**Michael Green, the leader**

It’s a great privilege to be asked to pay tribute to Michael’s leadership, not only because I’ve been personally greatly inspired by Michael’s combination of theological energy, passionate desire to share the gospel, and his commitment to building God’s people and releasing their gifts, but also because of his long association with the Diocese of Coventry and his special relationship with two of its bishops: Cuthbert Bardsley, who invited Michael to become one of our Canon Theologians in the 1970 and Colin Bennetts, one of Michael’s curates at St Aldates and Chaplain of the Oxford Pastorate.

Although admired by a succession of Bishops of Coventry – and many other bishops over the decades, Michael himself, of course, was not a bishop. Dioceses wanted him but he didn’t feel called to exercise that sort of leadership in the Church. There is a real sense in which Michael’s comment on John Stott’s similar decision could be applied to himself: ‘Instead of preferment in the Anglican Church, he aimed at usefulness to the universal Church’.

Michael’s leadership was a gift to the whole Church. He had dynamic influence on the culture and structure, student and staff bodies of Regent College, Vancouver, and enthused, inspired, and encouraged leaders – many of them now bishops – throughout the Anglican Communion and beyond. And his impact on the British Church in all its forms through his missions and his teaching was immense.

Nevertheless, his institutional leadership was most evident in the Church of England, as Rector of St Aldates, Principal of St John’s Nottingham and Co-Director/Advisor of Springboard. Michael’s energy and enthusiasm, vision and drive, imagination and innovation were transformative not only in his immediate context but on large swathes of the Church of England as those who came under his influence went on to enact what they had learnt from him – that ‘possibility thinking’, as Michael put it, that marks effective Christian leadership. The Church of England is different because of Michael’s leadership in parish, college and in missions too many to number. So I speak not only on behalf of successive Bishops of Coventry but many hundreds of Bishops – and as George’s presence today bears witness – Archbishops, giving great thanks to the Lord of the Church for the blessings of Michael’s leadership to the Church of England, and for the renewal he brought to our dioceses.

There are many themes that run through Michael’s leadership but there’s one that was perhaps the most consistent and deeply grounded. ‘That was the overriding principle I tried to bring to the parish’, he said, describing his leadership at St Aldate’s, ‘equipping the Christians in the congregation for the work of serving the Lord, rather than trying to do most of the ministry myself. *It is all about giving away power so to empower* *others*.’ At heart Michael was a leader who made leaders. With a foundational doctrine of the calling and ministry of all Christ’s people and confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit to gift and equip Jesus’ disciples, he enthused, encouraged and trusted people, releasing them into the fulness of their Christian identity and so unleashing the missionary energies that belong truly to the Church as the body of Christ.

Michael’s theological and practical commitment to the ministry of others carried through into his understanding of leadership. ‘The fundamental requirement of leaders is that they should lead’, he wrote, and he could do that himself with zeal and charisma. But he also believed in what he called a ‘fellowship of leadership’ in which consultation and counsel were sought, and the leadership gifts of others identified, supported and harnessed allowing, as he said, ‘the life of the Christian body to flourish’.

When describing in *Adventure of* Faith – apparently under some pressure from Rosemary – his own way of leading, Michael began where any concept of Christian leadership must be rooted and where its authenticity will be always judged, and from whence its effectiveness derives: ‘total loyalty and commitment to Jesus Christ’. He went on to say that, as those who are themselves led by Jesus, Christian leaders are, like Jesus, to ‘be loyal to the Scriptures’. Again, like Jesus, they are to be servants to others, ready to do whatever is asked of them and whatever is needful – even the most menial – for the sake of the gospel. They are to love those they are leading, ready to be vulnerable before them and allow them both to critique their leadership and to be ministered to by them.

Michael tenderly spoke of how his own leadership had been influenced by his experience of the full, present reality of the Holy Spirit, and how he had learnt to be open to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. His convictions about the Spirit, love of Jesus’ leadership and no doubt the particular traits of his personality, convinced Michael that *boldness* is an essential aspect of leaderhip: ‘boldness in making changes, boldness in seizing initiatives, boldness in doing the unconventional thing, boldness in standing up for biblical truth’. This Cathedral today is full of people who can testify to the way Michael showed that sort of boldness in his leadership in parish, college and mission, and are thankful for it.

I end, though, where Michael rooted his definition of Christian leadership, and which shaped his leadership to the end: ‘total loyalty and dedication to Christ’. Michael led a CICCU mission in 2018. It must have been one of his last missions. These words of the Events’ Secretary put well the impact of Michael’s ministry, leadership and, moreover, p*erson* on countless young people over decades of Christian service. ‘Across an age gap of almost 70 years’, she said, ‘Michael showed thousands of students the most extraordinary generosity, joy and love. He presented the gospel with clarity and kindness. And he unfailingly pointed to the One who offers life in all its fulness ­– the One to whom he has gone home.

Christopher Cocksworth, Bishop of Coventry