REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP

By JOHN F. X. HARRIOTT

OVER TEN YEARS AGO I wrote an article for *The Month* called 'The Suicide of Authority'. It began by contrasting authority and leadership in the Anglo-Saxon poem, 'The Battle of Maldon', with their interpretation in a contemporary British Army recruiting advertisement. As the poem illustrates, the Anglo-Saxon lord could count on the unquestioning loyalty of his thegns, even to the death; in return he was their protector and provider. In the recruiting advertisement that kind of unquestioning loyalty was explicitly rejected. The modern officer, it said, had to derive his authority from professional and personal qualities which his men could respect and trust. The first I called the authority of status, the second the authority of competence; and I argued that the difference marked a major change in the way authority is conceived.

I went on to argue that this shift marked a broader change of outlook in society which Church leaders, no less than others, must recognize and come to terms with, since the faithful could not be expected to relate to religious authority and leadership in a way entirely at odds with the way they related to their secular equivalents. Such psychological acrobatics were simply not on the cards. It was not a matter of wavering faith or brittle loyalty but of a different mentality. Nuremburg had been as great a watershed for humanity as Hiroshima. A new generation had grown up disillusioned by the consequences in this century of trusting too readily in the capacity of official leaders to know best, and even more specifically by the horrific outcome of the simplistic principle that orders are orders.

More than a decade later I would stand by the substantial truth of this thesis, though the experience of these past strange ten years prompts a number of modifications. For one thing, I now realize that I was talking from too narrow a perspective. Such a change of outlook, though lurking, as recent events in the Soviet bloc and China have demonstrated, behind the facade of many notoriously

authoritarian societies, was and is primarily a phenomenon of the western democracies; elsewhere the concept and exercise of authority, including religious authority, often continues more or less along traditional lines. Secondly, even in societies like our own the picture no longer looks quite so black and white. I certainly did not foresee or take into account the rise, popular appeal and impact of such leaders as John Paul II, President Reagan or Mrs Thatcher.

Superficially, indeed, it might be argued that these figures demolish the thesis altogether. Are they not proof that many people still nurse a deep respect for status and are prepared to follow and to hand over their powers of choice and decision to leaders, aided by the skilful use of a modern public relations apparatus, who exhibit a certain kind of confidence and conviction? Are not the cheering crowds proof positive that old instincts die hard, that many people still find individual responsibility burdensome, still prefer to be told what to do, and require a living focus for various kinds of inarticulate, and perhaps atavistic, feelings?

Superficially, perhaps. For the impact of all three high-profile leaders itself turns out, on closer inspection, to be curiously ambivalent. All three have made effective use of the aura attaching to office, whether that of President, Prime Minister or Pope, and it has to be admitted that this alone can evidently still exercise a strong claim on the loyalties of many people. Their achievements, as these are commonly interpreted, are very similar. All three have been restorers of lost pride. President Reagan made many Americans feel good about themselves after the humiliations of Vietnam and Watergate; Mrs Thatcher has struck a chord among many Britons regretful of the United Kingdom's diminishing influence as an economic and political power; Pope John Paul II has caught the interest and attention of a secular world in which religion appeared to be increasingly brushed aside. All three have been leaders with strong personal convictions. They have all drawn a large following of virtually uncritical devotees. Each has demonstrated a willingness to change traditional institutional structures not only by argument and persuasion but often by sheer compulsion. Whether the kind of confidence they have induced, whether the changes they have effected, are good or bad is not here the question. The fact is that they have used their leadership role in a clearcut, decisive manner and among considerable numbers of people have attracted a positive response.

At the same time it is possible to argue that none has succeeded in establishing their personal authority or promoting their most cherished ideas with the degree of success for which they hanker. The American people valued President Reagan as a symbolic figure, a sort of constitutional monarch, but were increasingly guarded about his most characteristic social and political ideas and policies. Simultaneously he was admired and patronized, to the point of being treated, even by his most fervent supporters, as a rather dotty though endearing old buffer. Mrs Thatcher, after ten years of virtually unchallenged power, and despite the many institutional changes she has imposed, has not, according to the most recent surveys, altered the fundamental attitudes and attachments which she has consistently attacked: the majority of the British people remain wedded, to name but a few examples, to the Welfare State, to a strong sense of community, to a feeling for the underdog, to a high regard for tolerance and consensus, to the conviction that there are more important things in life than money, even to the value, abuses apart, of trade unions. All the rhetoric, aided by a quite exceptional lack of restraint in manipulating the public organs of communication, has met with stubborn resistance. She has effected more change to outward forms than to basic attitudes.

