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ABSTRACT

**DISCOVERING NEW MOTIVATIONS FOR EXCELLENCE IN CHRISTIAN
MINISTRY WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP OF
THE CHURCH AT POWAI**

by

Cecil Clements

The purpose of this study has been to examine fresh motivations for excellence that will contribute towards a sustained life of excellence. Excellence is not an option; it is mandated by the fact that human beings are made in his image. This study proposes that a Christian's motivation for excellence must come from within—out of an intimate relationship with the Master. Only a growing love relationship with God can provide the motivation for an excellent way of life.

Participants, drawn from the Leadership of The Church at Powai, attended a full-day seminar that addressed the dual issues of excellence and motivation. Participants filled out pre- and posttest questionnaires that were used to measure changes in their thinking and understanding of excellence and motivation.

Results showed that participants had made significant changes to their understanding of and motivation for excellence and were going to incorporate these new concepts into their lives in their pursuit of excellence.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
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MINISTRY WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP OF
THE CHURCH AT POWAI

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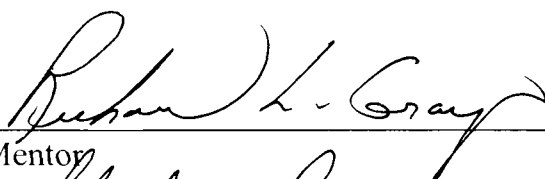
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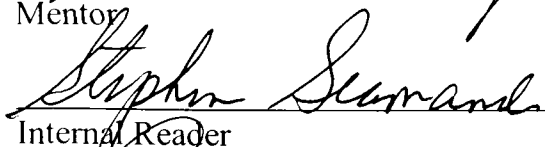
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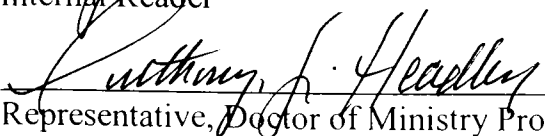
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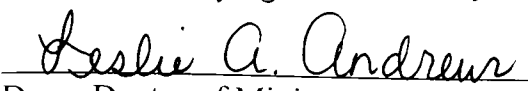
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THE CHURCH AT POWAI

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
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In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by

Cecil Clements

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

“The problem with Christian leadership,” said a recent entrant into full-time ministry “is that you can’t kick butt.” I looked at him, amused at this outburst on the one hand, but disagreeing with his assumption on the other. Implicit within his statement was the assumption that one had to accept shoddiness in the Christian workplace because one could not confront poor work. I balked at that thought. Roberts Liardon’s words rang clearly in my mind: “God never calls you to be average. Average is a mixture of good and bad. Nowhere in the Bible did God call anyone and keep them average” (qtd. in Wagner 77).

Nevertheless, with over twenty-five years of management experience tucked away in his past, I had to take his statement seriously—seriously enough to think about it, ruminate over it, and interact with it. I had to consider whether or not the statement was valid, whether using a heavy hand was the only way to get things done in Christendom. The church might be churning out mediocre, average, substandard offerings because they could not motivate people other than through “kicking butts.” I began to wonder if the words in the Good Book, “With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,” (Eph. 6:7, NASB) were merely an elusive mirage, an unattainable dream, an unachievable target. I had to find out for myself, for my ministry, and for my pursuit of excellence.

Motivations for Excellence

Delegation of responsibilities, decentralization of leadership, and a bottom-up style of functioning are leadership styles much talked about today. The days of

charismatic leadership seem to be giving way to more pragmatic, balanced, team leadership styles. Charismatic leadership seeks to allow one person to bloom while others, being supportive branches, completely depend on the direction of the leader for their own growth and fulfillment. Stephen A. Whitney finds two problems with this model:

Over time, this model of ministry proves unsustainable and even wasteful. It is unsustainable, because it relies on the energy of one person to continue. If that person burns out, takes a new job, or has to focus on a different need, the ministry collapses. It is wasteful because the potential of the individuals who are part of that ministry simply goes to waste.

Charismatic leadership depends completely on one person's charisma and skills and is often unreliable in the long run.

Now a broadening of roles is taking place; leadership and management are two different entities, yet two sides of the same coin. Initially leaders were good managers,, but with the distinction consultants are making between these two roles, leaders can be just leaders while managers can be just managers. I remember listening to a professor lament that the Church had stopped being “fishers of men” and had instead focused on being “keepers of the aquarium.” Nevertheless, as I have thought about this statement, I have come to the conclusion that it is not an either/or situation but a both/and situation. In the changing face of leadership, the leader would be the one fulfilling the “fishers of men” criteria of the Great Commission, while managers would be the “keepers of the aquarium.”

Along with this broadening of roles, where decision making and accountability get rooted deeper in an organization than at the top, motivation then must come from within and not without. Most corporations instill a culture of excellence with checks and

balances built into the structure. Any breach of these guidelines can and will result in reprimands, punishments, or termination or be labeled “butt kicking” as my new entrant into ministry said. Nevertheless, standards of excellence maintained in the environment of business houses by employees do not necessarily translate into an excellent way of life, simply because once management removes the deterrents (reprimands, punishments, etc.,) the people are likely to revert back to the way they functioned.

Christian ministry, however, is different. Each part or person fulfills a particular function based on his or her spiritual gifts. Romans 12:4 says, “For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function” Christians, therefore, do not look for excellence because punishment would ensue for shoddy work, but rather because life must be a ministry of excellence. Everything Christians do must fall into the category of high quality, perfect standards. Scripture bears that out in the gospel of Matthew, where also the exhortation is: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48, NIV).

Further, because issues of heaven and hell are not at risk, the motivation is not out of fear but out of love. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37, NASB) is the appeal to Christians, and it’s with a heart of love that life is lived in excellent ways—not through the promise of material benefit or good health or divine blessing, as borne out in the book of Job. God’s challenge to Satan was based on the premise that Job would serve God even without material blessings, while Satan’s assumption was that as long as God blessed Job he would honor God. St. Francis Xavier captures the essence of this truth in his hymn:

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S HYMN OF LOVE

O GOD, I love Thee for Thyself,
And not that I may Heaven gain,
Nor because those who love Thee not,
Must suffer Hell's eternal pain.

Thou O my Jesus! Thou didst me
Upon the Cross embrace;
For me didst bear the nails and spear
And manifold disgrace;

And griefs and torments numberless,
And sweat of agony;
E'en death itself—and all for one
Who was Thine enemy.

Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ,
Should I not love Thee well:
Not for the sake of winning Heaven,
Or of escaping Hell;
Not with the hope of gaining aught, not seeking a reward;
But, as Thyself hast loved me,
O ever-loving Lord?

E'en so I love Thee, and will love,
And in Thy praise will sing;
Solely because Thou art my God
And my eternal King.

Yes, only because God is our God and not for any other benefit do we love him.

Context of the Study

The Church at Powai is located in a suburb of Mumbai. Mumbai itself is the largest city in India and is its commercial capital with a population of around eighteen million people. The area called Powai in which the church is located and named after has an approximate population of around 400,000 people spread over a ten-mile radius.

The church has two English services in the morning—a traditional service and a contemporary service—in addition to a Hindi service in the evenings. A total of around four hundred people worship at CAP (Church at Powai) every Sunday.

The church also has four other daughter churches besides a ministry to HIV/AIDS infected and affected persons, a school recently started for tribal children in Orissa, and Reflections, a book store.

The church has had “excellence” as one of its core values since its inception in April 1997, nevertheless as the Lord has grown the church, departments have increased, staff has enlarged, and a rationale for why the church does things in certain ways became necessary.

The teaching on “excellence” was an opportunity to train various department heads on the church’s staff on pursuing excellence as a lifestyle.

The Purpose Stated

The purpose of this study was to see the effect a focused program of training would have on participants at The Church at Powai with regards to their understanding of, and motivation for excellence and its pursuit. I hope this study will be replicated in many other cities across India and that men and women who name the name of Christ would be examples of high standards of excellence so that “they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven”(Matt. 5:16).

Research Questions

This study will address the following questions.

Research Question #1

What was the participants’ understanding of excellence prior to and following the

teaching seminar?

Research Question #2

What was the participants' motivation for excellence prior to and following the teaching seminar?

Research Question #3

What aspects of the teaching seminar did the participants find most helpful in better understanding excellence and its motivation?

Definition of Terms

In talking of excellence, though, I would be wise to offer a few definitions. First, *understanding*, as defined by the Merriam Webster Dictionary is to “have the power of comprehension; to achieve a grasp of the nature, significance, or explanation of something; to believe or infer something to be the case” (“Understanding”). Second, *motivation* is “the act or process of motivating [emphasis mine]; the condition of being motivated [original emphasis]; a motivating [emphasis mine] force, stimulus, or influence” (“Motivation”). For the purpose of this study, I use the terms *quality* and *excellence* synonymously. *Quality* as defined by the same dictionary is “a degree of excellence” (“Quality”), and *excellence* as defined by the same dictionary is “superior, very good of its kind, eminently good” (Excellence). Everyone has different understandings as to what this word means and has come to mean. Joni Eareckson Tada produces paintings that might not find their way into any renowned art gallery until one knows her disability and understands that she created the painting with a brush clenched between her teeth. While one would not call her work excellent in the midst of other “whole” artists, one would almost immediately pronounce her work as excellent when

viewed from within her limitation. Similarly Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony moves into the realm of the sublime when one realizes he composed it when he was practically deaf.

John William Gardner offers this definition of excellence: "Our society cannot achieve greatness unless individuals at many levels of ability accept the need for high standards of performance and strive to achieve those standards *within the limits possible* [emphasis mine]for them" (131). The operative word in his definition is *limits*, and limits are those things that restrain or curtail the scope of one's abilities outside of one's capacity to overcome them.

The question that needs to be raised, in lieu of this definition, is who defines excellence. In the case of Tada, her limitation is visible; hence, everybody can evaluate her work. Only the person involved can see a troubled mind, a ravaged self, or an emotional scar; and he or she must decide the worth of one's offering to the Lord. The onus of deciding the quality of things offered to the Lord must be oneself and nobody else. "This above all: to thine own self be true," wrote William Shakespeare in his famous tragedy (Hamlet 1.3).

For the purpose of this study I define excellence as doing one's best in every sphere of life, treating it as an offering to the Lord, an offering made out of a constantly growing intimacy with Jesus.

Description of the Project

The Church at Powai was the setting for these seminars. Participants represented various departments of the church so as to permeate every area of the church's functioning. At least one sitting member was invited from each of the following departments to be a part of this exercise: finance, vision, Sunday school, youth, CAPCare

(the church's ministry to HIV/AIDS infected and affected persons), Paripurna (A ministry that provides schooling to tribal children in the State of Orissa), administration, Reflections (the church book store), and members of the preaching unit (lay members who preach when the pastor is out of town).

The purpose of this teaching is to see what effect a focused program of training would have on participants of The Church at Powai's program on excellence with regards to improving the level of quality and excellence in the lives and ministries of those attending.

The participants attended a full-day teaching seminar that addressed key areas of understanding excellence from a biblical standpoint rather than a secular one. The seminar dealt with various topics: delineations between success and excellence, perfection and excellence, God's proactive role in helping to achieve excellence versus excellence built on an egocentric lifestyle.

Motivation was the other key area looked at, particularly in terms of achieving sustainability. At the end of the seminar participants put down application points that would enable them to pursue excellence as a lifestyle, as a way of life.

Methodology

A researcher-designed Pre-test and posttest questionnaire was used to evaluate the project. Thirty questions made up the questionnaire. Respondents answered these questions both before and after the teaching seminar. Of the thirty questions, twenty were on an understanding of excellence while ten had to do with motivation. I included negatively phrased questions in both sections and the questionnaire conformed to the selected-response format according to the Likert scale.

Pre-test and posttest questionnaires offered the same thirty questions along with two qualitative questions designed to gauge the respondent's understanding of excellence and his or her motivation for excellence before and after the seminar. In addition the posttest questionnaire had two additional questions meant to determine what aspects of the teaching seminar had been most helpful and how the respondent would apply these aspects to his or her life. The questions came out of research that has been documented in the literature review found in Chapter 2 and reflected some of the misconceptions existing between one's understanding of excellence vis-à-vis success and perfectionism and God's view of excellence mandated by his children's "image of God" creation.

I tested the questionnaire for validity at two levels: In the first instance a representative sample of the final participants answered the questionnaire. I calculated the time taken, noted and changed difficult words or phrases and streamlined badly worded questions. Professionals involved in market surveys conducted the second validity check. Their suggestions helped in tidying up the questionnaire, making it aesthetically appealing and shifting of qualitative questions to give better results. I incorporated these suggestions in the questionnaire prior to the seminar.

The participants attended a full-day teaching seminar that addressed key areas of understanding excellence from a biblical standpoint rather than a secular one. I made delineations between success and excellence, perfection and excellence, God's proactive role in helping his people achieve excellence versus excellence built on an egocentric lifestyle.

Motivation was the other key area looked at so that sustainability could be achieved. The seminar focused on moving participants from an extrinsic motivation that

included rewards and punishments to an intrinsic one fueled by their love for God and their original “made in his image” position.

I also attempted to elicit a commitment from the participants at the end of the seminar to pursue excellence as a lifestyle, as a way of life, by asking the respondents to put down application points that would enable that pursuit.

Delimitations and Generalizability

Because the motivation for excellence stems from a Christian’s understanding of and response to God’s love, his requirements as stewards of his property, and considering that excellence is not often visible or measurable, the seminar anticipated the following delimitations:

- Instruments used in the study would only capture a shift in each participant’s understanding.
- The study could not evaluate the changes made in lifestyles and ministry because the onus to affect change with the new knowledge was an individual’s personal choice.
- The study is replicable if the seminar is replicated in similar fashion.
- The project is limited to urban cities because English was the medium of instruction.

Biblical Theology of Excellence

Two important points surface from these preliminary observations. One is God’s expectation of Christians, his creation; and the second is Christians’ response to his mandate. For the purpose of discussion, I am going ahead with my observation that ministry is something all Christians must engage in whether it be “full-time,” “part-time,”

or “all” of the time; and the onus is on leadership to teach, model, and encourage excellence within the church.

God’s expectations for his creation existed since the beginning, when he gave his desired will for humanity to Adam as found in Genesis 1:26-28:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” (NIV)

God’s desire for his creation was to rule over the earth. God gave humanity the authority to rule in his stead. R. Paul Stevens brings out a clearer understanding of what being made in the “image of God” is, when he says, “The Genesis account of creation mentions two things about the dignity of being God-imaging creatures—relationality and regency” (6). He amplifies these two concepts by adding that the relationality aspect of being made in the “image of God” invites believers to be “community-builders,” while the regency aspect means that “we have a wonderful role of representing the absent monarch’s interests”. (6). The Bible underscores this point in Psalm 115:16: “The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth He has given to the sons of men” (NASB).

To rule in his stead is to rule in a manner that would perfectly reflect God’s rule on earth. Jesus illumines this point when he teaches his disciples how to pray, and says, “your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). Christians should rule or conduct themselves here on earth in such a way that God’s will is accomplished. Further,

and I think this truth has tremendous ramifications for Christians, God made humans in his image and put into people all the attributes necessary to conduct the affairs of humanity according to the way he would. In fact Scriptures say that he did this by making humans just “a little lower than God” (Ps. 8:5).

Dutch Sheets elucidates this point:

Now it’s no small task to re-Pre-sent God. Therefore to help us humans more adequately carry out this assignment, God made us so much the same as Himself that it was illusionary.... The Hebrew word for “image” is *tselem* which involves the concept of a *shadow*, a *phanthom* or an *illusion*. (26)

God expected humans to conduct themselves and the affairs of humanity in such a way that God himself was doing the work. God’s way of doing work is always excellent. Ted W. Engstrom, former president of World Vision remarked, “God never has made junk” (22). The writer of Deuteronomy reiterates this point.

For I proclaim the name of the LORD;
Ascribe greatness to our God!
The Rock! His work is perfect. (32:3-4)

God expects his creation to be perfect in their sojourn here on earth, to excel in everything they do. Engstrom quotes Dr. Melvin Lorentzen as saying that Christians must give their best to the Lord.

[We] must stress excellence over against mediocrity done in the name of Christ. We must determine to put our best into the arts, so that when we sing a hymn about Jesus and His love, when we erect a building for the worship of God, when we stage a play about the soul’s pilgrimage, we will not repel people but attract them to God. (23)

God expects people’s best efforts in everything they do, not randomly, but routinely.

Nevertheless, a Christian’s response to God’s expectations has its limitations.

Satan’s involvement in luring Eve into disobeying God had tremendous consequences.

Into a perfect world created by a perfect Creator, imperfection came in the form of Satan. Satan lowered the standards, showed Eve an easier way out by saying, “Did God really say?” and into this perfect world came the temptation to settle for less than the best—to “miss the mark,” as the Greek word for sin, *amartia*, literally means. In every sphere of human activity, men and women face Satan’s temptations to settle for less than the best—to miss the mark of excellence by settling for average, mediocre offerings.

Sin seems to be a harsh word to use in the context of fulfilling one’s call, but to overcome, sin must be seen as sin. Otherwise, people will continue to settle for lesser things. Is that so bad, one may well ask. The answer is yes. The following example from my own life helps illustrate this point.

Music is and has always been an integral part of who I am. I remember conducting a church choir almost twenty-five years ago as I started out in what would later become a ministry in music. I was standing in front of the choir and exhorting them to give me a little more, and I gave them this reason: I told them I was pushing them so hard because I hoped when they sang on Sunday that their listeners, the congregation, would concentrate on the message inherent within the anthem and not get sidetracked by mistakes and unwanted sharpened or flattened notes. For the people to be ministered to, their total concentration had to be on the content and not on the shortcomings of the messenger. Missing the mark of excellence forces people to focus on the shortcoming, rather than the main entrée.

Urging his listeners to be “salt” and “light,” Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). Excellent offerings glorify the Father in heaven. They

bring him honor, they showcase his majesty, and people draw near to him, which is the desired end in pursuing excellence. So far I have looked at God's expectations and Satan's devious methods—devious because imperfect goals lure people to lower the standards. I have also shown that love for God is the motivation and everything Christians do must be an offering unto him. "Good works and righteous work behavior from a Christ-centered perspective can be understood only in the context of motive. The central motive essential in qualifying any activity is love born of a desire to bring glory to God" (Williams 52).

The sad truth is that failure comes too often. Men and women fail too often; they miss the mark too often, and need to understand the deterrents to excellent behavior. Allow me to offer two reasons out of many that could come to mind. The first is that Christians do not love God enough to want to give him their best, and the second is complacency or sloth—to push themselves to the point of exertion is too much trouble, rather inconvenient, and far too problematic.

In a human relationship one may have with a spouse, the motivation often is to do or not to do certain things because of the love the couple shares. Spouses offer their best to the relationship because of their love for each other. The love I am talking about is not the warm fuzzies people often feel when things are going well. It is a love with commitment as its backbone, that is, committed to following through whether the feeling is present or not—a love that goes the distance.

Jesus modeled that love in the incarnation and the atonement. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." God loved, and he gave his best—his

only begotten Son, to be the Savior. Jesus' atoning work on the cross captures his total commitment. He did not pull away when the going got tough, when it did not feel good, or when it was not convenient. No, love involved a commitment to the end, a willingness to persevere against all odds and under great persecution. Love did not give up.

In the pursuit of excellence the greatest motivation ought to be love for God, and inherent in that love must be a willingness to persevere to the end. Excellence is not modeled only when convenient; excellence is an attribute marking Christians' behavior. This behavior must be the Christian's way of life irrespective of whether life is going well or not. The ordeal in the garden of Gethsemane highlights the fact that God's excellent giving persevered even through the dark and doubt-filled hours of Gethsemane. Jesus wrestled with the awful culmination of that act of love when he cried out to his Father, saying: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will but as you will" (Matt. 26:39).

This supreme gift captures the essence of love as a motivator. Love goes beyond feelings; feelings after all are based on situations and circumstances. I can get up one morning, look out of the window at the sunlight bouncing off the leaves of a tree in full bloom, and sing the lyrics Oscar and Hammerstein II penned for the musical, Oklahoma: "O what a beautiful morning, O what a beautiful day, I've got a wonderful feeling, everything's going my way." Then as I get out of bed, stub my toe, and voilà, gone are those magical feelings of a beautiful day; now I wonder whether the rest of the day is going to be as miserable.

Feelings are flighty and must not be what love is based upon. Love must be based upon fact, unshakeable fact. I can once again look out the window, see the beauty of that

sunrise, break into song again and feel pretty good all over again, because the stubbed toe does not take away the reality of a beautiful sunrise. Feelings follow facts; but so often feelings govern moods, responses, and behavior. For behavior to be excellent, motivation for love must not be based on feelings but on a commitment to excel however “out-of-it” a person may feel.

The second reason Christians do not push towards excellence is complacency or sloth. Bringing commitment into the equation will take care of this problem. When commitment to loving God is present, excellence will ensue, because excellence follows commitment. A falsehood that exists is that whatever is done for the Lord will be accompanied by willing hearts and cheerful dispositions. The apostle Paul writing to Timothy puts this mistaken notion to rest when he tells him: “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2); He exhorts Timothy to continue preaching in season when he feels like doing things and even out season when he does not.. Not feeling like doing something is not an excuse for not doing it well—what needs to be done, must be done well, regardless of feelings or expectations because excellence characterizes God’s children. It is in their DNA, their genes; after all, all humanity is made in the image of God.

In order to live, act and model excellent behavior, Christians must overcome these two deterrents. Commitment is a key ingredient in a life characterized by excellence. In fact it is a key factor in any relationship. The level of commitment is in direct proportion to the strength of the relationship. Two meanings for commitment give further insights into this noun:

Meaning 1: a pledge to do

Meaning 2: the act of binding yourself (intellectually or emotionally) to a course of action. (“Commitment”)

Taken together these two meanings show that commitment involves sincerity, steadfastness, and a binding together either intellectually or emotionally. When this meaning is applied, “commitment to God” almost mirrors the definition of the great commandment when Jesus tells the lawyer he should love “the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37).

