

<b>Institution: University of Aberdeen</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 33 - Theology and Religious Studies</b>
<b>Title of case study: <i>Transforming Patterns of Ministry and Church Leadership</i></b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>At a time of decline in church attendance in the UK, the models and patterns of leadership that churches have traditionally utilized have been questioned and rethought. In this context, aspects of the research carried out in Divinity and Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen have focused on the leadership of the church, as a key user group of research in Divinity. This research has led to changes in models and patterns of leadership within the churches. To illustrate this, this case study examines two related examples of the impact of research carried out in the UoA in different sub-disciplines. <b>Drane's</b> (1998-2004) work in Practical Theology has impacted the church leadership's approach to spirituality and Fresh Expressions of Church through Mission Shaped Ministry and through his work with the Church of Scotland. <b>Clarke's</b> historical and theological research into New Testament texts and first-century contexts have been brought to bear on contemporary contexts of church leadership, within both Scottish Baptist and Church of Scotland settings. <i>Claimed impact is, therefore, on the patterns and practice of ministry in these churches as a result of the research of Drane and Clarke.</i></p> <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p><b><u>Nature of Research Insights</u></b> Traditional patterns of ministry, based on classically conceived parish or congregational structures, or contemporary 'managerial' models of ministry neither have exclusive biblical mandate (in light of the earliest communities), nor best serve the church or contemporary culture. Models, practices and patterns of ministry need to be rethought in creative ways in order for the church, at a time of declining attendance, to attend to the communities of which they are a part.</p> <p><b><u>Underpinning Research A.) McDonaldization:</u></b> In his research into the nature of the contemporary church, <b>Drane</b> (2000) applies the four characteristics of Ritzer's McDonaldization thesis to the Christian Church. He finds these four characteristics manifest in a large number of churches. He consequently argues that these churches have become McDonaldized: they have become indistinguishable from consumer culture. <b>Drane</b> describes the identity of these churches and their leadership in detail in relation to four features: efficiency (which confuses efficient business with real human issues and authentic spirituality); calculability (sixty-minute packaged services rather than meaningful periods of time to engage in worship of God and to connect with the community of other Christians); predictability (routinized worship which stifles creativity and fresh engagements with God); and control (whether it is through 'sound' theology, crusade evangelists or episcopal dictatorships). These four insights questioned the models of church leadership that are operative in the church, and their effectiveness for serving the church in the contemporary setting. This foundational research on McDonaldization gave rise to further work, which has created further avenues towards impact from the research carried out at Aberdeen. We see an example of this in <i>Do Christians Know How to be Spiritual?: The Rise of New Spirituality and the Mission of the Church</i> (2005), which offers a theological reflection on the 'New Age' phenomenon, focusing on how the Christian community can connect with spiritual seekers in the contemporary setting. In the book, <b>Drane</b> considers what an effective church might be like for the post-modern culture of the twenty-first century. Furthermore, stemming from the diagnosis offered by his research on <i>McDonaldization</i> (and particularly ch. 8 on the future of the church), <b>Drane</b> published in 2008, <i>After McDonaldization</i> which directly utilizes his research at Aberdeen on the McDonaldization thesis to provide the basis for a reinvigorated style of ministry and mission.</p> <p><b><u>B.) Biblical Models of Leadership:</u></b> <b>Clarke's</b> research focus on New Testament aspects of church leadership includes consideration of structure, authority, status, power, equality/hierarchy, and the task and tools of local church leadership (including persuasion and the nature of discipline). The research entails both: <b>a)</b> a social-historical, descriptive investigation of first-century patterns of community leadership (in the Graeco-Roman cities, the Roman colonies, voluntary associations [cf. trade unions], synagogues, and family/domestic contexts) in comparison with first-century positive and negative depictions of church leadership; and, <b>b)</b> a constructive, exegetical-theological exploration of local church leadership from the New Testament Pauline corpus. Key findings include an emphasis on the significance of the domestic context within the New Testament in its teaching about and practices of church leadership – with significant implications for the role of</p>

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women; the place of children; the nature of discipline; the importance of community meals; the context for, and consequently the nature of, teaching and worship; the size of church communities; and the importance for effective leadership of 'shared lives'.