Pope John Paul also fits this pattern. His main object is clearly to influence the beliefs, devotion and behaviour of the faithful. Yet it is precisely in this area that he appears to have been least effectual. Despite all his tireless journeying and equally tireless preaching, it is rare to meet bishops and priests from any country he has visited ready to claim that the outlook and practice of the Catholic population have been significantly affected by his passage. Like a huge low-flying aircraft he has brought temporary drama and thunder but passed on leaving little trace behind. The real work of instruction and conversion continues to lie in the dogged, humdrum, routine activities of the local church, parish and school. Oddly enough his most visible effects have been political. It is commonly agreed that he has been a key player in the altered political condition of his homeland, and perhaps also of other parts of eastern Europe. It is also the fact that his visitations have spelled the end for a number of unsavoury dictators elsewhere, and that his powerful defence of human dignity and human rights has reinforced the cause of both. It is also true that he has not hesitated to shape Church institutions to his will, even in the face of doubts

and opposition, and has attempted to silence and discipline those within the Church, even fellow bishops, of whom he disapproves. Yet, to the extent that it is possible to evaluate such matters, Pope John Paul has been unable to affect the convictions, the minds and hearts of Catholics, to anything like the same degree as his predecessor, Pope John, who acquired immense personal authority yet was far less personally assertive.

Indeed personal assertion has been a characteristic common to all three leaders. Each is temperamentally a hot-gospeller, insisting that others listen but unready to listen in return. All have practised a highly personal and idiosyncratic mode of leadership. All have harboured very strong convictions, been outwardly untroubled by self-doubt, and, as far as is known, generally unsusceptible to advice from others apart from existing sympathizers. That has been a kind of strength which cannot be discounted. The response to it is summed up in the popular sentiment that 'At least he knows where he's going'. But recognition of a sense of direction has not translated into a conformity of minds or a willingness to travel in the direction indicated. All three leaders have been much respected for characteristic personal qualities, whether bonhomiousness, toughness of mind, decisiveness or eloquence; and Pope John Paul and President Reagan have been widely liked as well as respected. Yet even their admirers have been prone to distinguishing between the messenger and the message, the leader and his cause. President Bush is expected to stand or fall by the speed with which he can detach himself from his predecessor's policies. Mrs Thatcher's convictions and policies come under heavier and heavier fire even among formerly warm supporters. Pope John Paul's religious appeal is chiefly to a dying though still vociferous breed of conservative which has never come to terms with the Second Vatican Council; both his theology and his ecclesiastical policies arouse growing scepticism and anxiety, and not just among Catholics of a radical disposition. The remarkable number and calibre of the theologians involved in recent protests are clear evidence of that.

Although, then, these three have met the often expressed demand for strong leadership, their record shows its limitations as strikingly as its advantages. Behind the starbursts of rhetoric and razzmatazz the real changes of belief and outlook are in fact fairly superficial. None has succeeded in their primary aim, to bring about wholesale conversion to their own most cherished beliefs. No doubt part of

the explanation lies in the nature of those beliefs. But another part must surely be the habit common to all three of proceeding by dogmatic assertion rather that by dialogue. Mere reiteration even of the most passionately held beliefs no longer cuts any ice.

The reasons for this are many. Yes, many people do like to be told what to do, but perhaps only when it is more or less what they are happy to do anyway, and as long as it does not clash with other strongly held desires and convictions; or because it takes care of activities and decisions with which they prefer not to be bothered. Again, wherever popular education has done its work people will not accept statements, even from leaders they admire and like, simply on trust; too many failures and scandals have undermined that sort of simple confidence. And wherever the mass media are still free to disseminate a variety of opinions and beliefs it is no longer possible to press one set of convictions while shielding hearers from the knowledge of alternatives. Less and less do we live in a world where large numbers of people are merely waiting to be told what to think, what to believe, how to behave. Less and less do we live in societies where social pressures virtually enforce conformity to a particular creed or code of behaviour. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that where there actually are pressures towards conformity they involve matters like fashions in clothes or life-styles, or are confined to sub-cultures where conformity is a condition of acceptance; but in all these instances the decision to conform is itself a matter of free choice and people are unlikely to be worse thought of if they choose a different way.