A danger exists in thinking that love can function without commitment—it cannot. Commitment must be an integral part of love. In fact love encompasses commitment. Without commitment, feelings will determine the path of love at that particular time. A sure case for an inconsistent love relationship and an inconsistent love relationship with God will result in only occasional moments of excellence. I love the song DCTalk, the Christian rock band, sings, saying, “Luv is a word that requires some action” (“Luv Is a Verb”). It is. It is a “doing” thing. It is something involving total commitment.

Divorces are so rampant because marriages lack commitment. At the first sign of trouble, couples back out of the relationship instead of staying and sorting through issues, which would happen if they were committed to each other and the institution of marriage. I love what Ruth Graham, evangelist Billy Graham’s wife, said in response to someone asking her if she had ever contemplated divorce. She replied, “Murder, yes. Divorce, never!” (qtd. In Strauss). I bring in the whole imagery of marriage because that is the way God sees his church—in a marriage relationship. Often God is momentarily divorced, as people dabble with mediocre standards. Commitment is the only glue that will hold the relationship together.

James C. Dobson quotes a heart-touching letter his father wrote to his mother before they were married. It beautifully captures his commitment to the marriage covenant:

I want you to understand and be fully aware of my feelings concerning the marriage covenant which we are about to enter. I have been taught at my mother's knee and in harmony with the Word of God that the marriage vows are inviolable, and by entering them I am binding myself absolutely and for life. The idea of estrangement from you through divorce for any reason at all (although God allows one—infidelity) will never at any time be permitted to enter my thinking. I'm not naive in this. On the contrary, I'm fully aware of the possibility, unlikely as it now appears that mutual incompatibility or other unforeseen circumstances could result in extreme mental suffering. If such becomes the case, I am resolved for my part to accept it as a consequence of the commitment I am now making, and to bear it, if necessary, to the end of our lives together. (14-15)

No wonder Christian marriage vows affirm that commitment is for better or worse.

Commitment must, however, be found within the context of God's love for his children, and their reciprocity in loving him. Further, the all important empowering of his Spirit reveals the "thoughts of God" and therefore his will for us, his children (1 Cor. 2:11-12). If commitment to excellence results in works that preclude the will of God, they will be burned up as "stones, wood, hay and straw" (1 Cor. 3:12-15). Commitment to excellence, therefore, must exist within a love relationship with God, which includes being led by his Spirit in excellent ways. Reading through Brian J. Dodd's book, I found myself cringing to think that my own foray into leadership and excellence would lead to where he found himself in early days. He says, "But slowly, subtly, and for a time, a focus on vision, excellence and seeker sensitivity had replaced the cross in my thinking. My ministry reflected my thinking, up to date but powerless" (Dodd 13). I am thankful for his candor as it has made me think through what I am writing and what is to be the compelling issue for my dissertation—that excellence in ministry must glorify the Father

“who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

I come back to love, to a love that encompasses commitment and cannot exist without it, a love full of passion for the Lord and the values of the kingdom, a love persevering and enduring all things while expressing itself in excellent ways, a love motivating his people to press forward doing all things “as to the Lord” (Eph. 6:7).

Love is a complex word, so complex that in one instance it is God directed and in another pet or food directed. Robert J. Sternberg in his article “A Duplex Theory of Love” says that “the three components of love in the triangular theory are intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. Each component manifests a different aspect of love” (185). While it can still function with one or two combinations, “consummate” love is experienced when all three come together. He goes on to say in his article on “Triangulating Love” that “consummate love, or complete love, results when all three components are Pre-sent. It is a kind of love toward which many of us strive, especially in romantic relationships” (129).

He further cautions “attaining consummate love can be difficult, but keeping it even harder” (“Triangulating Love” 129). He stresses the importance of translating the components of love into action, saying, “Without expression even the greatest of loves can die” (136).

As people give expression to God’s love for them and their love for him, in the context of his will excellence becomes a by-product. At this time, when all these “loves” are held in balance, his will “will be done in earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10).

A chart on the different permutations and combinations of the various forms of love reveals further insights into how love for God can warp. For so often in a person’s

relationship with God consummate love degenerates or slips into “romantic” or even “friendship” as he or she offers up one or two combinations of these three forms of love.

Table 1.1. Taxonomy of kinds of triangles of love

Type of Love	Intimacy	Passion	Commitment
Non-love	No	No	No
Friendship	Yes	No	No
Infatuated love	No	Yes	No
Empty love	No	No	Yes
Romantic love	Yes	Yes	No
Companionate love	Yes	No	Yes
Fatuous love	No	Yes	Yes
Consummate love	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Sternberg, “Duplex Theory” 187.

At this point one may wonder whether this kind of love—consummate love—is possible, and if possible, sustainable over a long period of time. Sternberg himself has said that maintaining a consummate love may be even harder than achieving it (“Triangulating Love” 129); however, this juncture is where a commitment to love and discipline must come in. God promises to work, empower, sustain, and finish all things that he has started but commitment and not wishful thinking brings consistency.

Particularly in the present time when the power of the Spirit of God is manifested in tangible ways, people have reached a point where they expect God to break addictions, heal sicknesses, and prosper businesses at their whim and without their active participation. The church has forgotten that the Jordan parted only when the soles of the priests carrying the ark touched it (Josh. 3:13-17), the walls of Jericho only fell after the

children of Israel walked around it for six days (Josh. 6:3-21), and Joshua won the battle with the Amelekites because Aaron and Hur continued to hold up Moses's hands after he was so tired he could not do so himself (Exod. 17:10-12). Somehow believers have forgotten that God works alongside them, that he is the equipper and his people work alongside to do the job entrusted to them.

I am not limiting God's power or diminishing his omnipotence; however, I am saying that the church has a part to play. Paul likens the journey to that of an athlete striding towards a goal, whipping his or her body into shape, undaunted by adversities, unfazed by obstacles, eyes set on the "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14, KJV). God's people live in a microwavable, instant-fix world and expect everything to happen yesterday. God's intention, though, is that through discipline his children will make choices to live by the Spirit, and overcome the seductive offerings of Satan.

Often in the church, I have seen men and women who are struggling with addictions come forward for prayer, asking the Lord for healing, and then they go away and experience the same temptation and convince themselves that God has not healed them. Then they are back again looking for that "quick-fix" touch they hope the Lord will deliver, which will avoid the necessity of them having to overcome temptation. They look for that "zap" from the Lord but forget temptation is Satan's greatest tool. Addictions are a habit to be broken, and habits formed over a period of time will require constant reversal to form new patterns.

The Lord showed me an example of this kind of temptation just recently. I landed in Dallas and within two days developed what seemed to be a sty over my right eyelid. I

was horrified and a little perturbed because I did not have insurance and knew how expensive a doctor's appointment would be. I prayed and asked the Lord to heal it because that was the only option I could think of and in my spirit felt that the Lord would do so. I carried that sty for five days and constantly overcame the temptation to rub my eye, which itched so badly. As I kept asking for strength to overcome each time I felt like giving in, the Lord showed me how discipline works—I disciplined myself not to rub my eyes even though the temptation to do so was so strong. I overcame, and the sty disappeared, but I learned a valuable lesson out of that episode: Resisting temptation brings healing. John reminds his readers that they are to be overcomers (1 John 2:13-14; 4:4), and he would not ask them to be overcomers if doing so was not necessary. Jesus too was tempted and overcame (Luke 4:2-13).

Love must involve commitment, commitment must involve discipline, and discipline must assume a constant overcoming of temptation. Too often Christians give up at the first sign of trouble, thinking that because obstacles are present, God is not in the situation. The truth, though, is that God allows these obstacles in his children's lives to strengthen and refine them, and they ought to take heart from 1 Corinthians 10:13, where Paul tells the church that when God allows temptation into their lives, three promises accompany it: it is a common temptation, the temptation will not be beyond their capacity to withstand, and an escape route will be available.

Role of Leadership

I come back to the leader and his or her role in modeling excellence. All I have said needs to be taught to the members of churches. Leaders must be able to propagate a practical life of excellence by undergirding it with good foundational teaching.

“Executives who want to increase their effectiveness with people need to understand theory as well as practice” (93), says Frank Goble, founder and president of the Thomas Jefferson Research Centre, and goes on to quote Kurt Lewin, another pioneer in motivational research: “[T]here is nothing more practical than a good theory” (93). That responsibility to articulate the why and the how rests squarely with leadership, and a lack of better understanding promotes mediocrity. Leaders are visible people who have followers, and the onus is on them to model and articulate these teachings. The Christian world today badly lacks good role models of excellence.

Further, if excellence is not modeled or practiced, church seekers for whom excellence is a sacred quality will be turned off of church. Norman Shawchuck and Gustave Rath affirm this idea when they say that “the thirty- and forty-something generation is searching for quality in religious organizations, and this generation of seekers will not stay where they do not find it” (125). A by-product of excellence then is the effect it will have on strategies for evangelism.

In conclusion, a call to excellence is a mandate not an option because God made people in his image and expects them to represent him here on earth. The Fall corrupted humanity’s view of excellence by making them want to settle for less than the best. The Spirit, however, empowers all people to reach for those heights, motivating them not through punishment but in loving response to God. Love encompasses passion, intimacy, and commitment held in balance. Perseverance plays a major role in commitment, and the onus now is on leadership to model and articulate it so that the church buys into it and embodies it in its striving after perfection.

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 of this work examines the idea of excellence from secular and Christian perspectives found in literature available on the subject. Chapter 3 presents the research design and chapter 4 the findings. Chapter 5 provides a summary and interpretations of the research findings.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

The book of Malachi presents the malady of mediocrity. The lives of God's children have degenerated into shoddy living. God's indictments against the Israelites was a damning testimony. It showed just how far they had slipped from the excellence that should have characterized their lives as the covenant people of God. God's words to them are heart-wrenching:

“Isn't it true that a son honors his father and a worker his master? So if I'm your Father, where's the honor? If I'm your Master, where's the respect?” God-of-the-Angel-Armies is calling you on the carpet: “You priests despise me!

“You say, ‘Not so! How do we despise you?’

“By your shoddy, sloppy, defiling worship.”

“You ask, ‘What do you mean, “defiling”? What's defiling about it?’

“When you say, ‘The altar of God is not important anymore; worship of God is no longer a priority,’ that's defiling. And when you offer worthless animals for sacrifices in worship, animals that you're trying to get rid of—blind and sick and crippled animals—isn't that defiling? Try a trick like that with your banker or your senator—how far do you think it will get you?” God-of-the-Angel-Armies asks you. (1:6-8 Message)

Truly, the important question is whether or not the church offers substandard offerings to their politicians or bosses.

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to see the effect a focused program of training would have on participants at The Church at Powai with regards to their motivation and pursuit of excellence. I hope that the teaching modules used to influence this shift in thinking will be replicable and available to be used in other churches in Mumbai and elsewhere—wherever a need to understand excellence and the motivation behind it is felt. The eminent British scholar and prolific writer Isaac D'Israeli felt that

motivation “is a wretched taste to be gratified with mediocrity when the excellent lies before us” (417).

This chapter reviews literature pertinent to the topic of excellence in both the secular and Christian fields, in particular, looking at definitions of excellence as they exist in the corporate world as well as those from Christian and nonprofit agencies. Also highlighted are examples of excellence in these areas, as well as some of the barriers to modeling excellence. The motivation for excellence is another significant part of this research; therefore, I explore the reasons for excellence in corporate and Christian circles. Finally, I look at the cultural factors, if any, related to a lifestyle of excellence before summarizing and synthesizing the findings of this chapter.

Defining Excellence

Definitions for excellence are many and varied. In almost all instances the more engaged one gets in the deeper issues surrounding this topic of excellence, the issue gets clearer—excellence is not a point of achievement but a dedicated way of life. Engstrom says “the decision to go after a goal is the key to success. The decision to stay with it is what brings out the quality of excellence” (26). The long haul, the full life, is how excellence must be characterized. It must stay the distance; it must not be swayed by a life of difficulty or adversity. Excellence must be built on these circumstances, acting as columns.

The call to excellence, therefore, must become a means to an end. As Steve Harper points out, three crucial words must always accompany everything that is done, thought, or said. “In order that” are words ensuring excellence remains a means to an end—an end leading the world to “see your good works, and glorify your Father who is

in Heaven” (Matt. 5:16, NASB). Gary Inrig reiterates this point when he says,

“Excellence is not a great achievement or a marvelous performance. True excellence is a way of life” (9). Excellence points the way and highlights the path; it is “not so much the destination as a direction” (10).

Somebody once said of humility, “It’s a strange attribute, just when you think you have it, you’ve lost it.” Excellence is similar. “A strange world awaits. A world in which defining ‘excellence,’ let alone ‘searching’ for it (let alone achieving it!) will be more and more elusive. And more and more exciting” (“Excellence Revisited”). While it may be getting more difficult to define, it is recognizable when seen:

But we all certainly recognize it when we observe it in others. And we are refreshed and reassured when we witness it. What is excellence? It’s a certain style of life, a manner of living, a bigness of spirit, a point of view, a frame of reference, a set of priorities, a hierarchy of values, an admirable self-imposed standard. (Johnston 25)

Excellence is multi-faceted, yet in almost all cases, recognizable.

Excellence is not about singular achievements or a workplace ethos or culture. Excellence is a state of being; excellence is holistic in nature. Excellent achievements are not a barometer for excellence, although an excellent lifestyle would surely lead to excellent deeds. It is almost akin to putting the arguments of Paul and James together. Paul states equivocally that the world is justified by faith and faith alone, which caused some to think that faith could be lived to the exclusion of good deeds (Rom. 3:28), and James responds to this anomaly by saying faith without works is dead (Jas 2:17). Faith and works go together—both/and situations, not either/or.

Excellence works the same way. Peter F. Drucker says, “I would not want any person to give his or her life to an organization. One gives one’s very best efforts” (21).

Often company executives work so hard their marriages suffer, their relationship with their children are almost nonexistent, and stress levels may lead to nervous breakdowns or coronary malfunctions; yet in the eyes of the world, they are men and women of excellence. Richard H. Bube concurs when he says, “Authentic excellence for the Christian cannot exist outside of a holistic relationship with God and others, which is reflected and manifested in all the dimensions of life” (71). This situation, therefore, forces one to draw a distinction between success and excellence.

Success is short-term—achievable in spurts and validated by achievements. Sociologist and author, Anthony Campolo, Jr. defines success in a Western context to mean “an individual has gained for himself one, if not all, of the following: wealth, power and prestige” (9). He goes on to say that if people have one of these they have the other two as well (10). Success, then, is equivalent to having “made it” or that one has “arrived.” Excellence, however, is a journey—a lifelong journey that is difficult to measure by worldly standards. Jon Johnston succinctly delineates the differences between the two:

Success offers a hoped-for future goal. Excellence provides a striven-for present standard.

Success bases our worth on a comparison with others. Excellence gauges our value by measuring us against our own potential.

Success grants its rewards to the few, but is the dream of the multitudes. Excellence is available to all living beings, but is accepted by the special few.

Success focuses its attention on the external—becoming the tastemaker for the insatiable appetites of the conspicuous consumer. Excellence beams its spotlight on the internal spirit—becoming the quiet, pervasive conscience of the conscientious who yearn for integrity.

Success engenders fantasy and a compulsive groping for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Excellence brings us to reality, and a deep gratitude for the affirming promise of the rainbow.

Success encourages expedience and compromise, which prompts us to treat people as means to our ends. Excellence cultivates principles and

consistency, which ensure that we will treat all persons as intrinsically valuable ends—the apex of our heavenly Father’s creation. (33)

Excellence, then, is not the same as success. It is also not the same as perfection. A person is quite capable of striving after perfectionism and becoming so consumed by it that nothing of excellence emerges. Often though, in the pursuit of excellence, lines do get blurred. Michael Sandel says, “High levels of perfectionism are associated with vulnerability to problems in life, proving that there is a bad side to ‘being too good’” (qtd. in Winter 26). Richard Winter goes on to explain the various stages of perfectionism:

If we hold this spectrum (also called “mutidimensional”) view, then neurotic perfectionism is at one end, nonperfectionism is at the other end and somewhere in between is normal healthy perfectionism, which is characterized by high standards, high levels of organization and striving for excellence. (26)

Perfectionism is sometimes viewed quite negatively, but Figure 2.1 shows three types of perfectionisms.

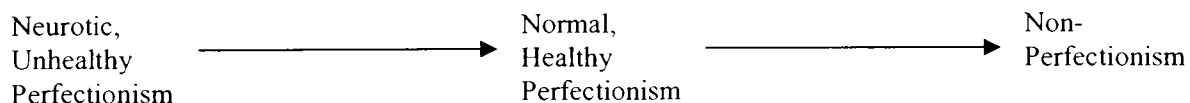


Figure 2.1. Types of perfectionism.

At this point, definitions for these three types of perfectionism become necessary.

Figure 2.1 clearly shows that a healthy pursuit of excellence requires some level of perfectionism—one not so laid back to be labeled lazy, while at the same time not so consumed as to be called neurotic. Psychologist Don Hamachek gives this definition:

Normal perfectionists ... are ones who derive a very real sense of pleasure from the labors of a painstaking effort and who feel free to be less precise

as the situation permits.... Normal perfectionists tend to enhance their self-esteem, rejoice in their skills, and appreciate a job well-done. (27).

In other words, these people are able to take their foot off the gas when the situation arises and are able to do this because they have a healthy view of themselves.

Neurotic perfectionists, however, are never satisfied with anything they do. In their eyes, their best efforts are never good enough:

It always seems to these people that they could—and should—do better. Of course, what this does is to rob them of the satisfaction that might ordinarily accompany an ordinary achievement or at least a well-done job ... because in their own eyes they never seem to do things good enough to warrant that feeling. (Hamachek, 27)

Under this definition, neurotic perfectionists are never satisfied with anything they do and relentlessly continue to work at everything to the point of neurosis.

Third, nonperfectionists are people who are so laid back that they face no guilt or shame in not reaching for high standards:

They are relaxed, easygoing and fun to be around, though sometimes so laid-back that they are perceived as being disorganized, unreliable and even lazy. Nonperfectionists are very accepting, making few demands on themselves or others—a personality type that can obviously have positive and negative aspects. (Winter 28)

Non-perfectionists tend to be so laid back in their attitudes that they sometimes slip into an average, mundane existence. Not surprisingly psychologist Linda Silverman sees perfectionism as “a two-edged sword with the potential to propel someone either to unparalleled greatness or into the depths of despair” (qtd. in Winter 27). *Perfectionism* and *excellence* are words sometimes used synonymously, yet they are very different. David Stoop has put together a helpful chart, recreated in Table 2.1, contrasting the perfectionist with a person of excellence.

Table 2.1. Differences between a Perfectionist and a Person of Excellence

PERFECTIONIST (UNHEALTHY PERFECTIONISM)	PERSON OF EXCELLENCE (HEALTHY PERFECTIONISM)
Idealistic	Realistic
Strives for the impossible	Strives for the doable
Fears failure	Anticipates success
Product-minded	Process-minded
Has to be the best	Wants to do their best
Views life as a threat	Views life as a challenge
Hates criticism	Welcomes criticism
Dwells on mistakes	Learns from mistakes
Values self by what they do	Values self for who they are

Source: Winter 30

The Bible and Excellence

A biblical concept of excellence assumes that excellence will be “related to one’s relationship with God, and hence must be ultimately defined in terms of faithfulness, obedience, and commitment to God and His purposes in the world” (Bube 69). Seeking to understand the scope of Christian excellence, Johnston asked for a definition from influential Christian scholars and leaders who responded in diverse ways and recorded the following answers. Martin Marty says, “Following out to its end the intrinsic character of a quality, event, or mode of being, and seeing this pursuit in light of ... the resurrection—that all things cohere in Christ” (48). Hudson Armerding responded, “Doing all to the glory of God, which requires my best” (48). Haddon Robinson responded in his own inimitable style.

There is no such thing as Christian excellence, just as there is no Christian hamburger; but a Christian will strive for excellence (i.e., integrity) with every task he attempts. It could mean making the very best hamburger you can—with plenty of onion, tomato and pickle (qtd. in Johnston 48).

Excellence, according to Robinson, must permeate every part of people's lives, not just particular areas.

From these samplings, Johnston concludes that excellence is an “umbrella term,” which is why the Greek word *aretē* (often translated “virtue”) is used in the New Testament (49). One is able to understand this Greek word a little better with the help of the Vines Dictionary:

Aretē properly denotes whatever procures preeminent estimation for a person or thing; hence, “intrinsic eminence, moral goodness, virtue,” (a) of God, 1 Pe. 2:9, “excellencies” (AV, “praises”); here the original and general sense seems to be blended with the impression made on others, i.e., renown, excellence or praise (Hort); in 2 Pe. 1:3, “(by His own glory and) virtue,” RV (instrumental dative), i.e., the manifestation of His Divine power; this significance is frequently illustrated in the papyri and was evidently common in current Greek speech; (b) of any particular moral excellence, Php. 4:8; 2 Pe. 1:5 (twice), where virtue is enjoined as an essential quality in the exercise of faith, RV, “(in your faith supply) virtue.” (“Arête”)

As Table 2.2 illustrates, in popular translations of Philippians 4:8 and 2 Peter 1:5, the word *virtue* gets translated *excellence*, *moral excellence*, and *goodness* respectively.

Table 2.2. Different Translations of Virtue

Reference	NASB	NIV	KJV
Philippians 4:8	Any excellence	Excellent	Any virtue
2 Peter 1:5	Moral excellence	Goodness	Virtue

Aretē is a difficult word to translate. It appears only five times in the New Testament and is quite distinct from the Jewish understanding of perfection. “The Jewish notion of human perfection is not *aretē* but *tzedekah*, translated in Greek as *dikaiosynē* and in English *righteousness*. Whereas *aretē* is decidedly anthropocentric, *dikaiosynē* is theocentric” (MacDonald 39). Righteousness emanates from God (Rom. 3:22), but Christians need to seek after and embody, *aretē*.

