate your paper with brief examples from your ministry experience.
- **or**
- *“When Christians live and minister in ways that contribute to the healing of creation, and to the love, honour and respect due to all God’s children, they honour their vocation and build up the communion of the Church. When Christians live and minister in ways that contribute to the brokenness of the world, and damage the love, honour and respect due to all God’s children, they dishonour their vocation and fracture the communion of the Church. In those moments communion is broken and needs to be restored.”* (Colin Hunter, background to the Code) Discuss in relation to the Code, brief examples from your ministry experience, the readings and the Biblical narrative.

# *What works and what are the challenges?*

- Meant to be integrative, but teeters on being instructive without drawing on the theological foundations
- Presenters are not necessarily pedagogically equipped
  - Presenters have roles and expertise, but they are not teachers. Sometimes they assume the power of their role and lack sensitivity and humanness. Teach out of their position rather than teasing out student experience
  - After review, there will be a shift, and lecturer will shape the sessions with breaks and be more involved in the presentations, giving them a format that breaks up presentation with discussion and feedback
  - Often the presenters from a denomination struggle to read the gauge the temperature in the room
  - Need to work at creating a safe enough space for students to open up and talk.
- Material itself raises tensions within people
  - eg. The content on bullying, sexual harassment, power become trigger points for people's past experience.
  - Dealt with by follow-up – Lecturer intervened to acknowledge their experience, offer follow up etc.
  - The positive of raising tensions is that they recognize the weight of what they are dealing with.
  - eg. If someone feels like they are being bullied, eg.. debunking social myths of engagement – eg, its just a joke. It came up several times. Eg. Pinching some-one's bum.
  - eg. Tom – flirting with lecturer. "I'd be interested". Social cues – hugging/friendship – comments on aftershave, church member doing the ironing

- Cultural complexity – working with a diverse room of people from diverse contexts with various theological frameworks
  - High number of CALD students and trainee ministers and the cultural norms are so different around
    - Finance/family/boundaries/time management/
    - They did hear it... they were dramatically changed.
    - Garry talked about dynamics they'd never experienced.
    - "I would never have thought of that" ...
    - This doesn't work in my culture'
- Shifting church culture
  - But they adhere to the code of ethics – sign it...
  - How do we create space for them to move.
  - Religious culture has not moved, and will need.
  - What is a respectful way of listening to culture, and what is a helpful way to support movement
  - Sensitivity and clarity = even advocacy (David)
  - Power dynamic much more complex...
  - Worked having older facilitator/lecturers.
- Identify their limits – identify the unresolvable – the 'grey' areas.
  - That this is not always neat...
  - Creating space for their colleagues and peers to offer input. – creating feedback loops among it.. affirmations, complexity and collegiality, affirming space.

- PSW
  - One off in-services for ordained/accredited ministers to join the group
  - Important connection for BUV and ongoing ministry learning
  - Conflict topic – 16 guests/sexual harassment – 5 guests
- Readings – theological content
  - Well accessed, used as resources for their reflective pieces.
  - Readings supported and widened the reading.
  - 5 reflective topics – selecting readings on topics.
    - Coupling reading and class materials/demonstrate they have read.
    - Not just their thoughts, but integrative with reading.
- Case Study – outstanding
  - Tutorials – best part of it... they read, integrate, they
  - Identify the part of code and the theological questions
  - Real struggles – real-time learning... learning that is applied to situations.
  - Starting point for their learning is theory, it's experience in “realtime”

## Resources

- Ballard P & Pritchard, J, *Tools for practical theology – Introducing the pastoral cycle. In Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the service of church and society.* London: SPCK, 2006, p 81-95
- Bass, Richard (ed.). *Leadership in Congregations.* Herndon, VI: The Alban Institute, 2007.
- Blodgett, B & M Floding, *Brimming with god : reflecting theologically on cases in ministry* Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2015
- Burns, B, Chapman, T, Guthrie, D. *Resilient ministry:What pastors told us about surviving and thriving.* Downers Grove Il: IVP, 2013
- Bush, J Jr. *Gentle Shepherding: Pastoral ethics and leadership.* St Louis, MO: Chalice, 2006
- Exley, Richard., Galli, Mark & Ortberg, John. *Dangers Toils and Snares: Resisting the Hidden Dangers of Ministry.* Oregon: Multnomah Books, 1994
- Floding, M. *Welcome to Theological Field Education.* Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2011
- Gula, R. *Just ministry: Professional ethics for pastoral ministers.* New York: Paulist Press, 2010
- Palmer, Parker J. *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Towards an Undivided Life.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004 (E-Version)
- Trull, J. & Carter, J. *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders,* (2<sup>nd</sup>. Ed.) Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004
- Whipp, M. *SCM Study Guide to Pastoral Theology.* London: SCM Press, 2013