*Dates research was carried out:* The foundational research and key research insights by **Drane** on McDonaldization (2000) and the church and on spirituality (1999) were carried out in Aberdeen during **Drane's** time as a senior lecturer in practical theology (1998-2004). **Clarke** (1995- ) carried out his research into church leadership as senior lecturer in New Testament Studies at Aberdeen.

### 3. References to the research

**John Drane**, *The McDonaldization of the Church: Spirituality, Creativity, and the Future of the Church* (London: DLT, 2000).

**John Drane**, *What is the New Age Still Saying to the Church?* (London: HarperCollins, 1999).

**John Drane**, *Cultural Change and Biblical Faith* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000).

**Andrew D. Clarke**, *A Pauline Theology of Church Leadership* (Library of New Testament Studies, 362; London: T&T Clark, 2008).

**Andrew D. Clarke**, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (Second edition; Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006).

**Andrew D. Clarke** (ed.), *Serve the Community of the Church: Christians as Leaders and Ministers (First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

### 4. Details of the impact

Impacts of this research from Aberdeen on church leadership can be seen in the following ways:

**A. McDonaldization** The body of research arising from **Drane's** primary research insight into the relationship between the McDonaldization thesis and the church (2000) has significantly impacted church leadership in the Anglican and Methodist Churches, as well as the Church of Scotland. The diagnosis of the failings of contemporary ecclesial praxis which this research provided has been central to the Fresh Expressions of Church Movement, and its rethought modes of ministry. This has led to four principal pathways to impact in relation to church leadership. The mechanism by which this has come about is the effect of **Drane's** research on the Fresh Expressions of Church / Emerging Church movement in the UK, USA and Australia, establishing him as a leading scholar and advisor for this international ecclesial movement.

**(1.) Drane** is no longer a university academic, but is now (2004-present), on the basis of his research and the impact it generates, a self-employed consultant working with churches of many different denominations throughout the United Kingdom as well as internationally. As part of this work, he teaches on spirituality and fresh expressions as a consultant for a number of seminaries (including Fuller Seminary, California and St John's College Durham), training church leaders. The insights in his consultancy and teaching are underpinned by his research insights into McDonaldization culture and church leadership. That **Drane's** research has led him to be an independent consultant on church leadership employed by church and para-church organizations internationally demonstrates the impact of his research on the church.

**(2.)** As a result of his research into the conditions in which the church exists and the nature of a McDonaldized culture, **Drane** was appointed to a significant leadership role within the Church of England which is focused on addressing decline in church attendance and renewing and reinvigorating the theory and practice relating to mission in the church. He has been co-chair of the Mission Theology Advisory Group (jointly sponsored by the Mission & Public Policy Committee of the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England and by the Global Mission Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland) since 2002, with ongoing impact through this census period. This group is a partnership between the Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Division and the Churches' Commission on Mission of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. MTAG offers advice to the churches on matters affecting the mission of the whole Church. Its particular focus is on the relationship between the gospel and western culture, as the context in which the gospel is proclaimed in the UK; this is the focused area of **Drane's** research insights. The approach of MTAG arises directly from **Drane's** research insights into the church and contemporary culture. For example, included in this work has been the establishment of a website 'Spiritual Journeys' (<http://www.spiritualjourneys.org.uk/>), created by MTAG which reports to be aimed at everyone

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who wants to explore their spiritual journey or the spiritual journeys of others; this draws on **Drane's** research into spirituality and the church. The website offers materials for visitors to the site to explore, as well as resources for practising Christians (both lay and ordained). Its aim is to provide members of Christian communities with the opportunity to learn more about their own traditions of spirituality and explore those of others: this is clearly contrary to the spirituality of a McDonaldized church, responding to his critiques of predictability and calculability.