To seek after a virtue one must be able to define it, and that is where the problem comes. Dennis R. MacDonald provides a historical background for the word:

But what is arete really? This question rumbles throughout ancient Greek literature and never gets a satisfactory answer. For example Plato begins the *Meno* with Meno asking Socrates, “Can you tell me, Socrates—can *aretē* be taught? Or if not, does it come by practice? Or does it come neither by practice nor by teaching, but do people get it by nature or in some other way? (41)

Socrates first demolishes Meno’s definition but is himself quite ignorant of *arete* and wonders if it is a gift from the gods. MacDonald goes on to say he “would translate *aretē* not as a virtue, which has moralized the concept for the west, but as ‘excellence,’ or ‘brilliance.’ It is perceived aesthetically, intuitively” (41). *Aretē continues to be a difficult word to explain or pin down.*

In 2 Peter 1:5 the Diaspora is told to add to their faith, *aretē* and to *aretē*, knowledge, and so on till finally *agape* is added. *Aretē* and *agapé* form the bookends to a list of virtues including knowledge, self-control, perseverance, and godliness in a journey that will leave one “neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:8, KJV).

First Corinthians 13 is helpful in understanding *agape* and more importantly its significance in the context of *aretē*. Paul seems to be moving to a climax in his

description of what is good and excellent behavior in the Church. Starting with spiritual gifts in chapter 12, he shows the healthy functioning of the Church to be the utilization of all gifts. He then moves into the thirteenth chapter by suggesting that beyond this wholesome functioning of the Church through these gifts, they can be distilled into three virtues, namely, faith, hope, and love and then says “the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13, NKJV).

Paul, in fact, prefaces this thirteenth chapter by saying he will now articulate a more excellent way, which as it transpires at the end of the chapter, is love—*agapé* love. *Agapé* in the New Testament as defined by Vines describes the attitude of God toward his Son, toward all of humanity, and toward the community of faith—those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also used to convey God’s will to his children concerning their attitude toward each other and to express his own essential nature. The tangible face of God’s love is found in the gift of his Son—a gift offered deliberately, without cause, without consideration of humanity’s undeserving status, and solely rooted in the nature of God himself. This love harbors no evil against anyone, but seeks opportunities to do good to everyone, especially those of the household of faith (“Love”). In the context of *agape*, *aretē* finds meaning; in the light of *agape*, *aretē* becomes visible. Excellence shines in the midst of *agapé*. This connection between *arête* and *agape* is crucial to the biblical understanding of excellence.

Inrig gives another perspective on understanding excellence from within a biblical framework:

1. There is a different standard of excellence—God. The character of God therefore provides the comparison and humility then is a consequence.

2. There is a different model of excellence—Christ. The Lord Jesus personifies excellence for the believer and a life of imitation will produce a life of excellence.
3. There is a different goal of excellence—Christlikeness. Our goal is conformity to Christ which must be shaped in the Pre-sent by a life of excellence.
4. There is a different focus of excellence—character. What a person is gives meaning to all that he or she does.
5. There is a different basis of excellence—revealed truth. An absolute and revealed value system provides the fixed substructure for a concept of excellence.
6. There is a different motive for excellence—God’s glory. God is pleased when His character is modeled in us, and the revelation of His character glorifies Him.
7. There is a different enablement for excellence—grace. Grace is the great incentive for Christian excellence as well as its enablement. The indwelling of the Spirit enables the believer to do in God’s strength what otherwise would have led to failure if human endeavor was only involved. (34-35)

Excellence, therefore, based on Christian values has a lifelong commitment not characterized by momentary achievements, but rather on a continuum where excellence becomes “a process that must occupy all our days” (Engstrom 89).

Engstrom writes about the great Polish maestro Padrewski who exemplified this attitude:

One night after he had given one of the greatest concerts of his brilliant career, Padrewski was greeted by an overeager fan who said: “Oh, I’d give my life to be able to play like you do.” Padrewski replied quietly, “I did.” (89)

In other words, excellence must be who one is, and not what one does. The emphasis is on “being” and not “doing.” Interestingly if one could get the “being” into place, the acts that would be characterized as excellent would fall into place. For the purpose of this study, I define excellence as doing one’s best in every sphere of life, treating it as an offering to the Lord, an offering made out of a constantly growing intimacy with Jesus.

Models of Excellence

Two individuals who modeled excellence in their lives are worth recounting at this point.

Jim Collins tells the story of the stunning transformation Darwin E. Smith brought to the fortunes of Kimberly-Clark over a twenty-year period in which, under his stewardship, “Kimberly-Clark generated cumulative stock returns 4.1 times the general market” (17). A quiet, unobtrusive start marked his ascent into the top leadership position at Kimberly-Clark, but his twenty-year tenure saw him overcome obstacles of health (he was diagnosed with cancer one year into his new position), meet the challenges of cynical experts (business experts called his move to sell the mills “stupid”), and press on to become what Collins categorized as a Level 5 leader—one who puts ambition for company and institution over personal aspirations. When asked to reflect on his exceptional performance, he simply replied, “I never stopped trying to become qualified for the job” (17-21).

A motivation to fill out the position he was given made Smith a person of excellence, one who overcame the odds to excel, one who was other-centric as opposed to egocentric.

The second individual, Eric Liddell is another example of excellence. Liddell not only pursued the talent he believed God had given him but was able to shine in that area while showcasing the Lord himself. As he told his sister, “God made me for a purpose. He also made me fast. Not to run would be to hold him in contempt” (qtd. in Alexander 8). John Alexander goes on to say excellence cannot become the master; in other words, excellence is always a means to an end, which is to glorify God. He adds, “Doing

something right can't be allowed to push God out; it can't be allowed to push our families out; it can't become a 'compulsion'; it can't keep us from seeing the sunset, or visiting the elderly widow next door" (9). Liddell modeled this kind of excellence in his life. Receiving the call to be a missionary in China, he served the Chinese people faithfully until he died making "life more tolerant for others in a Japanese internment camp" (Qtd. in Alexander 2).

Obstacles to Excellence

Deterrents to a life of excellence are many and come in different ways. Some are from within and some are from without, but all these barriers diminish the quality of excellence and lead one to average, mediocre living.

Collins underscores the problem of egocentric leadership as a deterrent to excellence when he says, "In over two thirds of the comparison cases, we noted the presence of a gargantuan personal ego that contributed to the demise or continued mediocrity of the company" (29). Lee Iacocca's tenure at Chrysler would be a case in point. After turning around Chrysler Corporation from the brink of catastrophe, he attained "rock star status, leading him to be mobbed by thousands of cheering fans upon his arrival in Japan" (29) His huge ego caused Chrysler to fall behind in the second half of his tenure and eventually led to its takeover by Daimler-Benz (30).

Another deterrent to excellence is in the area of personnel—putting the wrong people in the wrong positions. Again, surveying the policies of good-to-great companies, Collins outlines practical discipline: "When you know you need to make a people change, act" (56). Often a person remains in a wrong position for a long time mainly because management is not ready to confront the issue, they hope the situation will change, or

they want to give the person three or four chances to come around and deliver. During this time, however, systems get built around the nonfunctioning member to bolster and compensate for the misfit. Research, however, shows that good-to-great companies had a fairly straightforward policy in rectifying hiring mistakes. “If we make a mistake, then we’ll confront that fact so that we can get on with our work and they can get on with their lives” (57). That approach seems not only the best option for the company but the more humane alternative for the worker—the sooner he or she is let go by the company the sooner they can find another place to settle and flourish. In the long run, it is a win-win situation.

A lack of discipline surfaces as another deterrent to excellence. Because excellence is the lifelong pursuit of looking beyond oneself and one’s own ambitions, indiscipline can be a major hindrance to some people. Consistency is a must, as is attention to detail. Gregory L. Jones, dean of Duke University Divinity School, points out the importance of detail:

We learn from other excellent athletes, performers and artists about the centrality of this attention to detail, habit and the doing of ‘ordinary things’ day by day. This is as true of Michael Jordan as of Isaac Stern, of Cal Ripken as of Dorothy Hamill.... [T]heir excellence was shaped by disciplined attention to the little things. (33)

All these persons went from great to excellent by their penchant for detail.

A commitment to excellence is necessary for excellence to become a part of the lifestyle of any person. Intelligent specialist Thomas Miller, stationed at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, echoes this sentiment when he says, “The edge comes from commitment. It’s one of our core values. You will get what you’re committed to, that’s evident. Just be aware: a commitment to anything less than excellence is acceptance of the ordinary.” He

then goes on to add that three circumstances must come together to make up commitment, and all three are within one's grasp. The first is to believe in what one is doing; indifference Pre-vents one from giving of one's best. Secondly, he says one ought to know what one is doing—to learn, study, take the opportunities; and finally, believe one is capable of excellence, which comes from a healthy self-esteem. Miller then closes his article with a personal commitment to excellence:

I'm not even going to consider the possibility of anything less than excellence. I'll respect the fact that I may not yet be there, but I'll take solace in knowing that excellence is a path rather than a destination. But I will not accept less.

For Miller, settling for the average, the mediocre was not even an option.

Barriers to a life of excellence are many and varied. Disobedience must be at the top of the list. “So then, if we do not do the good we know we should do, we are guilty of sin” (Jas. 4:17, GNB). To go against God's will after knowing it is sin. “Only as committed against God is an act sin.... The word ‘sin’ always has reference to God. It means that we have deliberately gone against his will” (Whitlow 15). Knowing then that God's will is for Christians to model and lead a life of excellence and not to do it is disobedience to his will and, therefore, sin.

Beyond disobedience one sometimes goes against the will of God because of unbelief and a lack of trust. Fear is often the instigator of this act. Fear paralyzes; fear takes one's gaze away from the Lord. The passage of Scripture in Matthew 14 where Jesus walks on water to the boat carrying the disciples is a classic example. Peter is astonished that Jesus can walk on water and wants a part of the action as well. In response to Jesus' invitation to join him on the water, Peter gets out of the boat in a flash and walks toward Jesus until, the Bible says, “he saw the wind, he was afraid and,

beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’” (Matt. 14:30, NIV). Peter was doing fine until he took his eyes off the Lord and saw the waves, and they took away his faith and replaced it with fear. Fear immobilizes and prevents one from achieving, of being the people they can and should be. This poem captures the true character of fear:

He was going to be the President
of the U. S. of A.
She was going to become an actress
In a Broadway play.
As youngsters—these were their dreams;
The visions they aspired to.
They truly thought these aspirations,
Eventually, one day would come true.

But he did not become President.
The reason is the ultimate sin.
He never ran for office.
He feared he would not win.
She didn’t make it to New York City.
In fact, never put a foot on the stage.
She thought she’d forget her lines.
In other words—she was afraid.

The lesson in these stories
Is that you must get up and try.
If you let your fears control you,
Your dreams will quickly die.
Because if you want to hit a home run,
You have to go up to the plate.
If you want to meet that special person,
You have to ask them for a date.

The biggest crime in life
Is to forget what you have dreamt.
It’s not the act of losing
But to have never made the attempt.
So as you battle with your fears in life,
Remember this brief command:
“If you’re not afraid to face the music,
You may one day lead the band.” (qtd. in Manz and Neck 5-6)

Fear becomes sin because it is rooted in unbelief. Sixty-two times in the Bible one finds these reassuring words: “Fear not!” (“Fear Not”) and even more comforting words, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5, KJV). With that kind of a promise, not to believe is unbelief and sin.

Another area that would keep one from realizing one’s potential and seeking after excellence is sloth. Brian Whitlow provides a definition of sloth:

The technical name for it is *accidie*.... Accidie leads to a negation of life with all its splendors and challenges. The man who is caught in its insidious toils exaggerates the difficulties that lie between him and any high attainments. He measures the weight of all tasks by his own disinclinations for them. He makes use of any easy excuse that comes to hand. (80)

A slothful person will accept any excuse or seeming difficulty to escape a life of hard work and determination will suffice for a person of sloth.

Jesus had strong words to offer regarding laziness when he told the people the parable of the talents. The master chastised the servant who did not do anything with the talent give to him:

You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 25:26-30, NIV)

The servant was not only chastised, but punished as well—losing what he had and being thrown into darkness.

Accidie, or sloth or laziness, is really a spiritual problem. It is “a failure of spiritual nerve. It greets all splendid things with a weary or a worldly-wise snigger”

(Whitlow 85) and leads people down a diametrically opposed path to excellence. The writer of Hebrews, too, writing to Christians dispersed by the persecution, still exhorts them by saying: “We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised” (Heb. 6:12). Persecution, difficulties, trials, and tribulations are not reasons to back away from doing what is right.

“Excellence—moral, ethical, personal excellence—is worth whatever it costs.... Nothing less will ever satisfy you or glorify God” (Swindoll 274).

The Image of God and Excellence

The fact that God, who is excellence personified created humans in his image, means that excellence, or the penchant for excellence is embedded in their DNA. While various views exist about the meaning of being made in the image of God, God’s image rests upon Christians and non-Christians equally. Millard J. Erickson stresses this fact as he concludes his chapter on “The Image of God in the Human”:

The image of God has not been lost as a result of sin or specifically the fall. The prohibitions against murder and cursing apply to the treatment of sinful humans as well as godly believers. The presence of the image and likeness in the non-Christian is assumed. If this is the case, the image of God is not something accidental or external to human nature. It is something inseparably connected with humanity. (513)

He then goes on to say the image of God is in the very nature of man. “It refers to something man *is* [original emphasis] rather than something he *has* [original emphasis] or *does* [original emphasis]” (513). This distinction is important for one’s understanding of excellence. God’s image is not manifested or revealed by possessions, resources, position, or status; it is just Pre-sent “by virtue of his being man, he is in the image of God” (513). Albert Schweitzer seems to have understood this profound idea in the way he lived his life. Norman Cousins spent a great deal of time with Dr. Schweitzer in the

hospital at Lambarene in French Equatorial Africa before he died, and he writes: “He considered the desire to seek the best and work for the best as a vital part of the nature of man” (135).

All the qualities of God in his image are inherent in humanity and in his Word, which gives one a portrait of excellence. This understanding is a point of contention between “the Greek and the Jewish, Christian and Muslim views ... whether we are left on our own to discover or create the ideal, the standard of perfection, or whether it has already been given to us” (Winter 179). God has modeled excellence in a variety of ways, especially in his creation of the universe (Gen. 1), his redemption of fallen creation through the incarnation (John 1), and atonement (Matt. 26-27). Meticulous planning of the Temple and the Tabernacle (Exod. 35-40), one’s own frame “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139), the miracle of procreation (Gen. 2:24), and the extent of his love (Rom. 8:38-39) all bear witness to this truth. God’s leaves one in no doubt regarding his standards of excellence. The world is not without visible, tangible evidences of God’s excellence. Looking at his “marvelous works” humanity must fulfill its legacy of excellence. Charles R. Swindoll adds, “Those who pursue it do so because of what pulsates within them, not because of what others think or do. Authentic excellence is not a performance. It is there whether anyone ever notices or tries to find out” (275).

People need to optimize their God-given potential for excellence and walk in the will of God. Jesus demonstrated the key to excellence, when, poised before the most excellent though painful gift he could give to humanity, he turned to God in anguish, crying out: “nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39, KJV). God has given his people the ability to understand his will. As Paul emphasizes, the presence of

his Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13) is given to every believer, and one can understand the mind of God because his Spirit resides in the hearts of his people (1 Cor. 2:16).

Understanding the will of God though theologically simple, poses practical problems for the earnest Christian, because myriad voices often clamor for attention. Lori Salierno and Esther Bailey offer clear guidelines for discerning the will of God. Sometimes when one faces indecision, God's will is clear, and one's decision is made with the verses that bring clarity. At other times one needs further clarity because the decision may be specific to a job or a move or a marriage, for example. In such cases they advocate four ways for deciphering his will. The first is God's promise found in Proverbs: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take" (3:5-6, NLT). The second is divine impressions—strong feelings that come after much prayer. Thirdly, they name circumstances through which God provides guidance; and, fourthly, advises taking the counsel of others. Any of these three areas or "guiding lights," as they call them, if negated by Scripture, should be automatically dismissed because the Bible "remains your final measuring stick" (21-30).

The ministry of the Holy Spirit in one's life is the key to a life of excellence. Andrew Murray underscores this point when he says, "The one thing needed for the church in its search for excellence is to be filled with the Spirit of God" (7). To be filled with the Spirit is to allow complete control for the Spirit to move one along God's path of excellence and to be completely dependent upon his leading:

Why do so many leaders go astray and end up in the quagmire of mediocrity—or worse? To stay on track requires a lifestyle of dependence on God. This habit of regularly consulting God was a hallmark of Israel's

most renowned and courageous leader, King David. (Halcomb, Hamilton, and Malmstadt 31)

The evidence of that submission and dependence is recognized by the fruit of the Spirit in one's life. It is clear proof of the Spirit's control, for love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are wonderful barometers of excellence (Gal. 5:22-23).

Motivations for Excellence

To provide a sustained level of excellence, one needs to be properly motivated. The secular world tries to motivate people by offering external rewards and punishments. Motivation, however, presupposes a need, which leads to appropriate behavior to fulfill that need, which then leads to satisfaction. A knowledge of excellence then, creates a need to be excellent. Appropriate behavior must follow for an actualization of that need. So the "basic perspective on motivation" looks something like Figure 2.1 ("Theories of Motivation").

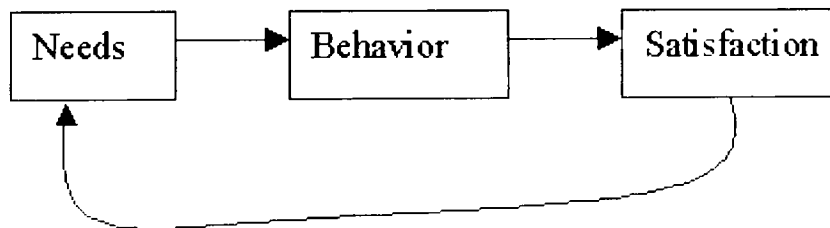


Fig 2.2. Motivation.

Abraham Maslow has done pioneering work on the subject of motivation. In Motivation and Personality, which he wrote over fifty years ago, he maintained that "needs ... are usually taken as the starting point for motivation" (35). Maslow's

contention is that needs come in a hierarchy with basic physiological needs taking priority over safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization (see Figure 2.3).

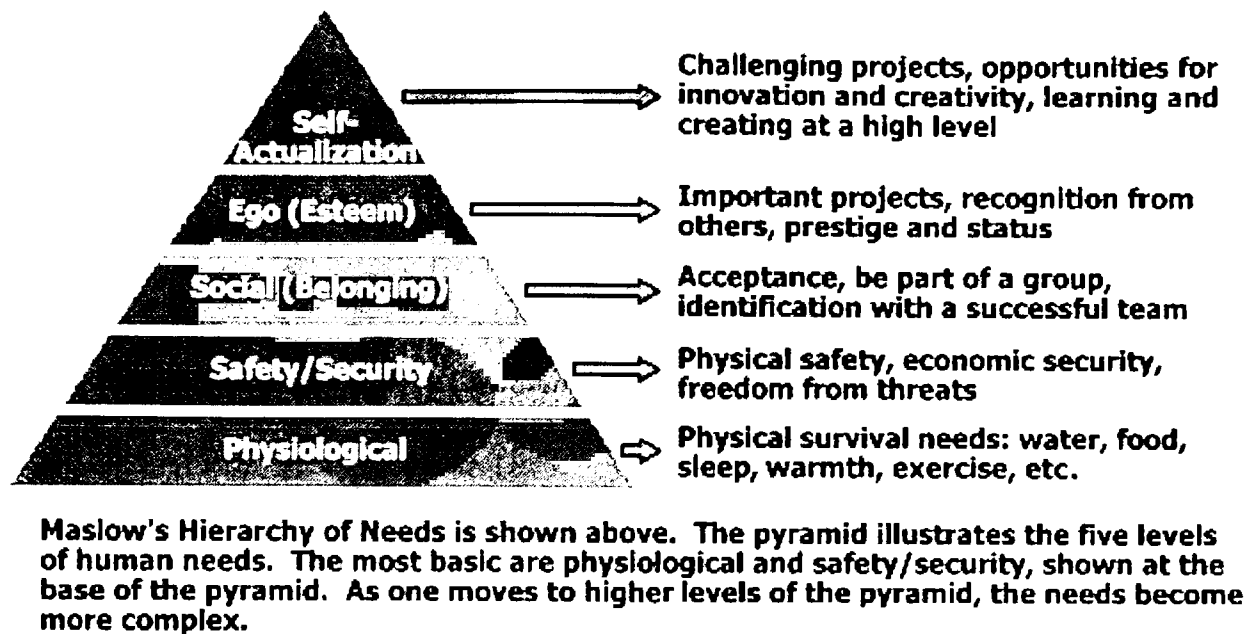


Figure 2.3. Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Maslow, also maintains that unless the basic physiological needs are met, the higher needs are not activated. Critiquing this premise, the article "Theories of Motivation" asks the following question:

But is that a safe assumption? According to the theory, if you are hungry and have inadequate shelter, you won't go to church. Can't do the higher things until you have the lower things. But the poor tend to be more religious than the rich. Both within a given culture, and across nations. So the theory makes the wrong Pre-diction here.

Maslow's position that lower needs must be met before higher needs can be attended to conflicts with scripture.

Because excellence is a biblical concept applicable to all, it must be universal in its scope and attainable in its reach. It must cut across barriers of gender and age, education and employment, economic and social strata and be challenging to all and sustainable by all. Sustainability must have constant motivation—unrelenting, exciting, and insistent. Theorists of motivation argue that motivation can be both intrinsic and extrinsic. Nevertheless, when motivation is contingent upon performance extrinsic motivation seems to have an inverse effect on people. Especially in a volunteer situation, extrinsic motivators lower the standards and remove the fun from the job:

“It’s strange,” said Kavita “I started work as a volunteer at an NGO. I put in 18 hours a week helping expectant mothers in slums and advising them on nutritious diet and care. I loved going to work. “Then, three month ago, they hired me full time at Rs18,000 a month. I am doing the same work I did before, but I’m not finding it nearly as much fun”. There’s an explanation for Kavita’s reaction. It’s called cognitive evaluation theory and it proposes that the introduction of extrinsic rewards, such as pay for work effort that was previously intrinsically rewarding due to the pleasure associated with the content of the work itself tends to decrease overall motivation. (“Cognitive Evaluation Theory”)

Motivation, then needs to come from within for it to be sustainable. As Edward Vockell says, “Extrinsic motivators may lead to merely short-range activity while actually reducing long-range interest in a topic.” Carol Bainbridge offers this definition of intrinsic motivation:

Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that comes from inside an individual rather than from any external or outside rewards.... The motivation comes from the pleasure one gets from the task itself or from the sense of satisfaction in completing or even working on a task.