If this analysis is substantially correct, the implications for authority and leadership, not least in the Church, are profound. At one level it can be seen that decisive leadership allied to the necessary power can still have considerable emotional and psychological effects and can push through certain kinds of superficial change—in personnel, structures or procedures—even in the face of general reluctance or opposition. But at the deeper level where the issue is the conversion of minds and hearts the very same authority and leadership can prove quite impotent. No amount of propaganda, of hectoring, of badgering, even of threats and penalties, seems sufficient in itself to shake or alter deeply held convictions or overcome a sceptical frame of mind. Large numbers of people may still relish the traditional trappings and rituals of authority; they may still value the rhetoric of leadership and admire

the personal strength of those willing to be leaders; but nevertheless, when the piper pipes they do not dance.

For the politician gaining external objectives may be sufficient; whether to favour public or private ownership, nuclear or conventional weapons, direct or indirect taxation, regulated or unregulated broadcasting. As long as he gets his way he may not much care whether he carries minds and hearts with him. Though in the long run the failure to do so usually invites its own nemesis, whether in democracies at the ballot box or in dictatorships in the form of riot and revolution. As the current crumbling of the Soviet empire illustrates, not even the most ruthless employment of naked power can permanently operate successfully against popular feeling and conviction. Indeed the exercise of that kind of authority and leadership, whatever its initial successes, breeds notorious forms of corruption which first enfeeble and then bring those who employ them crashing down. And at a much humbler level the same holds true. In no human institution can there be lasting success where the gap between the mind of the leader and the mind of his followers yawns too wide.

Whether or not the politician is content or can get away with superficial changes, these are plainly inadequate for the Church. It cannot rest easy with outward forms. The whole business of religion has to do with genuine interior beliefs and their sincere expression in daily life. Merely shuffling the furniture about or imposing outward conformity fail to touch the core of the matter. Where there is no real individual interior conviction or conversion of heart the strictly religious mission of the Church has failed. Nobody today would look back complacently on the follow-my-leader mass conversions of the Middle Ages, or the era of rice Christians, or enforced conversions in the shadow of the auto-da-fé. And this religious reality must have a bearing on which styles of leadership are judged appropriate to religious ends.

To begin with, from what has been said already it would appear that leadership and authority are not coterminous. Given clarity of aims and effective power it is possible for someone in a leadership role to set particular directions and obtain particular results. In its crudest form this kind of leadership stems from the simple possession of power: control of the army and police, or an unassailable majority in parliament, or, whether in the body politic or the Church, control of the institutional apparatus of government. If opponents can be knocked flat by brute force this kind of leadership

can, at least in the short term, be effective, impose its will, achieve visible results.

But leadership does not have to be of that sort. By contrast is the type of leadership described in secular contexts as enlightened management. This recognizes the limitations and self-defeating nature of leadership by sheer assertion or main force. The leader still sets directions and promotes changes, but only after taking into account the sensitivities and minds of the led and reaching the maximum degree of consensus. Such leaders are not concerned to get their own way at all costs but to create conditions and procedures which draw their followers, employees or dependants into the problem-solving, decision-making process so that they do not merely comply with the aims finally defined but pursue them out of personal and collective conviction. It is a type of leadership which requires humility and patience on the part of the leader, not least a willingness sometimes to abandon his own ideas in favour of others which emerge as more generally persuasive.

But before returning to this theme and considering whether the Church can accommodate this kind of leadership, or whether authority and leadership in the Church must be regarded as a special case, perhaps it is worth glancing briefly at types of leadership other than that based on a combination of power and conviction.