**(3.)** Because of his research insights on McDonaldized ecclesial cultures and practices of ministry and because of his work on church and contemporary culture, **Drane** was appointed as a member of the board of Mission Shaped Ministry, which is part of the Fresh Expressions initiative of the Church of England and the Methodist Church. His appointment was to utilize his research into how to find new and creative ways to explore what it means to be a community of the church beyond the traditional parish system, such as in discussion groups meeting in coffee shops; through arts events; etc. He has engaged in this work throughout the census period. In this role, **Drane's** research has been used to provide training days and in syllabus formation for church leaders exploring new patterns of ministry. **Drane** currently teaches church leaders across the UK, using his research and applying it directly to church communities. *Mission Shaped Ministry* is at present running ecumenically in over 50 centres across the UK with more than 2000 students enrolled. The one-year, part-time course seeks to take participants on a learning journey as part of a supportive community, in contradistinction to what **Drane's** research understood to be McDonaldized ecclesial cultures. In doing this, the course trains clergy for leadership in Fresh Expressions of Church. Fresh Expressions of Church, which **Drane's** research in part led to, accounts for about 6% of Anglican and Methodist churches in the UK, so the effect of this work is widespread.

**(4.)** With Olive Fleming Drane, **Drane's** research has been used in his report commissioned by the Church of Scotland, *Reformed, Reforming, Emerging, and Experimenting* (2011). This report offers an account by the commissioners of why **Drane** was appointed, highlighting his research in relation to the appointment and the task required from the church. The report highlights the take-up and development of the *Mission Shaped Ministry* course. This Report was commissioned by a Joint Working Party of the Ministries Council and the Mission, and adopted in May 2011. It explores ways to re-engage with the contemporary culture, and challenges patterns of ministry, offering constructive suggestions for how these might be better improved.

**B. Biblical Models of Leadership:** **Clarke's** historical and theological research into New Testament texts and first-century contexts has key implications for the development of new and nurture of existing local church communities in semi-rural or sparsely-populated rural areas of Scotland. **Clarke's** research has been used in a Scottish culture, in which critiques of hierarchy and Baptist models of congregationalism have resulted in the Baptist Union of Scotland's perception of a crisis of confidence about leadership in churches; widespread dysfunctionality among leaders; and uncertainty about what characterizes a 'healthy' community. Models and expectations of leadership have not adapted to declining numbers within congregations. **Clarke's** work has been applied as directly relevant to contemporary situations, especially for those for whom biblical models provide the ultimate authority of forms and practice, and has also been used indirectly to stimulate reflection and change in Scottish Baptist churches. Two examples illustrate this:

**(1.) Baptist Union of Scotland – national discussions.** As a result of his research insights into the forms and practices of leadership in the earliest church communities, **Clarke** was involved in Baptist Union of Scotland 'Leadership Consultations, 1 and 2' (Aug and Dec 2006). The focus was on exploring what biblical values should shape leadership; defining a distinctly Baptist understanding of leadership; exploring the tension between strong leadership and congregationalism; and the shape of pastoral leadership in a post-Christendom world. This outcome provided a route to impact through the following three areas during the REF census period, and in each of these three instances, **Clarke's** research made a distinct and material contribution (both directly and indirectly) to the impact taking place, such that the impact would not have occurred or would have been significantly reduced without the contribution of that research:

**a.** a collection of essays (commissioned by the Baptist Union): Andrew Rollinson (ed.), *Transforming Leadership: Essays Exploring Leadership in a Baptist Context* (Glasgow: Baptist Union of Scotland, 2008). These were circulated to all Scottish Baptist churches, and have been used as the formal basis for directing leadership in Scottish Baptist settings, thereby enabling the outcome (the publication) to have formal impact in ecclesial leadership settings.