In other words motivation does not need an external stimulus. It is sustainable intrinsically.

This same quality of process, of sustainability, of constantly improving, of trying to better oneself, of not being satisfied with the status quo, of moving beyond mediocrity and average is true of corporations as well. Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman Jr. reported that innovation was the watchword of excellence, that continuously innovative companies proved to be excellent, and that these companies held strong beliefs giving them both movement and intensity (12-16). Those beliefs exhibited by excellent companies revealed this truth:

Companies were, above all, brilliant on the basics. Tools didn't substitute for thinking. Intellect didn't overpower wisdom. Analysis didn't impede action. Rather, these companies worked hard to keep things simple in a complex world. They persisted. They insisted on top quality. They fawned on their customers. They listened to their employees and treated them like adults. They allowed their innovative product and service "champions" long tethers. They allowed some chaos in return for quick action and regular experimentation. (13)

These companies honed their existing skills but were bold enough to try something new.

Another motivation for excellence embedded in corporate executives is the fierce competition prevalent in today's dog-eat-dog market. Average is not enough. Having a high profile job is directly proportionate to delivering the goods, even as the standards of excellence continue to escalate. Sudipta Dev quotes Abraham Thomas, managing director of IBM India, to make a point:

The pursuit of excellence is an ideal that I have followed all my life and the passing years have brought the realization that excellence is a vital necessity, a quality which one can't survive without in today's fiercely competitive world.

Competition produces excellence; excellence that is borne out of bold, courageous initiatives.

Courage, however, requires conviction, and conviction embodies God's call on his people to excellence. Conviction provides a sense of identity, message, and mission.

True conviction is clarity, that is, knowing who one is, what one believes, and what one should be doing in the world for Christ (Harper 33). It further involves a commitment to truth; a realization of God's continued, involved presence; an understanding that God uniquely equips his church for ministry; and a drive to mission stemming out of a personal lived-out passion (35-39).

This understanding will add a dimension to secular leadership that might be missing in their own quest for excellence. Reviewing the claims of Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman Jr., Business Week pointed out two years later, with its "Oops" cover, that many of the "excellent" firms celebrated in the book suffered a sharp decline in performance ("Excellence Revisited"). The character of Jesus and the grace that he gives, must instill a desire and a penchant for excellence in everything that people do. Paul, writing to the church at Philippi, seems to echo this view when he says, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13, NASB).

Stanley Tam, the businessman who made God his senior partner, shies away from the word *average* as a description of himself, saying one should not settle for the spiritual plight of the average person:

I can understand the plight of being average in mentality or in physical endowments—because I surely qualify in both categories—but I do not understand why so many Christians read a Bible abounding in promises to make them something beyond themselves and yet settle for a spiritual vitality so mediocre as to seem virtually nonexistent.... [O]n the contrary, it is my conviction that God intended the full rewarding life to be every person's birthright. (2)

What a powerful and reassuring statement, almost echoing Jesus' promise of "abundant life" in John 10:10b.

For God's people to inherit abundant life, however, the pursuit of excellence must become a lifestyle; it must be an essential part of one's character, shaped not by the standards and expectations of the world but by a higher, more absolute, standard. That standard can only come from a God who embodies excellence. Paul's letter to Titus captures the essence of this argument as he exhorts Titus to go after "the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness" (Tit. 1:1), and in embracing that truth "we will become people of deep and genuine character" (Harper 21). Genuine character is formed by abiding in him. Abiding in him produces character, and the foundation of excellence is careful attention to character. Paul articulates these traits of godly character in Titus:

An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (1:6-9)

An impressive and daunting list, but a prerequisite nonetheless.

Further, not only must one pay careful attention to character, one must also be proactive in building up other men and women of character. Nancy Ortberg highlights this fact:

Character and competence are developed over time, and there's no way to microwave it. Your commitment as a leader is to say, 'Over time, as you're overseeing this critical task, I will watch you and call character and competency issues into the conversation. (95)

People of good character are people who can be trusted, whether in Christian or secular circles. David Pottruck, president and co-CEO of the Charles Schwab Corporation, agrees:

Virtually everyone I've ever met wanted to work with people of impeccable character. Just as my own character determines my personal ability to generate trust, so it is for the company as a whole. I wonder how many people think of building an entire company that has strength of character as its foundation. Such a company will be a compelling place to work. (qtd. in Kouzes and Posner, Leadership Challenge 97)

A bold statement from the CEO of a company, considered to be one of the largest financial services firms in the world.

Motivations for excellence come from different sources for Christian and non-Christian people. Non-Christians' motivation is to be successful in all they do; however, motivation is different for Christians. While non-Christians place the emphasis on success, on getting ahead, Christians place it on glorifying God.

Cultural Issues

I would like to look for deterrents or motivations to excellence embedded in Indian culture. The buzzword today in India is *excellence*—in industry, in retail, in academia, and in corporations across the country. B. S. Padmanabhan writes about just one of the many initiatives mushrooming across the country:

What is common between the removal of bitterness from the juice of the Kinnow Apple in Punjab and the development of an orthopaedic prostheses in Bangalore, or between a mobile pollution monitoring van in Surat and efforts to improve petroleum reservoir management in Dibrugarh? All of these represent the outcome of a single programme—Mission REACH (Relevance and Excellence in Achieving new heights in educational institutions)—launched four years ago by the Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) of the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

Its goals are lofty; its objective is “to bring out the best in the industry and the academia and help usher India into the club of developed nations by 2020” (Padmanabhan).

In the area of sports too, excellence is a key word. India's cricket heroes realize that the millions of cricket fans who immortalize them when winning can quickly turn

into angry, vindictive followers when they begin to lose, and so they pursue high standards in batting, bowling, and fielding, practicing long hours each day to hone their skills. Rahul Dravid, India's cricket team captain, models this approach. "Dravid dreamt of greatness for India. Somewhere in that pursuit of excellence, he gave India a strong character. The India middle-order that regularly cracked under the slightest trying conditions developed a tough spine. He made India shine with him" (Patwardhan). Dravid exemplifies current thinking among Indians today. Mediocrity and the average have no place. Nobody remembers the runner-ups; the push must be to excel, to do one's best.

A Google search revealed an interesting result. Using the keywords "India industry excellence," I found many awards for excellence offered in various fields—in engineering, the diamond industry, environment, rural development, design, and outsourcing, to name just a few. Interestingly, too, Dr. Venkat R. Krishnan, who received his PhD in business administration from Temple University and now teaches at the Xavier Labour Relations Institute, one of the premier management schools in the country, espouses a return to Indian philosophy and Hindu culture as a prerequisite for his course:

An understanding of Indian philosophy will therefore enable you to grasp the essentials of Indian culture and hence to be a more effective manager. Management is after all an influence game, and influencing others requires an awareness of their worldview. The strongest influence is exerted when you transform others by taking them closer to their real roots and by leading them to where they truly belong. That is when you really touch their lives and leave a lasting impact, resulting in leadership par excellence.

Worldview is important and change best happens when a person understands another person's roots.

One might assume, given the concept of Karma and the whole idea of fatalism—whatever will be will be—that I would see this idea as one of the deterrents to excellence. Surprisingly, in the *Mahabharata* Krishna tells Arjuna, who faces a bout of melancholy on the battlefield, to make the battle a place of yoga and then elucidates further:

How does excellence in work become Yoga? By preparing the mind to comprehend the essential function of Yoga, i.e., to attain the purity of mind and reason through service and selflessness. To achieve excellence one must control the mind so that requisite concentration can be achieved. With practice, this control over senses and the mind reaches the degree of perfection where sadhaka can understand the value and necessity of selfless service and renunciation to enjoy the higher state of bliss. (Shah)

Even in Hindu scriptures, then, the concept of excellence seems to be well-ingrained.

Excellence is encouraged and mandated in the Bible as well. The difference surfacing between Hindu philosophy and Christian thought is in the area of the ends. The end as stressed in the *Mahabharata* is “bliss” for the seeker after excellence. The end in the Christian faith is to “glorify” God, and when one does that, excellence becomes the by-product or the consequence of such a willful action.

The caste system has been the bane of India’s development progress and a strong deterrent to excellence. Recent debate has centered on whether or not further reservations for backward classes should be made in India’s premier management institutions. The problem is not whether graduates can get into professional institutions (they have reached so far); the problem is whether education is freely accessible at the grassroots level—to the millions living in rural parts of India. That gap needs to be bridged:

“The biggest factor that made India a land of knowledge into a land of illiteracy and backwardness is our social caste systems,” said Sudheendra Kulkarni, Communications and Research director in the Prime Minister's Office. “We must remove those hurdles.” Going further Kulkarni told delegates at an international “IT.com” conference here that a vast portion

of India's one billion population was being denied education due to the hierarchical caste system. ("Caste System")

Education remains a hurdle for rural India. The problem is aggravated by too few schools and even fewer teachers.

One year ago The Church at Powai opened a school for tribal children in Serango, Gajapati district in Orissa. Children in these areas could not even relate to what an airplane was—they had never seen one. Their biggest ambition was to go to Mumbai and become a construction worker in this city's growing real estate industry. In the midst of a growing, thriving economy the ghosts of the caste system continue to overshadow and limit the ability of some people to strive towards excellence. Talking exclusively to an IT conference but with ramifications for all sections of the economy, Kulkarni warns that progress must permeate evenly across India to be effective:

"I believe the objectives of IT and social justice go together. They are not separate worlds. We must look at them as one common set," Kulkarni said. For India to obtain IT superpower status will require a profound commitment from all political parties to ensure that the infotech revolution is not confined to a few islands of excellence. (Caste System)

Progress must touch every strata of community for communities to change; isolated areas of development will only drive a further wedge between the "haves" and the "have-nots."

Some churches and ministries are known for excellence and some are not. Patrick J. Brennan did a study of parishes excelling in various fields and offers this advice in the conclusion of his book—"benchmark." Pointing to recent phenomena doing the rounds in corporate circles, he says almost 60 to 70 percent of companies benchmark, and they do it for their own survival. Instead of reinventing the wheel they look to their competitors and learn from them. Further, they pick and chose the areas of learning to match their areas of weakness. Brennan points out that churches, too, can benchmark:

Thus, a parish might study Willowcreek for its great skills in hospitality and congregational, person-to-person reach-out. But the same parish might benchmark Bethel Lutheran for its ability to respond to real human needs and look to St. Johns in Arlington Heights for benchmarking in small communities, or St. John Neumann in St. Charles for excellence in youth ministry. For each aspect of parish life being benchmarked, the parish could probably study several models. (121)

Benchmark is to today what networking was to the last decade. Shared resources are the order of the day.

Excellence, then, gets spread around and higher standards prevail. Innovation is what enables this kind of information to spread. Pastors need to realize churches are about conversion and congregations and not about competition and rivalry. Swiss watchmakers found out too late that their reticence to enter the digital market ended up with Japan garnering 70 percent of the world's market. On the flip side, pastors who have gravitated towards innovation are seeing pastors acting as "consultants to each other for support, challenge, idea swapping and what Tom Peters would call model innovation" (Brennan 115). In the process they are experiencing the joys of working together for the kingdom in excellent ways.

Conclusion

In looking at the collected material, to seek after excellence is to involve commitment, perseverance, and a certain brazen attitude towards the unknown. Further, one must think beyond oneself; even in secular fields where success is the bottom line, the higher good of a subordinate is important. Robert K. Greenleaf calls it "servant leadership":

The servant-leader is servant first.... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first,

perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material position. (27)

While Greenleaf espouses the good of others, he still falls short of the Christian end, which is Christocentric—to glorify God. Servant-leadership is a step away from egocentric leaders and in line with what Collins would call Level 5 leaders “who are ambitious for the company, not themselves” (39). Nevertheless, Level 5 leaders are also entirely fanatical about success; they “are infected with an incurable need to produce sustained results” (39).

The difference surfacing between secular and Christian pursuits of excellence in a nutshell is that one goes after “success” while the other “showcases” the Lord. True excellence is holistic; it touches the whole person, every aspect of life is optimized, and at its core is *agapé* love:

It matters not ... what others may think or say or do.... Since it is the living Lord in the final analysis who appraises our excellence, it is he whom we must please and serve, honor and adore. For his eyes only we commit to living above the level of mediocrity. (Swindoll 278)

After all, one must “with good will render service as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph. 6:7).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Excellence, or the pursuit of excellence within the ministry of the church is a challenge faced by many leaders. Various mediums ensure that staff reach or align with these biblical values—mediums like staff initiation, elaborating core values, raising expectations, and offering incentives and reprimands to name a few. Nevertheless, by and large the challenge remains, extrinsic motivations for excellence fall short of desired results, and churches begin to look to “professionalize” their services with paid staff replacing volunteers. The danger in this kind of a move is that churches will slowly begin to concentrate on programs that are perfectly run rather than on motivating people to give of their best. Henry and Richard Blackaby make a case for churches to value people over projects:

The primary goal of spiritual leadership is not excellence, in the sense of doing things perfectly. Rather, it is taking people from where they are to where God wants them to be. There is a tension here, for surely leaders want to motivate their people to develop their skills/talents/gifts to the glory of God and never settle for less than their personal best. But in order to help people develop spiritually, leaders may have to allow them to make mistakes, just as leaders make mistakes on their road to maturity as leaders. Developing people to their potential is not tidy. Often church staff could do a better job than volunteers could. Allowing amateurs to attempt things may not always be efficient in the short term, but good leaders recognize the long-term benefits. Both the people in training and the organization benefit when their leaders value developing people over doing everything perfectly. (125)

The challenge, then, remains to find motivation that is more intrinsic, more deeply-rooted in a person’s very DNA, in their unique “image of God” creation, in their wanting to do everything according to “God’s will and honoring him through their best efforts” (125) so that “kicking butts” does not become the only recourse in a life of excellence.

The purpose of this study was to see the effect a focused program of training would have on participants at The Church at Powai with regard to their understanding of, and motivation for, excellence. The study acknowledged the appreciable level of excellence present among these leaders but hoped to further raise the standards of the expectation and understanding that each participant had during the seminar. The study also sought to facilitate a shift in the motivation for excellence, namely, to move the motivation from “without” (excellence because of the church’s core values or expectations) to “within” (excellence based on doing all things “as to the Lord” (Eph. 6:7)).

I conducted pre-- and post-surveys to measure the change in thinking before and after the introduction of the independent variable—five focused teachings on leadership, vision, administration, preaching and finances, couched in an overall teaching on excellence.

Research Questions

The two components of the purpose statement guided the research questions. The first question sought to probe the level of understanding that the leadership of The Church at Powai had of excellence and their motivation to consistently seek after it in their daily schedules. The second research question sought to measure changes, if any, that transpired after the teachings in the seminar. The third research question tried to capture key thoughts contributing to the participant’s perception and motivation of excellence.

Research Question #1

What was the participants’ understanding of excellence prior to and following the

training seminar?

The answer to this research question provided measurable data pertaining to the participants' knowledge and understanding of excellence before the teaching seminar, which then provided the basis for measuring the shift in their understanding after the seminar. Major themes that surfaced included a difficulty by many to delineate between success and excellence and perfection and excellence. Participants also had an above average understanding of excellence from a biblical perspective and tried to live up to that standard because it is one of the core values of The Church at Powai. One qualitative question was also included in the pre-test questionnaire to gauge the respondents' understanding of excellence and this question was repeated in the posttest questionnaire to gauge change. Ten negatively worded questions and ten positively worded questions were used. I reverse scored the negative questions.

Research Question #2

What was the participants' motivation for excellence prior to and following the teaching seminar?

This research question tried to measure the change in motivation that the participants had prior to the training seminar and after it. Love for God was the theme I had hoped would replace incentives and punishments. Love for God and an understanding of that love as "consummate love" showed that the participants had seriously considered changing their motivation from extrinsic to intrinsic stimulus. Participants completed the sentence, "My motivation for excellence is" to check qualitatively whether changes had occurred in their motivation for excellence. Here also, I included negative questions on a 50 percent basis. I reverse scored these questions as

- Worship services
 - Lay leaders in the Hindi church
 - Sound and projection team
 - Worship teams
 - Lay preachers
 - Ushers and greeters
- Social concerns
 - CAPCare (a ministry to HIV/Aids infected and affected persons)
 - Counseling
- Any other
 - The population also included other members of the church who wanted to

be challenged in the area of excellence.

Leadership in The Church at Powai was the criteria for selection. The respondents made up the entire population, which was identical to the sample. In all thirty-eight persons attended the seminar that was held at The Church at Powai and that ran from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Methodology

A researcher-designed pre-test and posttest questionnaire was used to evaluate the project. Thirty questions made up the questionnaire. Respondents answered these questions both before and after the teaching seminar. Of the thirty questions, twenty were on an understanding of excellence while ten had to do with motivation. I included negatively phrased questions in both sections and the questionnaire conformed to the selected-response format according to the Likert scale:

[The Likert scale is a] scale with a number of points that provide ordinal scale measurement. A set of related responses, one for each point, is provided. Response is made by checking a point or circling a letter (or number) representing a point on the scale. When summarizing the results, these points are assigned numerical values, 1 to 5 or 0 to 4, which can be totaled over a number of items that concern the same issue or topic. (Wiersma and Jurs 170)

Pretest and posttest questionnaires offered the same thirty questions along with two qualitative questions designed to gauge the respondent's understanding of excellence and his or her motivation for excellence before and after the seminar. In addition the posttest questionnaire had two additional questions meant to determine what aspects of the teaching seminar had been most helpful and how the respondent would apply these aspects to his or her life. The questions came out of research that has been documented in the literature review found in Chapter 2 and reflected some of the misconceptions existing between one's understanding of excellence vis-à-vis success and perfectionism and God's view of excellence mandated by his children's "image of God" creation.

I tested the questionnaire for validity at two levels. In the first instance a representative sample of the final participants answered the questionnaire. The input of these seven people helped me fine-tune the questionnaire. I calculated the time taken, noted and changed difficult words or phrases and streamlined badly worded questions. Professionals involved in market surveys conducted the second validity check. Their suggestions helped in tidying up the questionnaire, making it aesthetically appealing and shifting of qualitative questions to give better results. I incorporated these suggestions in the questionnaire prior to the seminar. One person from the pilot group attended the seminar and filled out the pre- and posttest surveys as well. Nevertheless, because he was only one of thirty-four participants, the sample results were not contaminated.

The participants attended a full-day teaching seminar that addressed key areas of understanding excellence from a biblical standpoint rather than a secular one. I made delineations between success and excellence, perfection and excellence, God's proactive role in helping his people achieve excellence versus excellence built on an egocentric lifestyle.

Motivation was the other key area looked at so that sustainability could be achieved. The seminar focused on moving participants from an extrinsic motivation that included rewards and punishments to an intrinsic one fueled by their love for God and their original "made in his image" position.

I also attempted to elicit a commitment from the participants at the end of the seminar to pursue excellence as a lifestyle, as a way of life, by asking the respondents to put down application points that would enable that pursuit.

Variables

The independent variable for this exercise was the teaching module, which included teaching on (a) excellence—an understanding of excellence as viewed by the world, particularly in the corporate sectors, and by the worldview of Christians based on biblical understanding and excellence's effect on ministry, especially as it works itself out in the nonprofit areas of management and leadership and (b) motivation—what factors pushed people towards excellence, how can excellence be sustained, and what would be acceptable motivators in the context of this study. The dependent variables for this study were changes in the understanding and motivation of the participants.

Instrumentation

I used a researcher-designed questionnaire aimed at measuring the change in

understanding of the participants in reference to their understanding of excellence and their motivation for excellence. It consisted of thirty questions divided into one's understanding of excellence and one's motivation for excellence. I used negatively worded questions as well, to make sure that respondents were actively engaging with the questionnaire.. Craig V. King explains the reasons behind this usage:

In an effort to reduce response set, or response bias, measurement experts (e.g. Nunally, 1967) recommended using negatively and positively worded items when measuring the same construct. Response set occurs when respondents fail to discriminate among the items and respond to every question in the same manner (e.g. circle all 4's on a 5 point Likert scale). In an effort to ensure that the respondents were reading the questions in a thoughtful manner, negatively worded items should be included. (1)

I negatively phrased ten out of the twenty questions on understanding excellence and five on motivation. Table 3.1 shows the breakdown of questions vis-à-vis understanding and motivation (the number following each question being the number on the questionnaire).

Table 3.1 Questions on Excellence and Motivation

STATEMENTS ON EXCELLENCE		
	Positive	Negative
1.	Excellence is a way of life. (#1)	Excellence is not a spiritual issue. (#5)
2.	God has modeled excellence in all he has done. (#2)	A successful person is one who has modeled excellence. (#8)
3.	Excellence is not limited by limitations. (#3)	A disability is a deterrent to excellence. (#10)
4.	Being made in the image of God aids in my understanding of excellence. (#6)	Excellence and perfection are the same. (#11)
5.	God expects excellence from us. (#12)	Charismatic leaders model excellence more easily. (#15)
6.	God is proactive in our efforts to excellence. (#16)	Pursuit of excellence might result in burnout. (#17)
7.	Excellence involves building up others. (#20)	My achievements speak for my excellent lifestyle. (#19)
8.	Not pursuing excellence is a sin. (#23)	Family life may suffer in my pursuit of excellence. (#25)
9.	Excellence is doing the best I can. (#29)	Excellence is a habit. (#26)
10.	Excellence glorifies God. (#30)	Excellence is mostly a matter of luck. (#7)

STATEMENTS ON MOTIVATION		
	Positive	Negative
1.	My relationship with God plays an important part in my pursuit of excellence. (#9)	Reprimands and punishments are good motivations for excellence. (#4)
2.	Being made in the 'Image of God' aids in my motivation for excellence. (#14)	I choose to do things excellently when I feel like it. (#13)
3.	Intimacy with God ensures a sustained life of excellence. (#18)	Motivation for excellence can be either negative or positive. (#22)
4.	I choose excellence because I love God. (#21)	Sometimes, my motivation for excellence is out of fear. (#24)
5.	I press for excellence because of my faith. (#27)	Incentives motivate me to strive for excellence. (#28)

Because the main catalyst for a shift in understanding was the seminar, I took care to conduct every aspect of the seminar in excellent ways. These aspects included: the

invitation letters to be a part of the study, the ambience of the conference hall, the welcome each participant received, personal folders including paper and stationery with their names on each table, the quality of the lectures given, punctuality and sticking to time frames, quality of the food, attention to non-vegetarian and vegetarian preferences, bottled water and mints on tables for comfort, and quality multimedia presentations and a sound system of high quality. Participants also evaluated the peripherals (apart from lectures) to see if this attention to detail contributed in any way to their shift in thinking.