There is, for example, charismatic leadership. The charismatic leader is not identical with the conviction leader though often there is an area of overlap. The latter can be entirely lacking in charm and still be effective. The charismatic leader's potency lies precisely in 'charm' or the personal magnetism which can almost literally cast people under a spell. It can attract followers to bad causes as well as good, but most often draws people to follow the leader in pursuit of some high ideal or philanthropic cause. Charismatic qualities have often been the strength of founders of religious institutes and charitable organizations, and when linked to ideals which are inherently inspiring and reinforced by structures and regulations capable of standing the test of time (not necessarily and perhaps rather rarely by the original leader) the charismatic leader can have lasting and dramatic effects. But because the tie between leader and followers is so personal this type of leadership also has drawbacks. Charismatic leaders who find it easy to recruit followers often show little appreciation for those they have, knowing these can quickly be replaced. The turnover can be high. Charismatic

leaders can be obsessed with their own special cause, value it out of proportion, and make excessive demands on their followers' loyalty and judgement. Their ability to inspire is often offset by an inability to organize or delegate and they tend to follow their own inspiration of the moment even when this is demonstrably leading in futile directions. Finally, no organization or system can depend on charismatic leaders for survival. They are rare, they emerge from a clear blue sky, and there is no way of ensuring a regular supply.

Much the same drawbacks attach to a more common and very similar species, the born leader. There are plenty of people who have an innate ability to dominate or sway any group to which they belong, though, unlike the charismatics, not necessarily because they have an attractive or admirable personality. Leadership powers of this kind can in fact originate in a streak of menace, or a bullying forcefulness, or an unusual spirit of recklessness or low cunning, as well as from relatively neutral qualities such as courage, imagination and even eccentricity. Perhaps the legendary officer should be included in this category whose soldiers were prepared to follow him anywhere 'if only out of curiosity'. When intelligently harnessed, the powers of the born leader can be a considerable asset. Head teachers, for example, have good reason for placing natural gang-leaders in positions of responsibility to divert their capacity for making mischief into more constructive channels. But, like the charismatics, born leaders too can be driven by a powerful ego, act erratically, find cooperation with others difficult, and as with the charismatics the supply is too irregular for all but relatively small and specialized systems to be able to depend on recruiting them.

The capacity to lead can also spring less from the overall personality than from some single highly developed quality making for dominance such as outstanding intelligence, or the ability to retain exceptional quantities of information or to marshal arguments, or from a rare personal integrity or a special sensitivity which enables the leader to get the best out of those answering to him. To some extent, where there is a natural gift of this sort, these qualities can be deliberately trained and developed; but they must be present in embryo, they cannot be artificially inseminated.

And there's the rub. Whatever the value of natural leaders, most large institutions have more leadership roles to fill than natural leaders to fill them. And though natural leaders, if wisely employed,

can be a boon to institutions, each kind has a shadow side which can undermine or damage the common cause. The natural leader is just the person to inspire new visions and new enterprises; but also the most likely to start splinter groups and sideshows diverting energies and resources from less flamboyant but cumulatively more productive activities, and, when they depend entirely on the personality of the leader, usually dying with him. Prophets and heretics (not only in the religious sense) are cut from similar cloth, and sometimes only the passage of time reveals which is which.

Leadership problems face every institution, secular or religious, and insofar as they are human organizations the Church and its various sub-groups have to deal with the same realities as secular organizations and can usefully learn from their best practice. The fact that God brought the Church into being to serve divine purposes does not, though it often behaves otherwise, permit it to ignore human experience and psychology. Grace sometimes compensates in strange and unpredictable ways for human deficiencies but, as in other matters, the provision of leadership cannot be based on the casual assumption that God will provide. When ordinary mundane realities and human behaviour are systematically ignored the result is bad leadership whether its emblems are the bishop's mitre and crozier, the field marshal's baton or the corporation chairman's gavel.