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**b. Clarke** delivering a public lecture entitled 'Biblical Reflections on Christian Leadership' at a series of national seminars on 'Transforming Leadership', organized by the Baptist Union of Scotland (March/April 2008). The work in this lecture arises from research for a seminar entitled, 'Theological Reflections on Christian Leadership', delivered at the national Baptist Union of Scotland Annual Assembly (Nov 2007); DVD and MP3 of the lecture were made available.

**c.** The Scottish Baptist College developing a new module on church leadership, drawing from the insights of **Clarke's** research.

**(2.) A Specific Church Plant:** Research, which subsequently appeared in **Clarke's** 2008 monograph (*A Pauline Theology of Church Leadership*), was foundational to establishing an innovative set of principles of ecclesiology and models of ministry for a pioneering church plant, under the auspices of the Baptist Union of Scotland in September 2007 [<http://www.gariochchurch.org.uk>]. In particular, the Pauline focus on multiple domestic settings for all-age community life and worship (a key insight of **Clarke's** research) was foundational, and impinged on defining a fresh approach to the nature and ethos of local church leadership. This church model is regarded as a flagship within the Baptist Union of Scotland. It provides an alternative to traditional focus on large, plenary Sunday services, with age-specific content, in dedicated worship venues.

**Continuing Work in Aberdeen on Church Leadership:** The University of Aberdeen continues to support research into leadership in the church, providing further avenues towards impact in this area, and sustaining continued research in ecclesiastical polity. This is seen in **Clarke's** continued presence in the department, along with the appointments of **Brittain** (2007- ), **Greggs** (2011- ) and **Nimmo** (2013- ). On the basis of his research into homosexuality in the church, **Brittain** is a member of the Faith and Order working group of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, which is working on church leadership and sexuality in the Anglican Communion. His research has led to his being invited to speak on BBC Scotland on conflict over moral issues in the Church of Scotland. **Nimmo's** research has contributed to his work with the Church of Scotland Working Group on Issues in Human Sexuality, and to his ecumenical work with the Joint Doctrine Commission of the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church. **Greggs'** research in ecclesiology led to his appointment as a Visiting Professor at St Mellitus College (a new Anglican training college focused on church leadership), London, where he helps in the training of Anglican ministers. His research has also led him to be appointed as a member of the Methodist Church's Faith and Order network. Furthermore, Christ's College (a Church of Scotland ministerial training college) is located within the department, with **Swinton** as its Principal.

**Claimed Impact as defined by REF:** The impacts of research into church leadership carried out in the unit have influenced the form and content of associations between people and groups within the church, and have illuminated and challenged cultural values and social assumptions locally, nationally and internationally. They have also created and inspired new forms of religious expression, both through the activities of the church leaders that have been influenced and the communities that they serve. The cultural context of this research and its impact has also responded to the needs of religious communities; and the research has impacted in terms of its effect on curricula significantly beyond the submitting HEI.

##### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. The work of mission shaped ministry (**Drane**): <http://www.missionshapedministry.org/>
2. Description of the work of MTAG (**Drane**): <http://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/mission/mission-theology.aspx>
3. Website of 'Spiritual Journeys' (**Drane**): <http://www.spiritualjourneys.org.uk/>
4. *Reformed, Reforming, Emerging, and Experimenting* (Church of Scotland, 2011: **Drane**).
5. Regarding **Clarke's** research on Scottish Baptist policies, corroborative statement from the Ministry/Mission Adviser of Baptist Union of Scotland.
6. *Transforming Leadership* chapter by **Clarke** for Baptist Union (pp. 8-15): <http://www.scottishbaptist.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/TransformingLeadership.pdf>
7. Details of church plant communities arising from **Clarke's** research: <http://www.gariochchurch.org.uk>
8. Personal website of John **Drane** confirming how his ongoing work links to the impact.