Participants received pretest questionnaires, color-coded in pink before the lectures began; they filled them out and handed them back to ushers. Similarly they received posttest questionnaires color-coded in blue after the last session in the evening; again, they filled them out and handed them back to ushers. Each participant also picked a number out of a box that became their anonymous identifier. They used this number for both their questionnaires to measure shift in responses.

I designed the questionnaires to collect other data from the respondents that might help to correlate changes in age, length of time that a respondent had been attending the church, educational qualifications, gender, and area or work or activity at The Church at Powai. Table 3.2 displays these questions.

Table 3.2. Questionnaire: Background Information

1	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male
		<input type="checkbox"/> Female
2	I have attended The Church at Powai for	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than a year
		<input type="checkbox"/> Between 1 and 3 years
		<input type="checkbox"/> Over 3 years
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't attend The Church at Powai
3	I was born into a Christian family	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		<input type="checkbox"/> No
4	Educational level	<input type="checkbox"/> Below high school
		<input type="checkbox"/> High school
		<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate
		<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate
5	Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Below 22
		<input type="checkbox"/> 23 to 35
		<input type="checkbox"/> 36 to 45
		<input type="checkbox"/> 46 and above
6	Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Married
		<input type="checkbox"/> Single
6	Area of church activity (May tick more than one)	<input type="checkbox"/> Management (Finance, HR, Madurai, Kharghar)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching (Sunday School, Youth, Jr. Youth)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Administration (Special events, Office, Reflections)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Worship Services (Hindi Church, Sound, Worship Team, Preachers, Ushers)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Social Concerns (CAPCare, Counseling)

Generalizability

This study was delimited to the leadership of The Church at Powai and some interested members of the congregation. The study is also delimited by careful attention to detail. The seminar must be replicated with the same care to achieve similar results. Further, the setting of this seminar was in Mumbai, a fairly advanced city with a well-educated populace. A modified program can be used in rural settings.

Data Collection

The seminar began at 10:30 a.m. with ushers seating participants in preassigned seats. An usher invited them to pick a number from a box that would be the number they would use on both the pretest and posttest questionnaires to ensure anonymity. Participants received and completed pretest questionnaires before returning them to an usher. Having pre-tested the questionnaire for timing, I knew that fifteen minutes would be adequate for this exercise. As respondents completed the forms, ushers invited them to have a cup of coffee at the rear of the room while their colleagues continued to work. The seminar started at 11:00 a.m. and proceeded until 4:00 p.m. with breaks as outlined in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3. Schedule for Excellence in Leadership Seminar Held on 16 Feb. 2007

TIME	ACTIVITY
10:30-11:00	Filling out pretest questionnaires and a time for coffee/snacks.
11:00-12:00	First lecture on Excellence in Leadership
12:00-12:15	Break
12:15-1:00	Second lecture on Excellence in Leadership
1:00-2:00	Lunch
2:00-2:15	Third lecture on Excellence in Leadership
2:15-2:30	Break
2:30-3:15	Fourth lecture on Excellence in Leadership
3:15-3:45	Filling out posttest questionnaires (extra time given to fill out two additional quantitative questions).
3:45-4:00	Vote of thanks

Data Analysis

The questionnaire employed both quantitative and qualitative functions in determining the shift in the participants' thinking. I used an Excel spreadsheet to collate and score the quantitative data and reverse scored the negative questions. Student's t-test determined probability and significance.

The qualitative questions in the pretest were in the form of incomplete questions:

- Excellence may be defined as.
- My motivation for excellence is.

The pretest questionnaire had one more question:

- If there are thoughts or reflections you would like to convey please do so here:

The posttest questionnaire repeated these questions and replaced the third with two other questions:

- What aspects of the seminar did you find most helpful?
- How will you apply them in your life?

I analyzed the key thoughts found in these answers.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

At the close of the seminar as I thanked the participants for attending and participating in the seminar one person raised her hand and asked to speak. She said, “Pastor, this focus on excellence is not new to us—we have seen it modeled at The Church at Powai for the last ten years and we want to thank you for modeling it.” Another respondent told me, “Till now we knew what we should do [in terms of excellence as a lifestyle] but now we know why,” and a third person who helped in organizing the seminar mentioned, “I always associated excellence with the corporate world and never thought of it in terms of ministry.” All three of these statements in a sense capture the thinking of the participants as they attended the seminar and fit into the purpose of this study, which was to see the effect a focused program of training would have on participants at The Church at Powai with regard to their understanding of, and motivation for, excellence.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study.

Research Question #1

What was the participants’ understanding of excellence prior to and following the training seminar?

Research Question #2

What was the participants’ motivation for excellence prior to and following the teaching seminar?

Research Question #3

What aspects of the teaching seminar did the participants find most helpful in better understanding excellence and its motivation?

Profile of the Participants

Participants were made up of all leadership teams functioning within The Church at Powai and consisted of twenty-one men (55.26 percent) and seventeen women (44.74 percent) ranging from 22 years of age to 46 and older (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Respondent Profile

Data cut	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	21	55.26
	Female	17	44.74
CAP member for	< 1 year		
	1-3 years	4	10.52
	> 3 years	32	84.21
	Don't attend	2	5.27
Born into a Christian family	Yes	33	86.84
	No	5	13.16
Educational level	Below High School	1	2.64
	High School	9	23.68
	Graduate ¹	13	34.21
	Post-graduate	15	39.47
Age	<22	1	2.64
	23-35	11	28.94
	36-45	14	36.84
	46 and above	12	31.58
Marital status	Married	30	78.94
	Single	8	21.06
Areas of church activity ²	Management	5	
	Teaching	12	
	Administration	8	
	Worship services	19	
	Social concerns	3	
	Any other	9	

¹ In India the undergraduate degree is referred to as a graduate program and the master's degree as a postgraduate program.

² Percentage for this category was not calculated as some respondents were involved in multiple activities in the church.

Thirty-eight persons attended the program. Three of them were pastors from vernacular churches and hence did not fill out the questionnaire. They were able to understand English and attended the seminar in the hope that they would gain from the knowledge. One participant arrived late and was unable to fill out the pretest questionnaire, although he filled out the posttest. His questionnaire was not taken into account for analysis.

Thirty-two (84.21 percent) participants had been members of CAP³ for over three years while thirty-three (86.84 percent) had been born into a Christian family. Twenty-eight (73.68 percent) of them had finished college degrees either at the undergrad or graduate level, and the age of most participants were almost evenly distributed between the 23-35-year-olds (28.94 percent), the 36-45 age group (36.84 percent), and those above 46 (31.58 percent). Marital status (married—30 [78.94 percent], singles—8 [21.06 percent]) and area of church activity provided the other variables.

Quantitative Analysis of Questions

The scores collated from the pretest and posttest questionnaires showed that the mean had changed significantly from 3.84 to 4.28 ($p \leq 0.000$) as can be seen in Figure 4.1. The 95 percent confidence interval for the mean in the pretest was 3.718 through 3.964. In the posttest it had moved to 4.160 through 4.406, showing no overlap at all. Analysis of the frequency distribution figure (see Figure 4.1) showed that prior to the seminar most participants had a very broad understanding of excellence, while in the posttest a more focused understanding of excellence and motivation emerged. This fact was borne out in the decrease in standard deviation in the pretest (0.365) to the posttest in which it dropped by 0.012 (0.353).

³ CAP is how The Church at Powai is referred to in Mumbai.

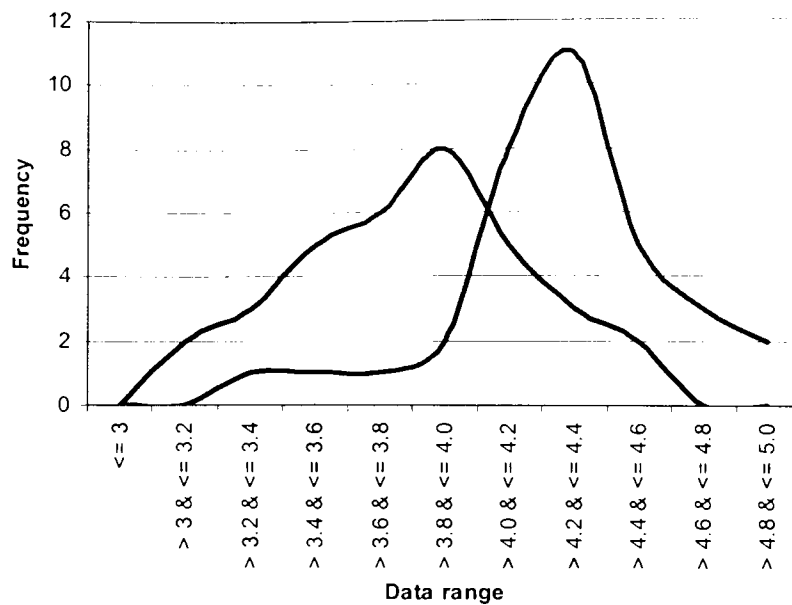


Figure 4.1. Frequency distribution chart.

I designed the questionnaires to test a person's understanding of and motivation for excellence before and after attendance at the "Excellence in Leadership" seminar. Out of a total of thirty questions, twenty focused on excellence and ten on motivation. Of the twenty questions on excellence, I worded ten of them positively and the remaining ten negatively and used the same proportion of positively and negatively worded questions for the questions on motivation.

The change in scores for all questions changed significantly between the Pre-test and posttest measures ($p \leq 0.045$). The mean score changed from 3.72 to 4.15 with a difference of 0.111 in the standard deviation.

For the twenty questions on excellence, the mean moved from 3.76 to 4.13, a change of 0.37 indicating only a strengthening of earlier held views on excellence. The remaining ten questions on motivation also showed a change from 3.66 to 4.21 with a standard deviation difference of .233 (see Table 4.2).

probability of $p \geq 0.000$, which is very significant (see Table 4.4)

Table 4.4. Change in Respondent Values Pre- and Post-Seminar

N	Mean	95% Interval for Mean	SD	<u>PRETEST</u>		Median	Ave. Absolute deviation from Median
				Hi	Low		
34	3.84	3.718 thru 3.964	0.365	4.55	3.13	3.90	0.301
<u>POSTTEST</u>							
34	4.28	4.160 thru 4.406	0.353	4.90	3.30	4.33	0.253
<u>FINDINGS</u>							
t=5.08							
sdev=0.359							
degrees of freedom=66							
The probability of this result, assuming the null hypothesis, is 0.000 (p ≥0.000)*							
<i>* indicates statistical significance</i>							

I also made data cuts for gender, age, and educational qualifications, but nothing extraordinary showed up beyond the readings all falling within the significant change range of $p \geq 0.05$ except for respondents beyond 46 years of age whose value was $p \geq 0.134$ (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Comparison between Respondent Data Cuts

		Measurements					
		Pretest		Posttest			
Data cuts	n	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	p ≤05*
Women	15	3.93	0.320	4.37	0.326	3.66	0.001*
Men	19	3.77	0.390	4.22	0.368	3.66	0.001*
Age 22	Insufficient data—only 1 respondent						
Age 23-35	9	3.83	0.316	4.35	0.268	3.8	0.002*
Age 36-45	13	3.81	0.337	4.26	0.286	3.71	0.001*
Age 46 and above	11	3.94	0.399	4.24	0.499	1.56	0.134
Education—High school	4	4.08	0.108	4.38	0.156	3.23	0.018*
Education—graduate	14	3.9	0.391	4.31	0.293	3.08	0.005*
Education—post-graduate	15	3.73	0.367	4.23	0.449	3.33	0.002*
Cumulative	34	3.84	0.365	4.28	0.353	5.08	0.000*

* Indicates statistical significance

Gender

Fifteen women and nineteen men attended the seminar.

Women

The change in score for women respondents was .44 ($p \leq 0.001$). The standard deviation increased marginally by .006 (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6. Variance Pre- and Post-Seminar for Women Respondents

FEMALES			
Excellence +	Pre	Post	Variance
Excellence limitations	5.0	5.0	0.0
God is proactive in our efforts	4.9	5.0	0.1
God models excellence	4.6	4.7	0.1
Glorifies God	4.8	4.9	0.1
Way of life	4.7	4.9	0.2
Doing the best I can	4.6	4.9	0.3
Not pursuing is sin	4.6	4.9	0.4
God expects excellence	4.5	5.0	0.5
Made in God's image	4.1	4.7	0.5
Building up others	2.7	4.3	1.6
Excellence -	Pre	Post	Variance
Not a spiritual issue	2.7	1.7	-1.0
Disability deterrent	2.9	3.7	0.8
Achievements and lifestyle	3.0	3.5	0.5
Same as perfection	3.0	4.1	1.1
Is a habit	3.3	3.9	0.5
Matter of luck	3.5	4.1	0.6
Charismatic leaders	3.8	4.1	0.3
Burnout in pursuit	3.9	4.0	0.1
Success models excellence	4.1	4.3	0.2
Family life suffers	4.6	5.0	0.4
Motivation +	Pre	Post	Variance
Pre-ss on faith	4.7	5.0	0.3
I love God	4.6	4.9	0.3
Made in God's image	4.8	4.7	-0.1
Relationship with God	4.7	5.0	0.3
Intimacy with God	4.7	5.0	0.3
Motivation	Pre	Post	Variance
When I feel like it	2.4	3.2	0.8
Negative or positive	2.8	4.5	1.7
Reprimands and punishments	3.0	3.5	0.5
Incentives	3.0	4.3	1.3
Out of Fear	3.1	3.8	0.7

For the ladies, the high swings on excellence was on “building up others,” “excellence not being a spiritual issue” (which was a surprise), a “disability is not a deterrent to excellence,” and that “excellence and perfection are not the same.” Figures 4.2 through 4.5 are charts with regression curves.

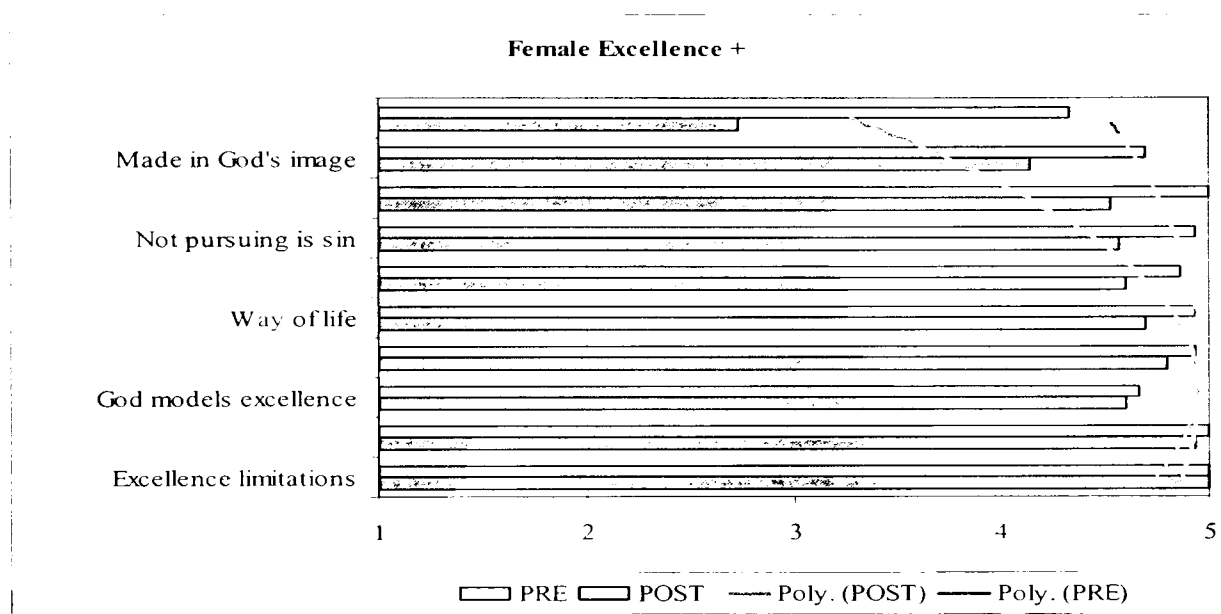


Figure 4.2. Positive questions on excellence—women.

Figure 4.3. Negative questions on excellence—women

Again, for the women, in positive questions on motivation, analysis showed a negative swing on whether being made in the “image of God” was a motivating factor or not. The swing was 0.1 and did not affect the overall positive score on this question (see Figure 4.4).

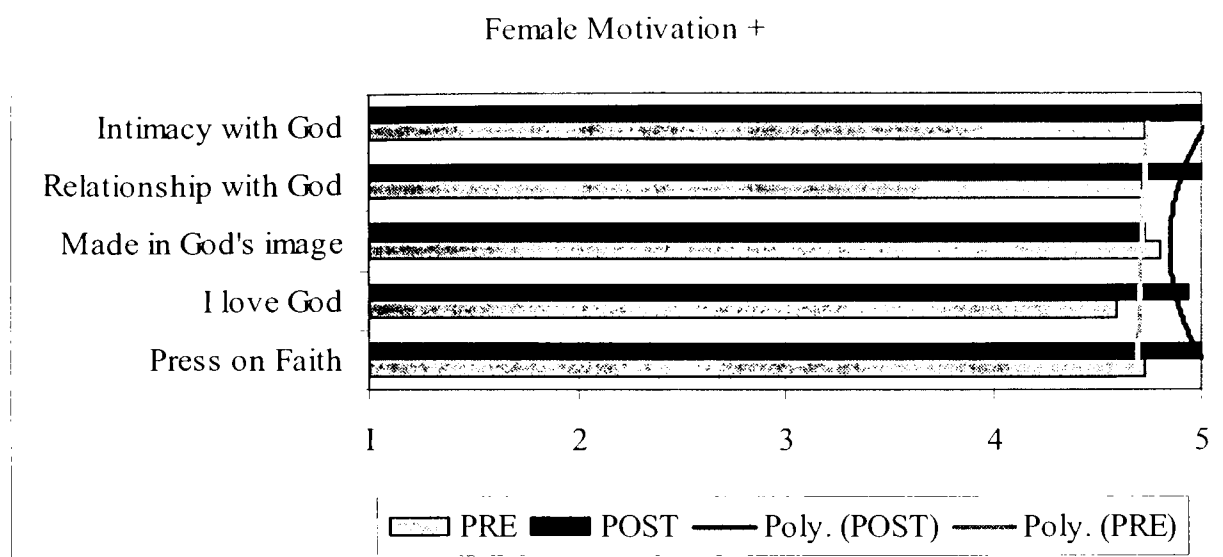


Figure 4.4. Positive questions on motivation—women.

The negatively worded questions, however, showed a high shift on whether motivations could be “negative or positive,” whether “incentives” were a motivation, and if “feelings” played a major role in motivating them (see Figure 4.5).

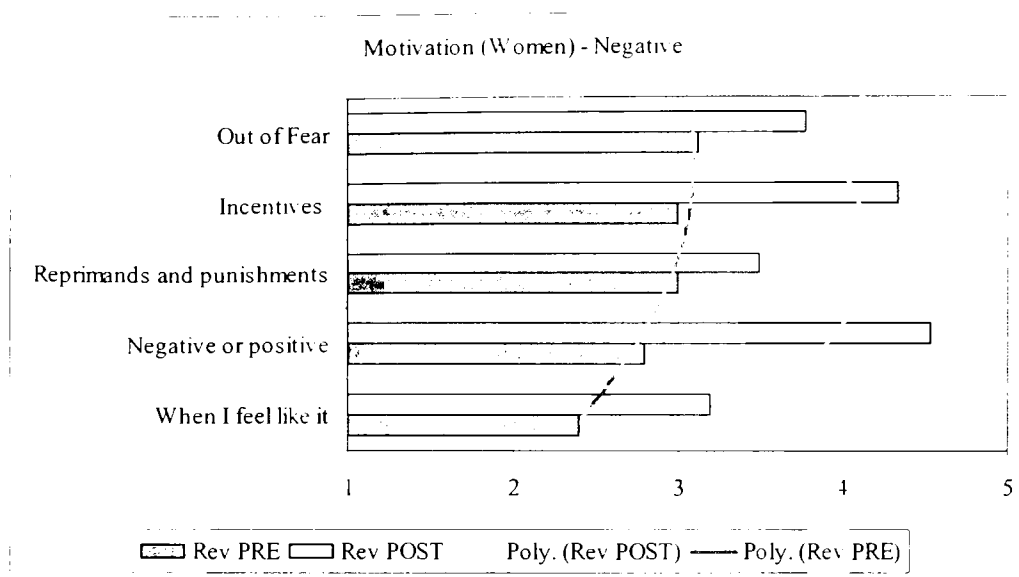


Figure 4.5. Negative questions on motivation—women.