Certainly the Church is uniquely complex. Its essential life is invisible and the success or failure of its mission can only be judged by conventional criteria in the most rough and ready way. It can count heads but it cannot produce an annual balance sheet of conversions of heart, of acts of love, justice and forgiveness, of prayer and penance. It seeks to influence people in their innermost depths and about the most mysterious issues of life: the existence and nature of God, humankind's relationship to God, the special means given by God to develop that relationship and for the achievement of full humanity, the structures of grace needing to be created so that human society can more closely reflect and express God's Kingdom. Yet the pursuit of these tasks involves a great number of humdrum human activities, of conventional organizational techniques and methods, in which it resembles a wide variety of purely human institutions dedicated to secular aims. Insofar as it claims to teach divine truths it requires a peculiar type of authority. But to hold together and to pursue its mission it needs down-to-earth human skills drawing on conventional

human knowledge and experience. In Piet Fransen's words: 'The hierarchy does not possess a special "organon" or "sense" or "light" which enable it to discover certain aspects of the truth impervious to other members of the Church . . . Classical Fundamental Theology has never accepted this . . .' Yet much damage and frustration result from believing otherwise.

To inspire effectively, to persuade effectively, to lead effectively, it needs to study the state of the art and to respond to the mentality of each successive age. And it is here that a mismatch frequently occurs between the way in which it communicates and the receptivity of those to whom its message is addressed. The issue is not the nature of the Church or the source of its authority or the claims it is justified in making. It is what actually engages attention, actually persuades, actually motivates action, in a particular cultural context. To refuse to face this is not faith but self-indulgence. There is no point in reiterating that 'Father knows best' 'Do as Father tells you' in a society that can no longer take in that kind of instruction. And western societies are increasingly of that sort.

The days are gone when a prince could change his religion and order his subjects to do likewise. The whole notion of chains of command in the traditional sense is disappearing or at least undergoing wholesale modification. The King no longer tells the Queen and the Queen tells the Dairymaid etc. Putting on a crown, or a chain of office, or a mitre, no longer determines who will instruct and who will obey. From armies and political parties through vast international corporations to the humble family a sea-change is occurring in the way authority is established and leadership exercised. Moreover the reasons for that sea-change have to do, generally speaking, with a greater respect for personal dignity, responsibility and fulfilment, of which the Church itself has been an eloquent champion and advocate. If it then ignores that change in its own mode of operation it does not just appear to be an anachronism but also self-contradictory.

No doubt it will be retorted that divinely instituted authority is not on all fours with purely human authority, nor apostolic leadership with company management, not the act of faith and religious commitment with the consent and dedication obtaining in secular fields. At one level that is true, but in practice the methods and psychological processes required to establish authority and exercise leadership on both sides are strikingly akin. To make what looks at first sight like an outlandish comparison, the business company's

task of inspiring confidence in its leadership, the belief of its employees in the quality and value of its products, and their individual and collective dedication to its success, is not all that dissimilar from the Church's task of inspiring confidence in its authority, belief in the ideals and teachings of the gospel, and enthusiastic participation in its mission. The most obvious difference, humanly speaking, is that the Church cannot offer the inducement of material rewards, nor the business company count on the action of the Holy Spirit in the direction of its affairs and its employees' response.

The area of overlap is still large enough to offer useful lessons. And though it is true that styles of company leadership still vary considerably, the underlying trend away from authoritarian patterns illustrates much of what has previously been argued in this reflection. Consider, for example, just one item from the vast literature now available on this subject, a paper by Jack Peel, formerly Director of Industrial Relations at the European Commission, on 'What makes man work?' Questioning whether people can be motivated within the old hierarchical system, still dominant in Britain where it perpetuates the division between 'us and them' and breeds confrontation, he contrasts this with the more successful patterns of industrial consensus obtaining in mainland Europe and Japan. He notes that dependence reduces drive and effort, whereas greater independence, control over one's personal future and a better chance to use personal talents leads to greater involvement and dedication. Information, consultation and a share in decision-making all contribute to building up the sense of a joint enterprise and a change from a sense of being used to a sense of belonging. He admits that this creates problems for traditional managers when they are 'required to adjust to some dilution of their authority by managing more by consent than by edict'. But, he adds, 'This does not imply a lesser authority; rather a greater one, since an agreed and supported decision attracts more loyalty and respect than an imposed and resented policy'.

Again he remarks that the interdependence of industry, better educated workers and fast communications encourage greater involvement. 'It is already becoming unthinkable for people to contribute to any form of collective action, without being able to influence goals and choices.' Above all, he remarks, 'we must generate trust, not tensions', and he quotes the motivational expert Herzberg to the effect that feelings must accompany functions. Peel

recognizes that to achieve these desirable aims requires a different outlook and different practices on the management side: a shift from the image of the effective manager as a shaker and mover to that of a consensus builder, to a developer and encourager rather than a results oriented achiever; a shift too from the mere transmission of information to providing information that is 'relevant, received and understood'; and from captaincy from the bridge to close personal contact.