Men

The change in scores for male respondents was .45 ($p \leq 0.001$). The standard deviation decreased by .022 (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7 Variance Pre- and Post-Seminar for Male Respondents

MALES			
Excellence +	Pre	Post	Variance
Glorifies God	4.7	4.6	-0.1
Doing the best I can	4.8	4.8	0.0
Excellence limitations	4.9	5.0	0.1
God models excellence	4.6	4.8	0.2
God proactive in our efforts	4.8	5.0	0.2
God expects excellence	4.7	4.9	0.2
Made in God's image	4.3	4.6	0.3
Way of life	4.5	4.8	0.3
Not pursuing is sin	4.6	5.0	0.4
Building up others	3.2	4.2	1.0
Excellence -	Pre	Post	Variance
Same as perfection	1.7	2.6	0.9
Not a spiritual issue	1.8	1.8	0.0
Is a habit	2.5	2.8	0.3
Achievements and lifestyle	2.8	3.2	0.4
Charismatic leaders	2.9	3.8	0.9
Matter of luck	3.1	4.3	1.2
Success models excellence	3.6	4.0	0.4
Burnout in pursuit	3.6	4.3	0.6
Disability deterrent	3.9	4.3	0.4
Family life suffers	4.8	4.9	0.2
Motivation +	Pre	Post	Variance
Press on faith	4.6	4.8	0.2
I love God	4.6	4.9	0.3
Made in God's image	4.6	5.0	0.4
Intimacy with God	4.5	4.9	0.4
Relationship with God	4.2	4.8	0.6
Motivation -	Pre	Post	Variance
When I feel like it	2.6	3.6	1.0
Out of Fear	2.7	3.5	0.7
Incentives	2.7	3.8	1.1
Negative or positive	3.2	4.2	1.0
Reprimands and punishments	3.8	3.3	-0.5

For the men, the shifts were on whether excellence involved “building up others,”

the recognition that excellence was not the same as “perfection,” and that “charismatic” leaders are not necessarily ones who model excellence. Figures 4.6 through 4.9 are charts with regression curves for men.

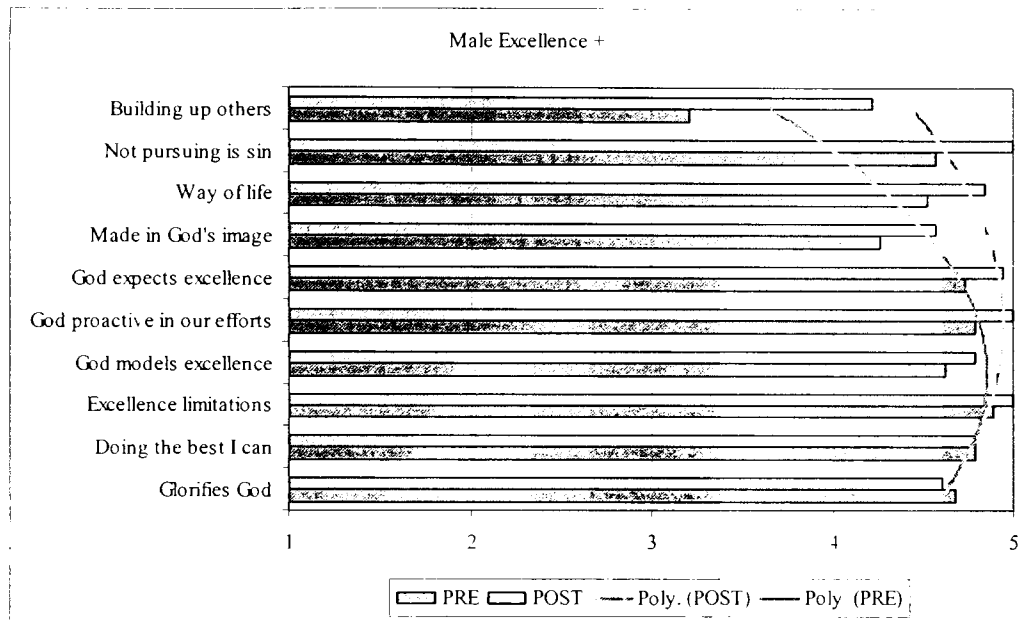


Figure 4.6. Positive questions on excellence—men.

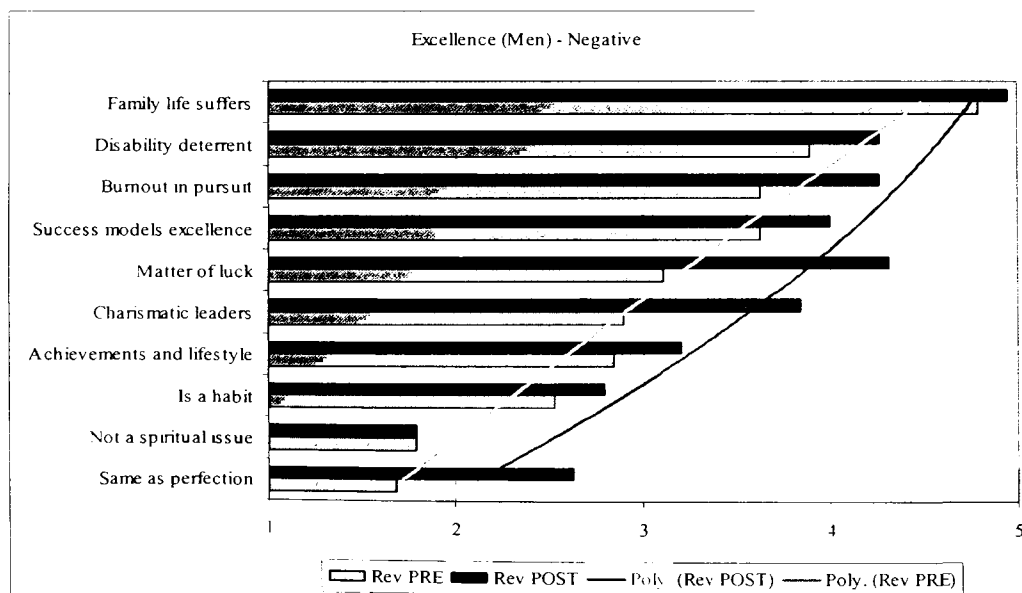


Figure 4.7. Negative questions on excellence—men.

On questions on motivation, the major shift on positive questions was that a “relationship with God” could be a motivator (see Figure 4.8).

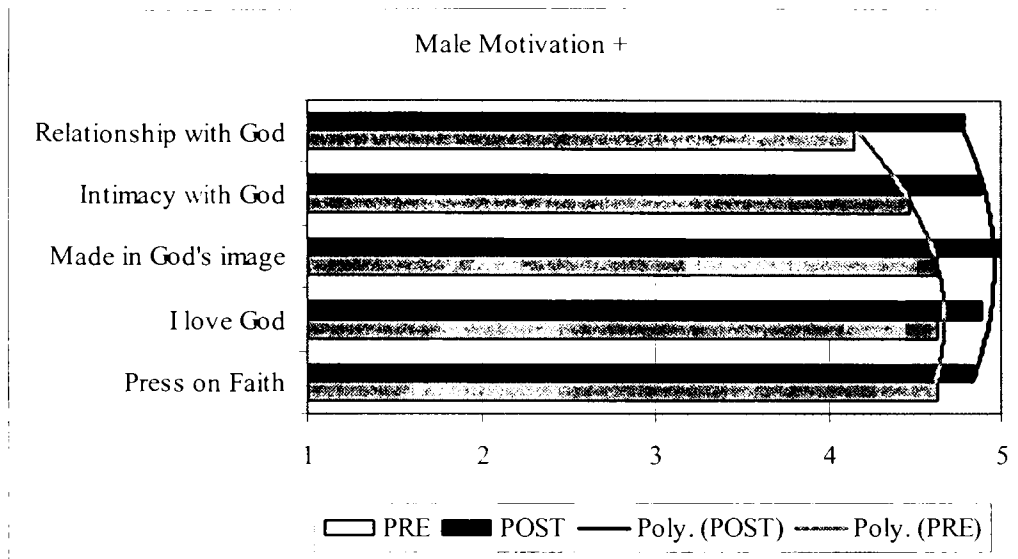


Figure 4.8. Positive questions on motivation—men.

On the negative questions, however, analysis showed a major move on questions of “fear,” “incentives,” and whether motivation could be either “positive or negative.” The big surprise, however, was that “reprimands and punishments” still played a major role in their motivation for excellence (see Figure 4.9).

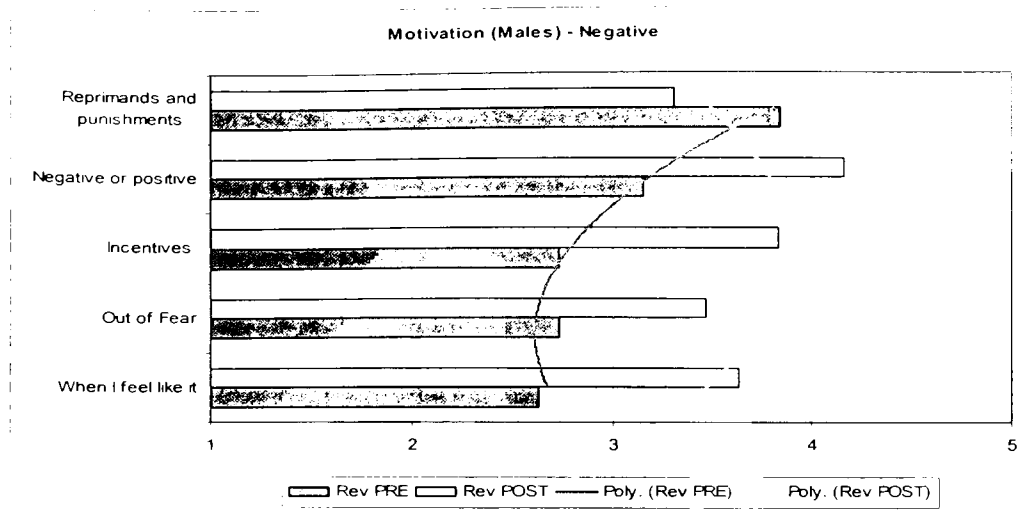


Figure 4.9. Negative questions on motivation—men.

Age Groups

I did a data cut to see if age played any factor in this project.

22 Years and Under

Only one respondent fell in into the 22 and under age group; his scores could not be analyzed.

23-25

The change in score for the 22-25 age group was .52 ($p \leq 0.002$). The standard deviation decreased by .048 (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8. Variance Pre- and Post-Seminar for Respondents Ages 22-35

22 – 35			
Excellence +	Pre	Post	Variance
Not pursuing is sin	2.6	3.9	1.3
Excellence limitations	3.7	4.0	0.3
Way of life	4.3	4.9	0.6
Made in God's image	4.3	4.8	0.5
God expects excellence	4.6	5.0	0.4
God proactive in our efforts	4.6	4.8	0.1
Building up others	4.8	5.0	0.3
Doing the best I can	4.9	4.9	0.0
God models excellence	5.0	5.0	0.0
Glorifies God	5.0	5.0	0.0
Excellence -	Pre	Post	Variance
Is a habit	1.9	1.9	0.0
Success models excellence	1.9	3.0	1.1
Burnout in pursuit	2.8	3.3	0.5
Achievements and lifestyle	2.9	3.4	0.5
Family life suffers	3.0	4.1	1.1
Same as perfection	3.0	4.3	1.3
Charismatic leaders	3.4	3.6	0.3
Disability deterrent	3.8	3.8	0.0
Not a spiritual issue	4.4	4.5	0.1
Matter of luck	4.6	5.0	0.4
Motivation +	Pre	Post	Variance
Made in God's image	4.3	4.9	0.6
Intimacy with God	4.4	5.0	0.6
I love God	4.5	4.9	0.4
Press on faith	4.5	5.0	0.5
Relationship with God	4.6	5.0	0.4
Motivation -	Pre	Post	Variance
Out of Fear	3.0	3.8	0.8
Reprimands and punishments	2.4	3.6	1.3
Incentives	2.3	3.0	0.8
When I feel like it	2.0	4.3	2.3
Negative or positive	1.9	3.3	1.4

In this age group, on the positive questions on excellence, “not pursuing

excellence” being viewed as sin was an eye-opener. On the negative questions on excellence analysis revealed a better understanding of the difference between success and excellence, and excellence and perfection. The research also revealed a shift in their understanding that family life must not suffer as a consequence of their pursuit of excellence. Figures 4.10 through 4.13 are graphs showing regression curves of this data.

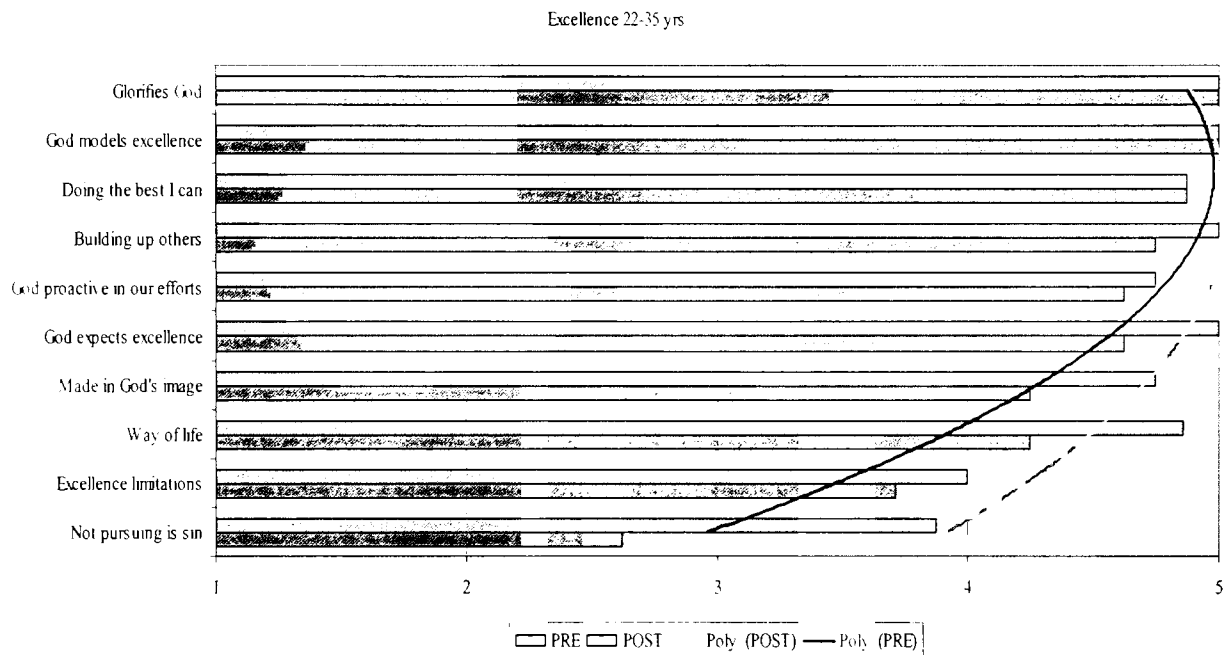


Figure 4.10. Positive questions on excellence—22-35.

The big mover in this section was equating non-pursuit of excellence with sin (1.3). On the negative questions in this group, the point that excellence cannot be a habit (1.1)—it must be intentionally pursued; it doesn't happen by rote—was a big shift along with the understanding that family life (1.1) must not suffer in one's pursuit of excellence. The biggest shift, however, came from a clearer understanding of perfection and excellence (1.3).

On the motivational front the data showed no significant moves on the positive

questions. The average scores for this group in this section were high to start with (4.5) and moved 0.4 to 4.9.

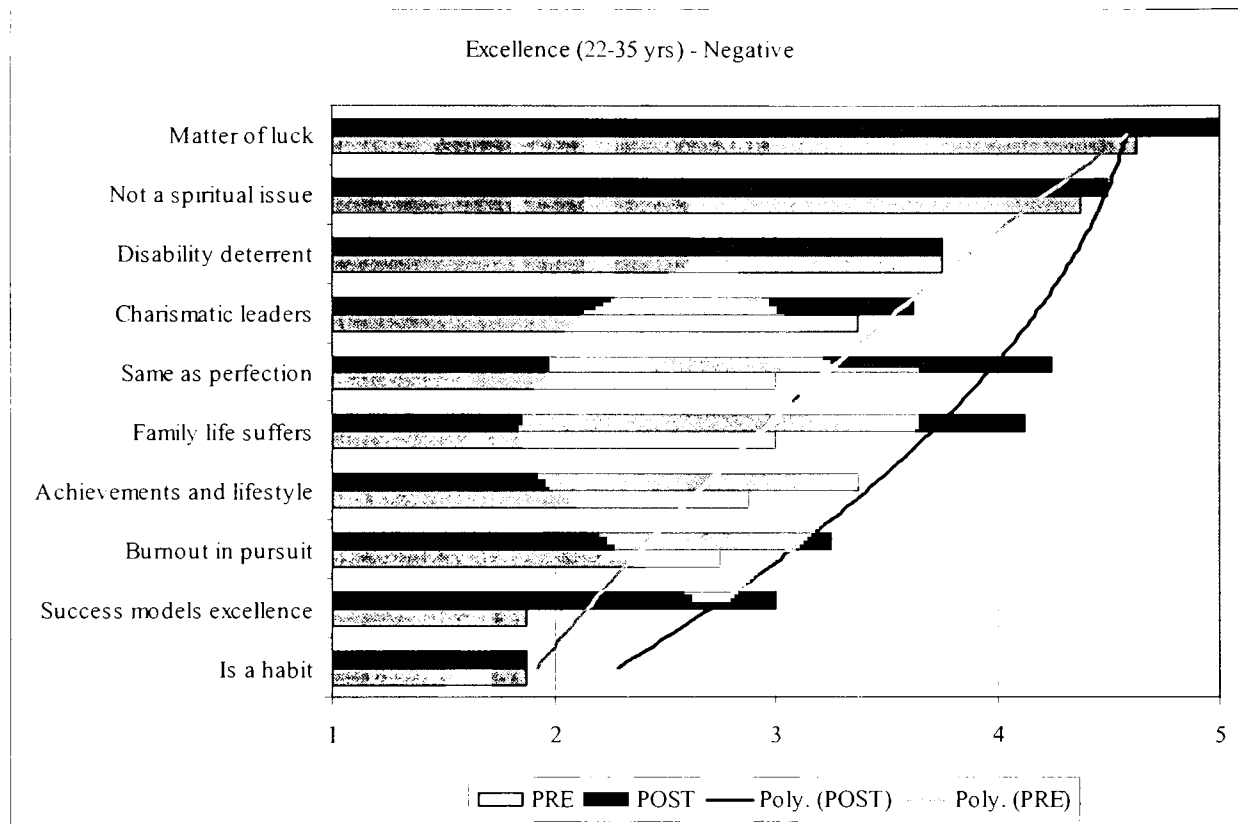


Figure 4.11. Negative questions on excellence—22-35.

The negative questions, however, showed significant shifts. Trusting one's feelings to pursue excellence was the biggest shift (2.3) with reprimands and punishments (1.3) following closely after negative or positive reinforcements (1.4). The point worth noting in this age group was that respondents showed some inertia on the question of fear. The move was significant as a variance (0.8) but not significant enough considering that it was around 3.0 to start with. Nevertheless, 3.0 being in the "do not agree/do not disagree" range, the shift was welcome. The group also came to a neutral position on

whether incentives/rewards could act as motivators for excellence. The pretest scores were in the affirmative (2.3).

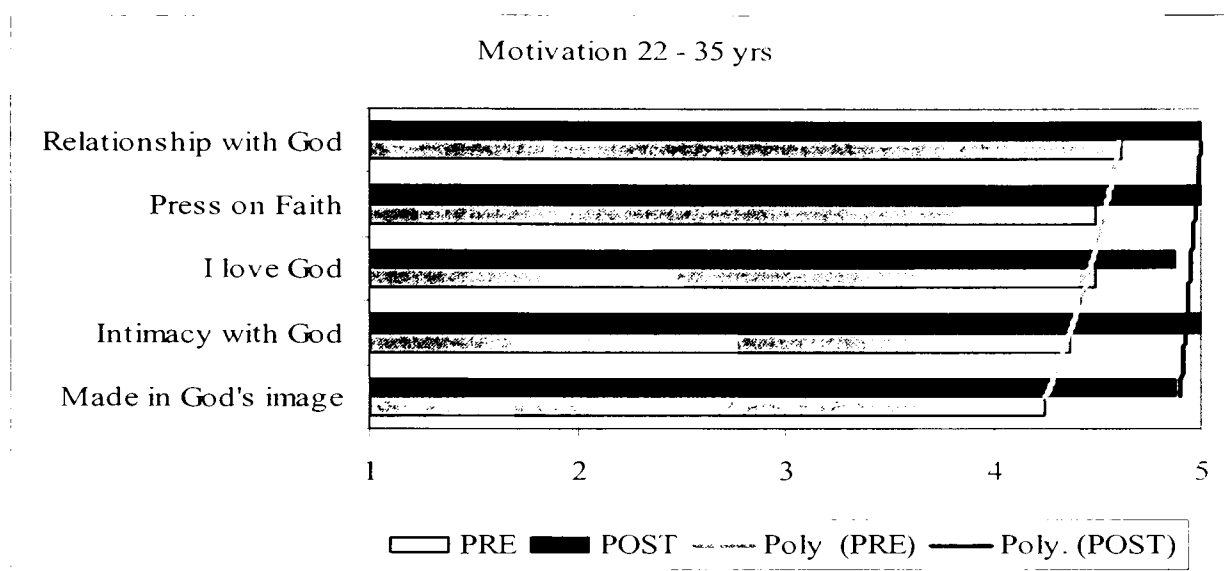


Figure 4.12. Positive questions on motivation—22-35.

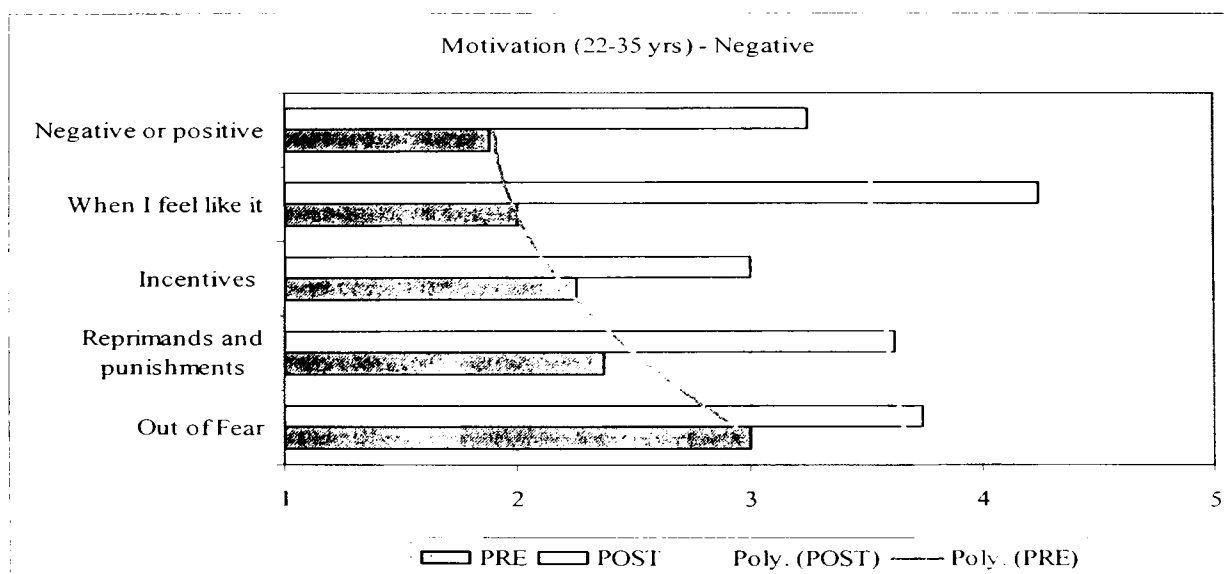


Figure 4.13. Negative questions on motivation—22-35.

36-45

The change in score in the 36-45 age group was .45 ($p \leq 0.001$). The standard deviation decreased by .051 (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9. Variance Pre- and Post-Seminar for Respondents Ages 36-45

36 - 45			
Excellence +	Pre	Post	Variance
Not pursuing is sin	2.8	4.1	1.3
Excellence limitations	3.9	4.4	0.5
God expects excellence	4.4	4.9	0.5
Made in God's image	4.4	4.8	0.4
Doing the best I can	4.5	4.6	0.1
Way of life	4.6	5.0	0.4
God proactive in our efforts	4.6	4.4	-0.2
Building up others	4.7	4.5	-0.2
God models excellence	4.8	5.0	0.2
Glorifies God	4.8	5.0	0.2
Excellence -	Pre	Post	Variance
Success models excellence	2.1	3.2	1.1
Is a habit	2.4	2.1	-0.3
Achievements and lifestyle	2.6	2.7	0.1
Charismatic leaders	3.0	3.2	0.2
Family life suffers	3.4	4.0	0.6
Disability deterrent	3.6	4.3	0.7
Not a spiritual issue	3.7	4.4	0.7
Same as perfection	3.8	3.9	0.1
Burnout in pursuit	3.9	3.8	-0.1
Matter of luck	4.6	4.9	0.3
Motivation +	Pre	Post	Variance
Relationship with God	4.4	4.7	0.3
Made in God's image	4.4	4.8	0.4
Press on Faith	4.4	4.7	0.3
I love God	4.6	5.0	0.4
Intimacy with God	4.7	5.0	0.3
Motivation	Pre	Post	Variance
Negative or positive	2.8	3.3	0.5
When I feel like it	3.3	4.2	0.9
Reprimands and punishments	3.3	3.9	0.6
Out of Fear	3.6	2.9	-0.7
Incentives	3.7	4.3	0.6

This age group reflected participants who had been working for ten to about

twenty years. Work habits would be ingrained and opinions on excellence tested in the marketplace. Once again I was not surprised to see the swing on “not pursuing excellence is a sin” (1.3). As in the previous age group (22-35), the shift was significant because it was a move from disagree to agree (see Figure 4.14).

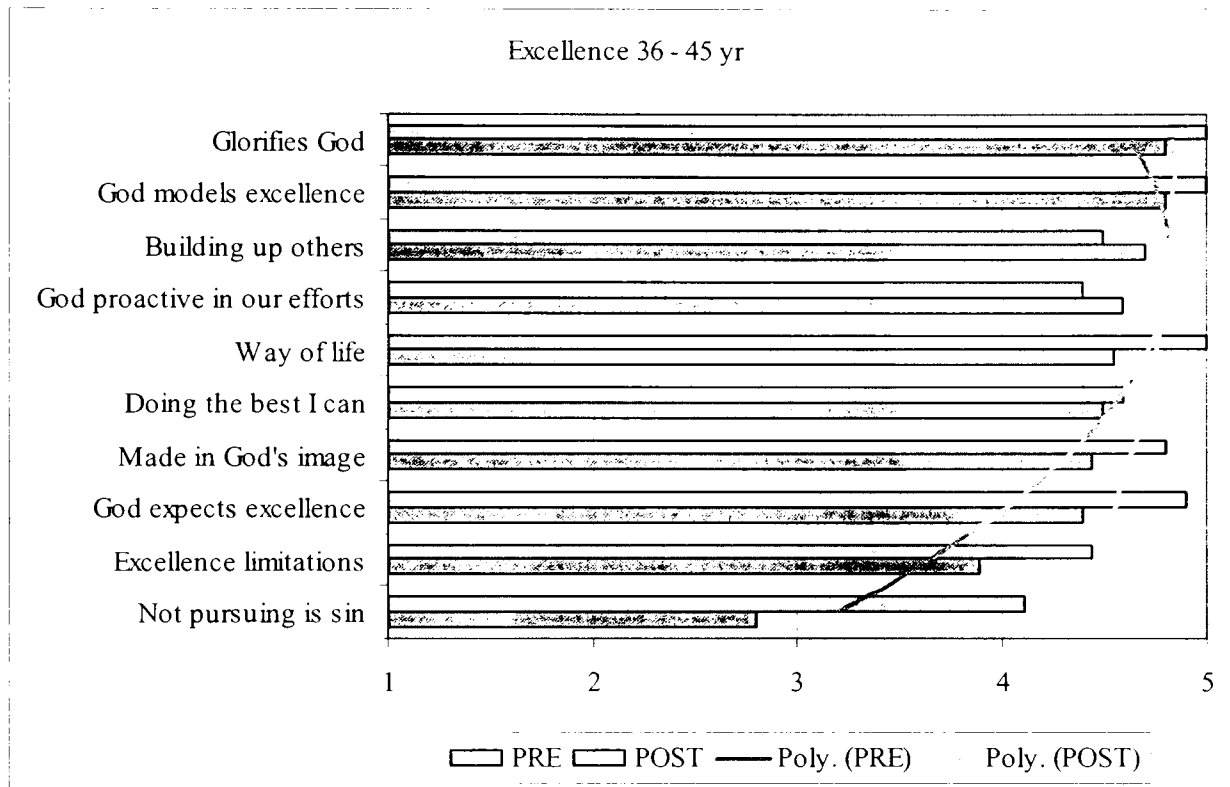


Figure 4.14. Positive questions on excellence—36-45.

Success versus excellence again showed a move of 1.1, although a closer look reveals that participants in this age group only moved to a more or less neutral position on it (3.2). Two negative moves in this age group came from their positions that excellence could be a habit and that burnout was involved in the pursuit. Another position they held on to was that achievements and lifestyles are good indicators of a life of excellence.

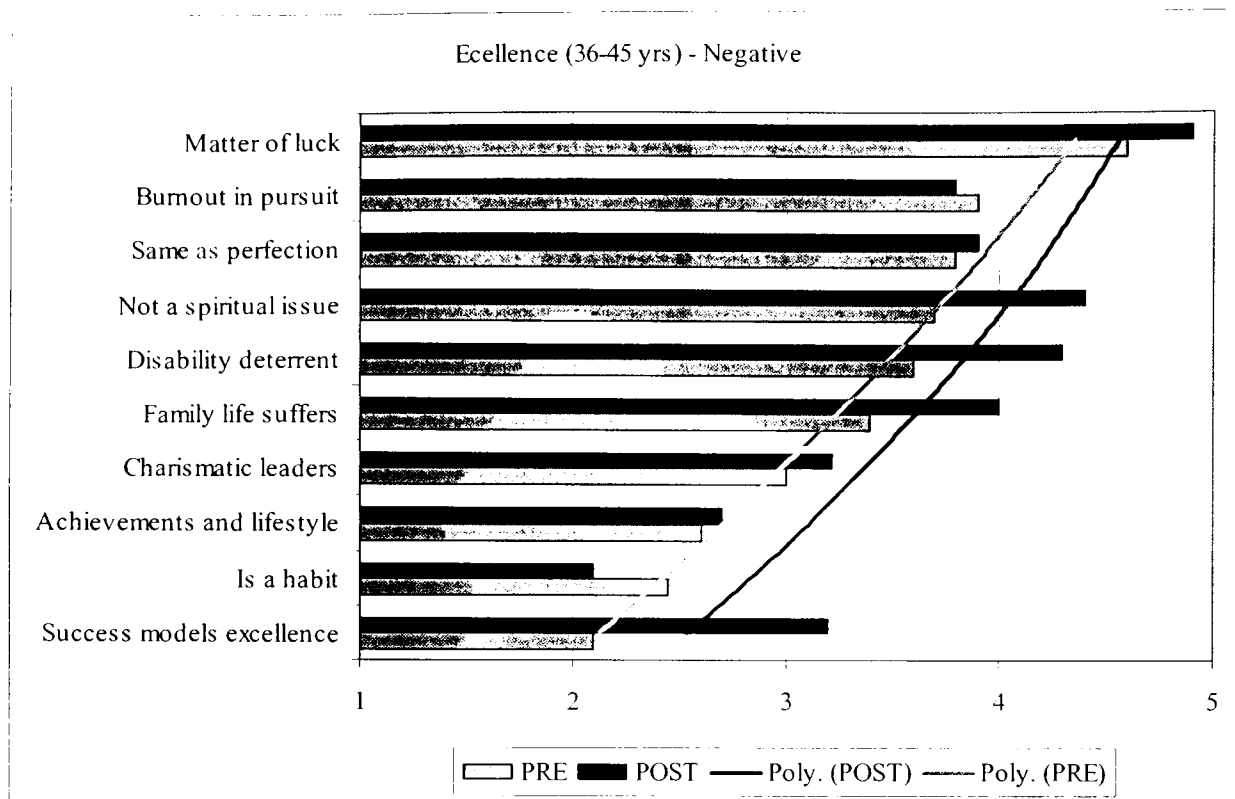


Figure 4.15. Negative questions on excellence—36-45.

The polynomial regression curve showed that all scores were strengthened in this section (see Figure 4.16). In the negative questions, though, the question on fear being a motivator was strengthened in the reverse moving from 3.6 to 2.9 a variance of 0.7. Pursuing excellence only on a feeling moved strongly by 0.9 to 4.2.

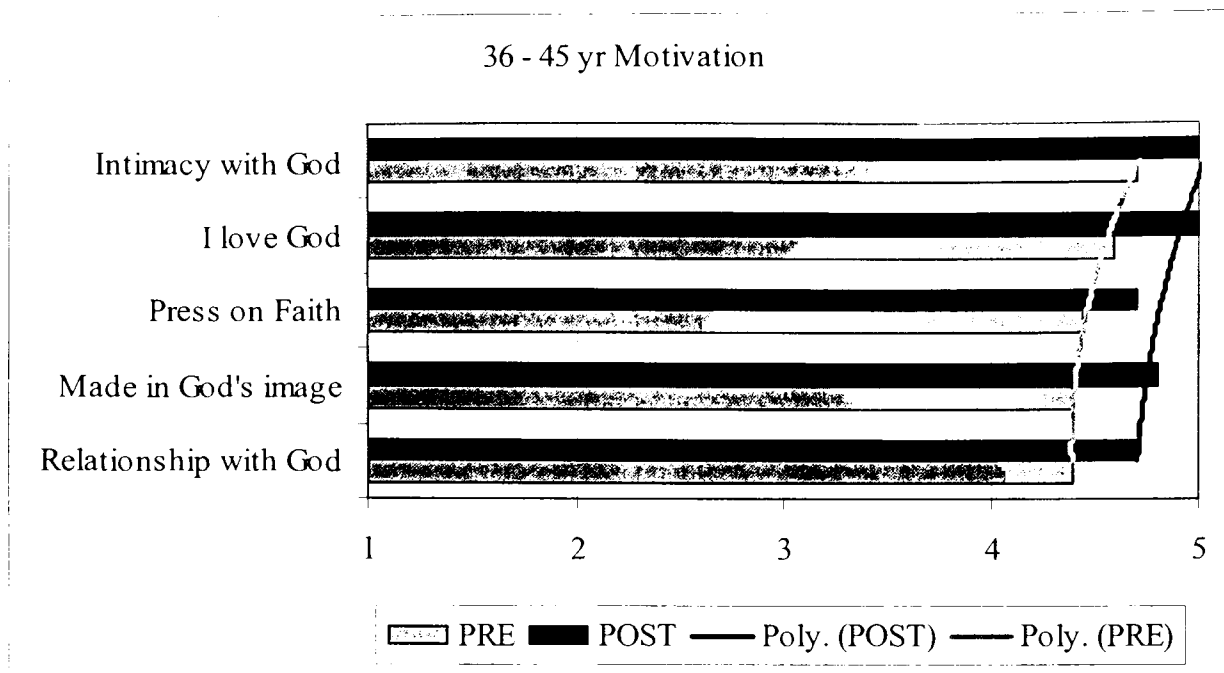


Figure 4.16. Positive questions on motivation—36-45.

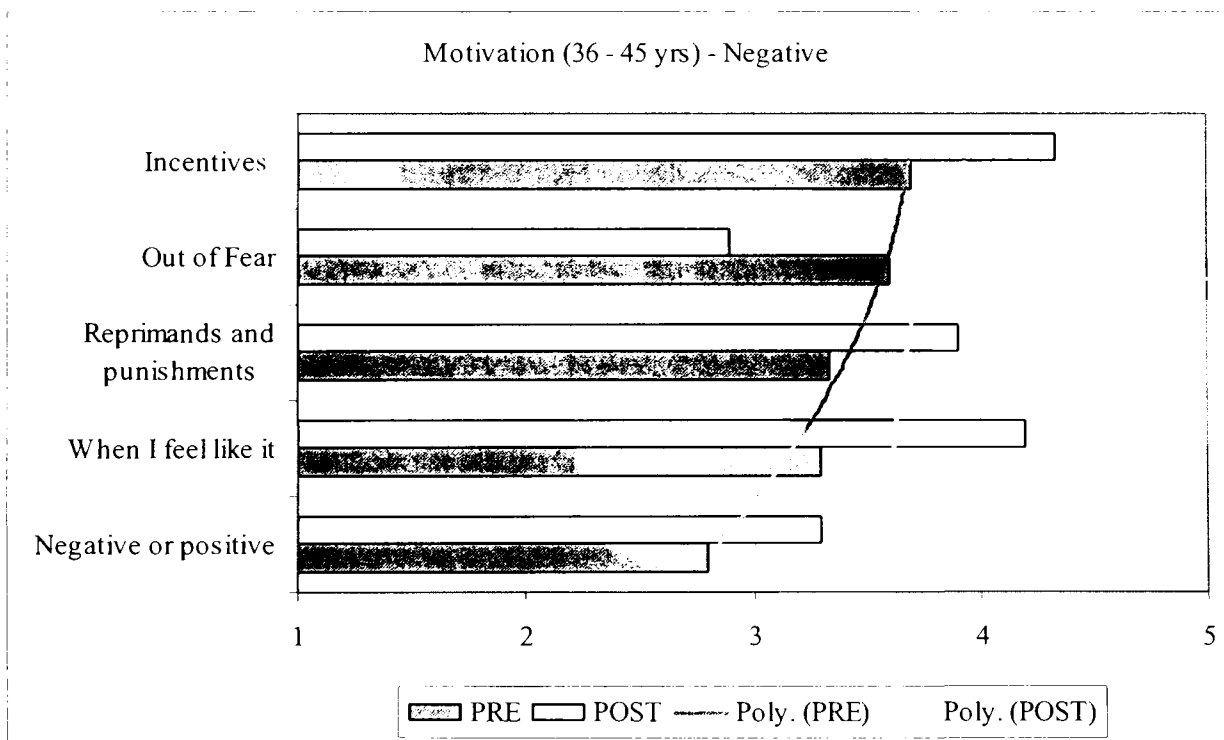


Figure 4.17. Negative questions on motivation—36-45.

46 and Above

The change in score for age group 46 and above was .30 ($p \leq 0.134$). The standard deviation moved up by .100 (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10. Variance Pre- and Post-Seminar for Respondents ages 46+

46 +			
Excellence +	Pre	Post	Variance
Not pursuing is sin	3.3	4.6	1.3
Doing the best I can	4.6	4.8	0.2
Excellence limitations	4.6	5.0	0.4
Building up others	4.7	4.9	0.3
Way of life	4.8	5.0	0.3
God expects excellence	4.8	5.0	0.2
Glorifies God	4.8	5.0	0.2
Made in God's image	4.9	5.0	0.1
God proactive in our efforts	4.9	5.0	0.1
God models excellence	5.0	5.0	0.0
Excellence -	Pre	Post	Variance
Is a habit	2.2	1.4	-0.8
Success models excellence	2.6	3.5	0.9
Charismatic leaders	2.6	3.3	0.6
Achievements and lifestyle	3.1	3.5	0.5
Same as perfection	3.1	3.9	0.8
Family life suffers	3.3	4.4	1.0
Not a spiritual issue	3.6	3.8	0.1
Burnout in pursuit	3.6	4.5	0.9
Disability deterrent	3.9	4.3	0.4
Matter of luck	4.8	5.0	0.2
Motivation +	Pre	Post	Variance
Press on faith	4.3	4.9	0.6
I love God	4.6	4.9	0.3
Relationship with God	4.9	5.0	0.1
Intimacy with God	4.9	4.8	-0.1
Made in God's image	4.9	5.0	0.1
Motivation	Pre	Post	Variance
Negative or positive	2.7	3.6	0.9
Incentives	2.8	3.5	0.8
Reprimands and punishments	2.8	4.4	1.6
When I feel like it	3.3	4.4	1.1
Out of Fear	3.6	3.5	-0.1

Once again, as in the other groups, not pursuing excellence being a sin showed a major move by 1.3. Noticeable in this group though, was the negative move on excellence not being a habit. From a “moderately agree” position, it went down almost to strongly disagree (these questions were negatively worded). The move on this question seemed to shift with age. In the 22-35 age groups, it had shifted positively by 1.1. In the 36-45 age segments, it had moved negatively to 0.3 and in this group to 0.8. Work habits formed over the years seemed to be the stumbling block for accepting this point of view. The graphs and regression curves shown in Figures 4.18 through 4.21 further elucidate this point.

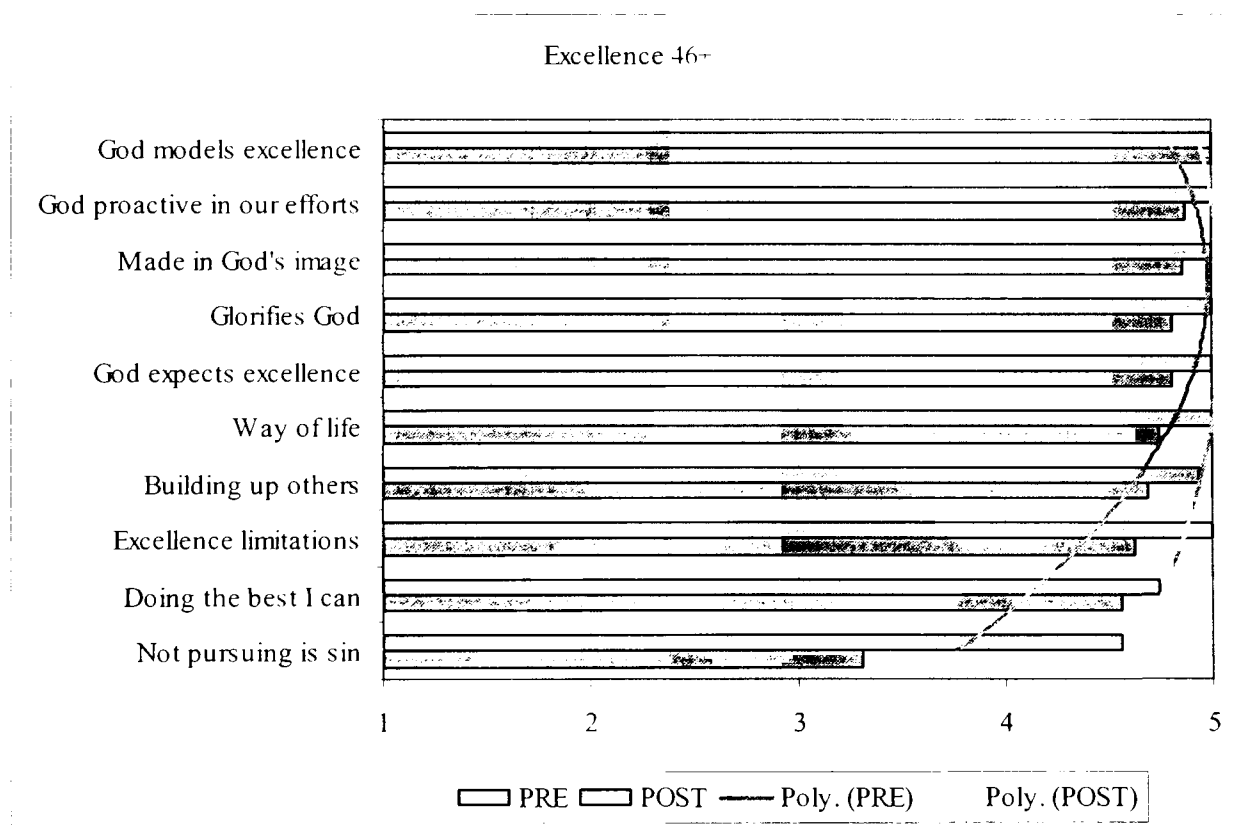


Figure 4.18. Positive questions on excellence—46+.

The other major shifts came from a move away from neutral on whether family

life suffers because of one's pursuit of excellence. That burnout does not need to be a factor in an excellent lifestyle and that family life need not suffer came in with shifts 0.9 and 1.0 respectively. That excellence was not a matter of luck strengthened to a complete 5.0 score.