Interestingly this prescription for good industrial relations echoes an observation by the distinguished Old Testament scholar, Professor John Rogerson. He notes that the unhappier consequences of the Industrial Revolution to which modern social reforms have been directed—that is, alienation, degradation and conflict in the work situation—are reminiscent of the attempts made by ordinary Israelites at their best to practise the mutual help and support implicit in the idea of a people valued not in purely economic terms but in terms of God's grace. Seen in that light, the search within the industrial world for a mode of leadership which pays better regard to the human dignity of all involved is not just a matter of greater business efficiency but, consciously or unconsciously, gives practical expression to a religious ideal. In religious terms it is an attempt to create a particular structure of grace. And the lessons learned in that process about human psychology demand to be taken seriously within other contexts, including the life of the visible Church.

If it is true that a leader who is a shaker and mover is less effective than an encourager and developer; that trust, a sense of involvement, close personal contact between leader and led, inspire commitment; that these days people find it almost impossible to engage in collective action without being able to influence goals and choices; and that information must be 'relevant, received and understood', these are serious considerations for leaders, clerical and lay, at every level of Church life. For there too the dangers of alienation, (the feeling of not really belonging), of humiliation (the feeling of counting for nothing), and conflict (a sense of struggle between 'us' and 'them') with a resulting apathy, lack of deep conviction and weakness of commitment, are not unfamiliar.

Some Catholics will, of course, argue that the unique nature of the Church makes such phenomena irrelevant. They cling to a model of the Church in which the 'command and obey' principle is tenaciously defended; where God tells the pope, the pope tells

the bishops, the bishops tell the priests and the priests tell the laity, who may, if they can get away with it, tell each other, but otherwise have only to bow the head and knee. But not only is this vulnerable in ecclesiological terms, and wildly at variance with the doctrinal insights of the Second Vatican Council, notably the diffusion of authority through the local Churches and the influence of the Holy Spirit in each member of the Church, it is a lazy and ineffectual *modus operandi*. There need not be a simple choice between stubbornly reiterating what is believed to be the truth and enjoining allegiance, whether or not people actually listen and respond, and trimming the truth to make it more conformable to fashionable opinion. The first is all too often self-indulgence masquerading as heroic fidelity, the second, if and where it happens so crudely, a betrayal of the Church's sacred trust.

But that is not the real choice. The point of adopting a different style of authority, as Pope John and the Council Fathers appreciated, is not to sell the pass. They were not electronic evangelicals. Neither they nor any serious Christian could for a moment imagine that the mysterious, the unpalatable and the difficult can be erased from a faith whose primary doctrine is the Trinity and whose commonest symbol is a gibbet. Nor were they looking only to secular models for enlightenment. Rather they were turning away from an outmoded secular model, that of Roman Imperial government, to a model more scriptural, more in harmony with Christ's own teaching and practice, and indeed reflecting the understanding of authority and leadership to be found in the great religious orders.

Though, for instance, cruelly simplistic notions of religious authority and religious obedience have been fathered on Ignatius Loyola, much of what he actually said on these subjects uncannily anticipates what is now regarded as good practice in modern company management. Far from promoting unquestioning subjection of the led to the leader, his ideal was a mutual understanding of minds and hearts, a mutual and unprejudiced search for the will of God in each particular situation, and a mutual personal and collective conviction that the right course was being adopted. True, the mutual frankness, the mutual spirit of faith and habit of prayer, and the achievement of inner freedom making for real power of choice, which he saw as the necessary underpinning of such a relationship, are not the stock-in-trade of industrial management. But even if he found the jargon unfamiliar, he

would have grasped the common interest in combating alienation, humiliation and conflict, and inviting maximum involvement, conviction and commitment.

Likewise, in the selection of leaders and the understanding of their role, the Church at large has much to learn from the practice of the ancient religious orders. The statement that 'the Church is not a democracy' is all too often a mindless slogan. Certainly the truths of the faith are the gift of divine revelation, not man-made fabrications. But this ought not to be translated into a crude argument for authoritarian ecclesiastical organization. In fact the purest form of democracy is probably that of the monastic community which among other expressions of its common mind elects its own abbot. Elects him, moreover, not as a 'command-and-obey' overlord, but as a servant of the community, an encourager and enabler. It is the exact antithesis of a system which parachutes in leaders at best unknown, and at worst neither respected nor wanted. The community chooses as leader 'one of our own', whose qualities have been tested in everyday life and who is judged capable of engaging in that intimate mutual understanding and respect, that mutual search for what is true and right, on which Ignatius later based his own theories of authority and obedience.

As the three examples considered earlier bear out, 'grant' leaders able to fill a social role as helmsmen, scapegoats and icons, continue to exercise a powerful appeal. In a complex world it is always tempting to look for someone apparently able to offer a way through the entanglement of personal and social problems. That urge pops up in surprising places. As Keith Botsford, reporting on America for *The Independent* newspaper, recently wrote: 'America may worship at the altar of democracy, but give the country an intractable problem and it will opt for a "tsar"—for example a "trash tsar", an "energy tsar", an "inflation tsar", or, latest of all, a "drugs tsar"'. Christians too are not above reaching for the tsars, and the Church always contains people willing to oblige.

Yet, as I have been arguing, these phenomena are often misleading. Whatever the psychological needs the overlord fulfils, when it comes to effecting changes of heart and mind both religious and contemporary secular experience point in a different direction. Statesmen, for example, can change maps and social structures but with rare exceptions they do not bring about seismic changes of beliefs and values as the saints, poets and philosophers have done, or as the Church continually labours to do. That kind of change

is a low-key process, a hidden and often slow evolution. And for its lasting success both the Church's own most successful models and the best of modern secular practice point to intimate, enabling leadership as the key, rather than the grand, remote leader claiming superior wisdom and handing down orders from above.

Failure to grasp this truth is surely one of the chief reasons, perhaps indeed the chiefest of all, why the faith does not 'take' and why so many drift away from the Church. 'No taxation', it used to be said, 'without representation'. Today it needs to be echoed by another: 'No commitment without involvement'. Today too many clergy and laity feel they are only valued for making up the numbers, only required to listen and obey. Certainly in the relationship between Rome and the local Churches, and because of that, all too often at other levels of Church organization, there is a strong feeling of exclusion. The Second Vatican Council had enormous authority because so much of the Church was involved in its deliberations and conclusions. It would have had still more if the genuine voice of the laity had been more evidently heard. At present, when the content of the faith is treated as a gnosis possessed only by a privileged few, and the Church appears to be run by a coterie through a network of loyal apparatchiks, poorly regarded and out of touch with those they so confidently command and instruct, that authority is being eroded and diminished. Local hierarchies, religious orders, professional theologians, not to mention the ordinary clergy and laity are made to feel surplus to requirements, their views ignored, their enterprises discouraged and frequently closed down. Once again the classic triad of alienation, humiliation and conflict rears its ugly head. In politics we have seen the results, in Red Square and Tiananmen Square. In the Church the response is simply apathy and desertion. People vote with their feet.

It does not have to be like that. The Church, too, can be organized so that all are drawn into the continuous process of formulating the faith (anyone with experience of small groups is quickly struck by the wisdom, insight and idealism of even the humblest Catholics), of determining the best means for conducting its mission, and of expressing its beliefs in practice. Where that happens conviction and commitment follow. But to develop sporadic examples into general practice demands a different style of leadership—humbler, more open-minded, enabling rather than autocratic, appealing through competence rather than status. Until

that kind of leadership exists, inspiring a universal sense of belonging, of being valued, of contributing to a common cause, the Church will continue to be viewed by multitudes as just one human spectacle among many, to be admired or disdained but essentially remote and inviting no personal involvement; it will continue to fail in cultivating that inner life of the spirit which should be conspicuously its main concern; and it will continue to break the spirits of many of its most dedicated members. That change will eventually come, I have no doubt. The old authoritarianism is a dead duck. But when is anybody's guess. Unhappily, here and now, the omens do not look good.