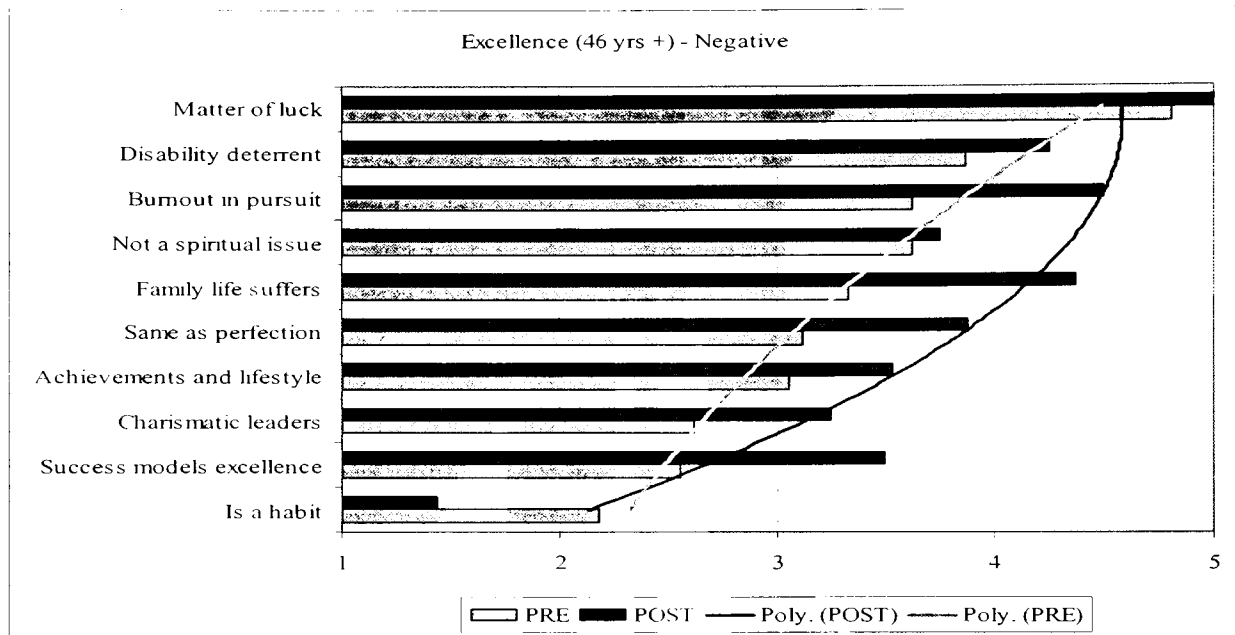


Figure 4.19. Negative questions on excellence—46+.

Questions on motivation (positive) came up with high scores which were further strengthened in the posttest. The only aberration seemed to be that intimacy with God being a motivation for excellence slipped by 0.1 (see Figure 4.20).

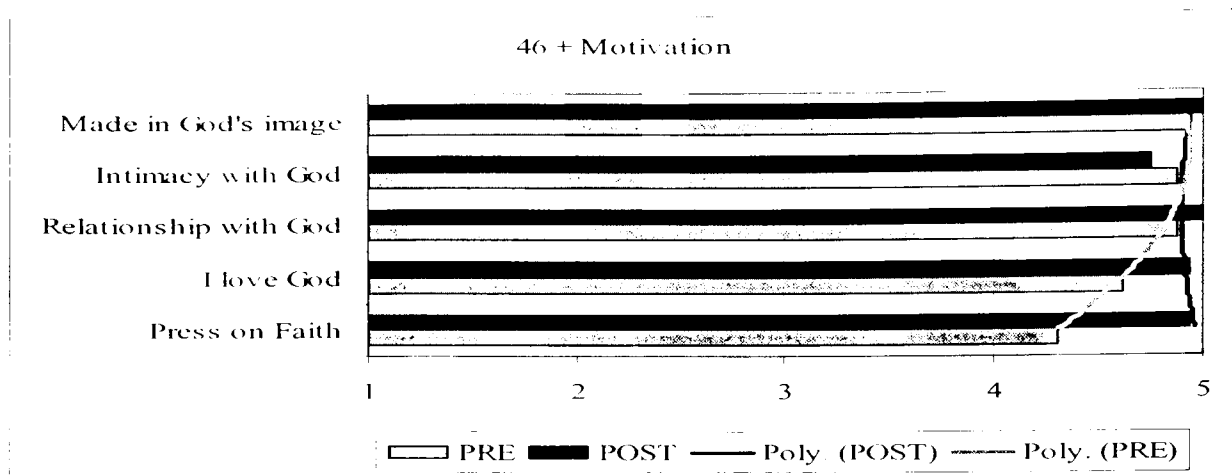


Figure 4.20. Positive questions on motivation—46+.

On the negative questions fear was once again an issue albeit not as strongly as the 36-45 age group. It still, however, slipped a decimal point. Reprimands and punishments showed the greatest gain from an agree position to a disagree position. While the question on whether motivation could be negative also moved from a close neutral to moderately disagree. The part played by feelings as a motivator too strengthened by over a point in this section (see Figure 4.21).

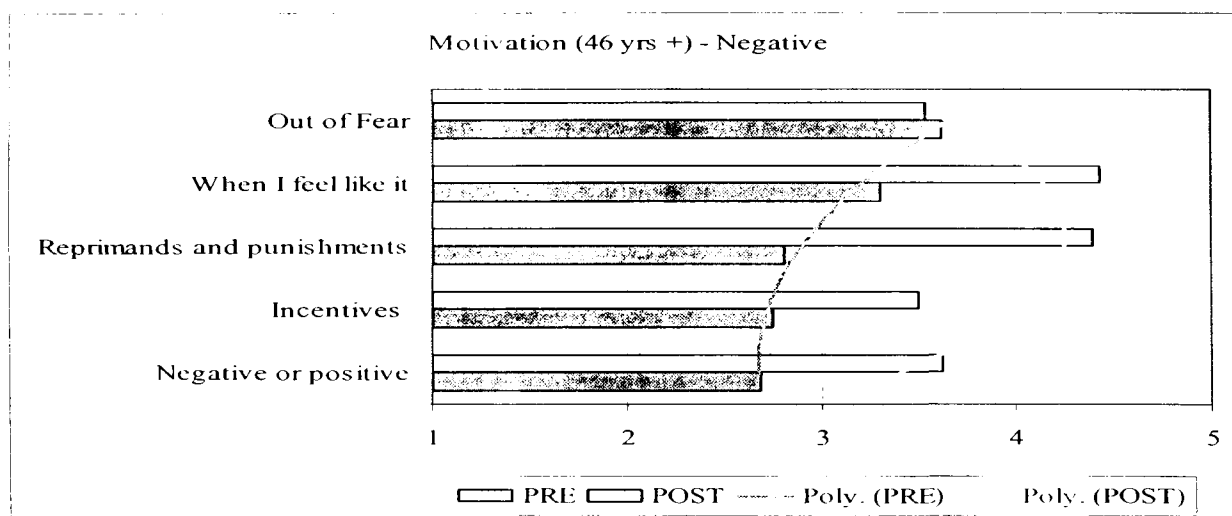


Figure 4.21. Negative questions on motivation—46+.

to the belief that negatively worded questions often make a respondent to pause and think through an answer rather than answering by response set. The sixth, “Not pursuing excellence is a sin” showed the largest jump in the whole questionnaire with a variance of 1.27, while four of the negatively worded questions were also among the top variances.

Table 4.11. Improvement from Neutral

No.	Question	Positive/Negative	Excellence/Motivation	Variance
23	Not pursuing excellence is a sin	Positive	Excellence	1.27
13	I choose to do things excellently when I feel like it	Negative	Motivation	1.26
4	Reprimands and punishments are good motivations for excellence	Negative	Motivation	1.18
25	Family life suffers in my pursuit of excellence	Negative	Excellence	0.83
11	Excellence and perfection are the same	Negative	Excellence	0.76
15	Charismatic leaders model excellence more easily	Negative	Excellence	0.47

Qualitative Analysis of Questions

Apart from this section on quantitative questions, I used qualitative questions to gauge the respondents understanding of excellence and their motivation for excellence both before and after the seminar. I evaluated the answers to these questions for key words and words related to the points in the teaching seminar.

On the question of excellence the pretest responses were varied and spread out. Posttest respondents also showed a greater focus in their understanding of excellence and motivation (see Figure 4.1 p.72). The frequency distribution chart seems to bear this out

as the 95 percent confidence intervals for mean do not overlap (3.718 thru 3.964 and 4.160 thru 4.406).

To check for themes in these definitions I applied content analysis measures to this data:

Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. Researchers quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time of which these are a part. (“Overview”)

Table 4.12. Dominant Themes in the Definition of Excellence

Themes	Pre-	n	%	Post	n	%
Doing my best as an end in itself (I, one’s, your, oneself, person)	20	33	60.6	5	34	14.7
Doing my best to glorify, honor God	2	33	0.06	6	34	17.6
Excellence as God’s will or purpose for humanity	10	33	30.3	23	34	67.6
Excellence as a way of life (pursuit, consistent, lifelong, continued)	3	33	9.09	20	34	58.8
Mention of God, Christ, Lord in definition of excellence	10	33	30.3	23	34	67.6

While the data was insufficient to apply quantitative tests, it was illuminating in underscoring the shifts that participants made to their understanding of excellence. Most significant was the use of personal pronouns in the definitions offered. Between the pretest and posttest, the use of pronouns dropped almost 46 percent. Respondents moved away from excellence as a result of their efforts and focused on God being proactive in their efforts. Respondents also increased the number of times they referred to God (Christ, Lord) in their definition—up 37.34 percent in the posttest. Another major jump

was in the way respondents viewed excellence as an ongoing, consistent, lifelong pursuit (58.82 percent) in the posttest as opposed to a 9.09 percent presence in the pretest.

Viewing excellence as God's will for humanity also doubled from a pretest position from 10 respondents (30.3 percent) going up to 23 in the posttest (67.64 percent).

With regard to motivation for excellence, respondents completed the sentence, "My motivation for excellence is," by using a variety of answers that had God involved but without specificity. Patterns and themes did not emerge in the pretest. Some examples include the following:

- People around me;
- The idea that I serve a living God and that He is working within me;
- Jesus Christ and God;
- God wants me to be able to put my best, and that is what He created me for.

He is the one who gives me all the strength and ability that I need; and

- My faith—which teaches me to showcase him and his principles in everything I do.

The posttest, however, revealed three clear themes as motivators for excellence:

- Love for God (12),
- To glorify God (11), and
- In response to God's love (6).

All three themes were consistent with the teaching in the seminar based on the research emanating from the literature review.

Qualitative analysis was applied to the third research question: "What aspects of the teaching seminar did the participants find most helpful in better understanding

excellence and its motivation?” The responses were varied but particular aspects of the teaching helped shape the respondents thinking.

Heading the list were the quotations and examples used in the presentation. Of the respondents, 31 percent felt this aspect of the presentation along with the teaching on consummate love (a combination of intimacy, passion and commitment) had been most helpful in shaping their thinking; another 26 percent of the participants chose excellence as a way of life, while the delineations between success and excellence and perfection and excellence were also helpful.

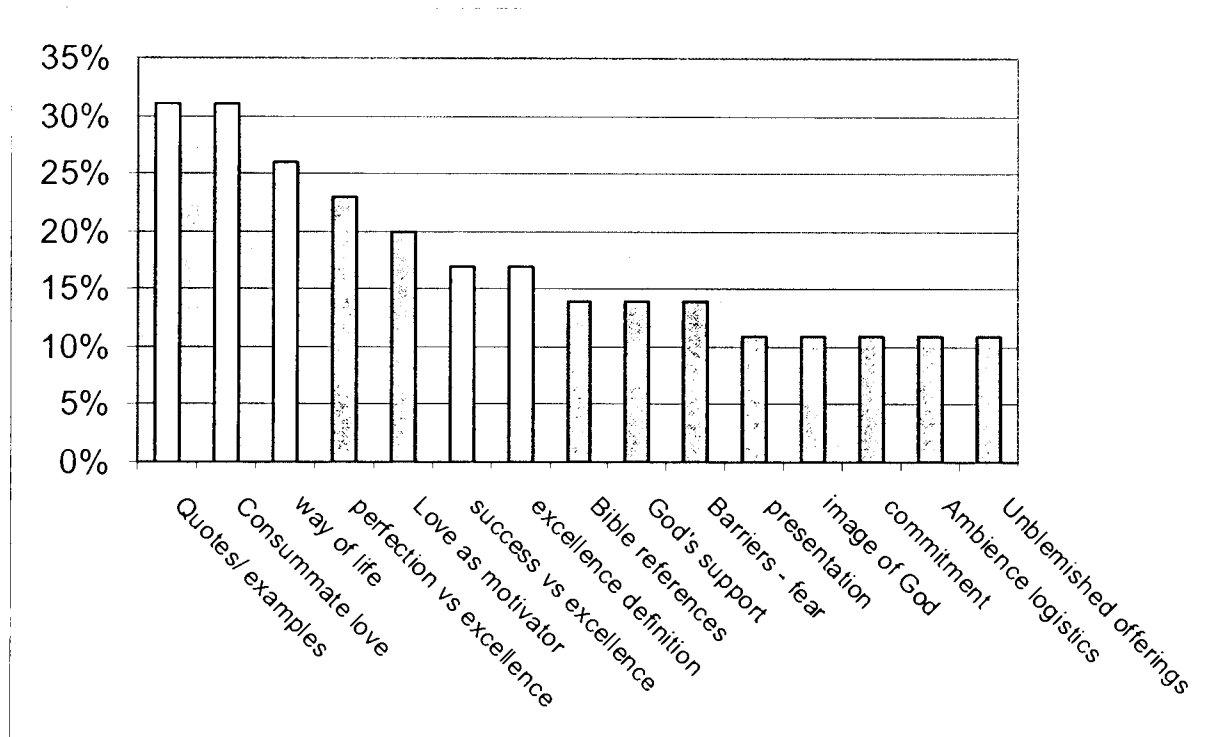


Figure 4.22. Most helpful aspects of the seminar.

Summary of Significant Findings

1. The seminar on “Excellence in Leadership” brought about significant change in respondents understanding of and motivation for excellence.

2. The intervening variables of age, gender, length of stay at CAP, and educational qualifications did not have any bearing on the outcome.
3. A clearer understanding of Scripture contributed to a clearer understanding of excellence.
4. Delineation between success/perfection and excellence were pivotal in a clearer understanding of excellence.
5. Participants recognized that excellence as modeled and demanded by God would come out a love relationship with him.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

“The problem with Christian leadership,” he said, “is that you can’t kick butt.” I started my first chapter with this quote. The implication was that in the ministry one has to accept the status quo, to grin and bear it, to grimace and tolerate it. I was drawn to this kind of an attitude, which is so prevalent in the church today—drawn to explore, study, and research, whether this method of “kicking butt” was the only option in getting things done in Christendom.

To say that the journey has been illuminating would be to understate the case; to say that it has been frustrating would be more accurate. So often I was confronted with mediocrity, with average effort, and a heightened desire to just “kick butt” and get on with life. It seemed to be the best option, if not the most satisfying one, until one was confronted with the research and biblical basis that “man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7, NKJV), and a changed heart along with the mind and the will prompts every Christian do all things as “unto the Lord.”

Summary of Significant Findings

1. The seminar on “Excellence in Leadership” brought about significant change in respondents understanding of and motivation for excellence.
2. The intervening variables of age, gender, length of stay at CAP, and educational qualifications did not have any bearing on the outcome.

3. A clearer understanding of Scripture contributed to a clearer understanding of excellence.
4. Delineations between success/perfection and excellence were pivotal in a clearer understanding of excellence.
5. Participants recognized that excellence as modeled and demanded by God would come out a love relationship with him.

The Seminar

The location for the seminar was the worship center at The Church at Powai, and being a holiday, people came casually dressed and with a laid-back attitude. The team, had transformed the worship center into a seminar setting with tables set to replicate a teaching environment. The sudden hush as participants walked in, demonstrated how contrary their expectations had been. None expected this kind of an ambience, and yet all of them were used to this setting because of their corporate backgrounds. Their response underscored the assumption of this hypothesis that standards in the church do not often model or emulate the excellence visible in corporate settings.

The pretest scores on the questionnaire were on the higher side—most respondents agreed with statements on excellence and motivation. Most participants had been with the church for a while, and I think they understood my expectations. The negatively worded questions helped to force greater engagement with the questionnaire borne out by the fact that some of the highest variances came in this section.

In Chapter 2 I surveyed various definitions of excellence both from a secular and Christian worldview and determined that excellence was not a point of achievement but a way of life. That adversity and hardships must not be deterrents but columns on which it

is built. The research also looked at Harper's three words, "In order that," to point out that excellence is never an end but a pathway, a corridor to a life lived in the true image of God, not a destination but a direction (10). The material also showed that true excellence was holistic in nature; it could not be accomplished to the exclusion of other areas of one's life. This fact made excellence not only difficult to reach but trickier to maintain. It shifted the focus to who Christians were and not on what they did.

Summation on Excellence

While most questions evoked positive, high scores on this scale, the areas that the seminar helped clarify were in terms of sin, perfection, success, and family life. In fact, during the lunch break one participant came up and asked me the relationship between perfection and excellence, and I told him that he was just a little ahead of me and that the afternoon session would deal with this issue. Stoop's chart on the perfectionist (unhealthy perfectionism) and the person of excellence (healthy perfectionism) touched upon in Chapter 2 reinforced the holistic nature of excellence and helped participants understand that perfectionism could be seen within the holistic nature of excellence and not as an aberration or eccentricity (Winter 30). Psychologist Hamachek's definitions of neurotic and normal perfectionism (27) proved particularly helpful to most. For those who shied away from excellence because of a warped view of perfection Winter's clarification regarding nonperfectionists helped: "They are relaxed, easygoing and fun to be around, though sometimes so laid-back that they are perceived as being disorganized, unreliable and even lazy" (28). With these clear delineations on perfection, participants were able to overcome their misconceptions and align themselves with a healthy quest for excellence.

Respondents reinforced this thought by the high swing on the question of whether

family life suffers because of one's pursuit of excellence. The participants were challenged and the group's posttest variance showed that they had changed their position positively to state that a pursuit of excellence need not be at the cost of the family. The teaching on the "perfectionist" and "being a person of excellence" contributed greatly to this changed position (Winter 30).

Also of note was that the shift was strongest in the age group of 22-35 year olds. This group has just finished college, are in MBA programs, are young IT professionals, and folk with small children—highly focused on what they were doing and where they were going, ready to make sacrifices and succeed. I believe that to this group this teaching came as a bit of a relief, that they could take the foot off the gas, slow down, and in a sense smell the roses.

India is going through a tremendous economic upswing with pundits forecasting a two figure GDP growth. DNA published this article on India's economic surge:

Credit Suisse revised GDP growth projections for Asian economies for 2007. Perhaps the most striking statistic is that India's GDP growth for 2007 could, for the first time, be higher than China's and reach double digits. "Our significant growth upgrade for 2007 is in India," says Credit Suisse chief Asia economist Dong Tao in his Asia Economics report. India's GDP growth projection for next year has been bumped up from 8.5% to 10%. And though the forecast for China's GDP growth too has been revised upwards by 0.1 percentage point, it is projected to fall a notch lower than India's, at 9.9%. (Vembu)

This growth is creating enormous pressure on people and expectations are high.

Opportunities for those willing to bend their backs are plenty with attrition rates in companies at an all-time high. This particular age group is on the cutting edge of a burgeoning economy, and the demands are huge. High-end salaries add to the pressure as more and more graduates from Indian Institute of Management schools find themselves at

the receiving end of high incomes but demanding careers:

IIM Indore's Batch of 2007 signed off with a total of 329 offers to its 114 students (at 2.89 offers per student) from 67 companies, including an unprecedented 29 new ones. Average salary of accepted offers went up 46.1 pc from 8.5 lakhs to 12.35 lakhs. With this, in the past 3 years, the average salaries have gone up by almost 100 pc. The highest salary on offer was US\$ 110,000 offered by a leading Indian IT firm. And with 12 international offers, the students of IIM-I are all set to make a mark on the world ("Salary")

To this group of entrepreneurs, then, excellence came shaded in different colors—warmer hues, I am sure!

Management guru Drucker says that he would not want to give his life to an organization—just his best efforts (21). Those words, coming from one as respected all over the world as Drucker, also put excellence in perspective.

Success was the next area that proved enlightening to most participants who found that success and excellence were not two sides of the same coin. In fact, posttest scores revealed that all age groups had moved significantly away from that presumption. In presenting this material I was able to observe deep interest and immediate engagement with the views of Campolo (9-10) and Johnston (33), outlined in Chapter 2. Campolo's definition of success—the acquisition of wealth, power, and prestige—has no kingdom value and participants saw and understood this pursuit as a chasing after the wind, a futile exercise in self-aggrandizement with no eternal benefits. Johnston's elaboration on success was a major factor in moving participants away from the thinking that words like success and excellence were synonymous. Especially helpful were these two verses:

Success offers a hoped-for future goal.
Excellence provides a striven-for present standard.

Success bases our worth on a comparison with others.

Excellence gauges our value by measuring us against our own potential.
(33)

People are measured by internal, standards that challenge them to reach high, to raise the bar.

I understood, from comments made to me during and after the seminar, how easily participants were able to keep God out of their understanding of excellence. God's presence, his will and desire for his creation, and his requirement of a life of excellence challenged most participants to not only look on excellence as a way of life but as a journey accompanied by the Lord of Hosts. The fact that humanity is made in his image, given responsibility to govern and rule over the earth representing an "excellent" God was also a new concept. To do otherwise was sin. These theological understandings, touched upon in Chapter 2, helped provide indisputable "evidence" to participants that excellence was not only required of his creation but mandated by being created in his image. I remember very vividly my sound engineer walking up to me after the seminar and in a voice choked with emotion telling me, "Pastor, whatever you require me to do, whenever you want me to come, I will be there—from now on you will find excellence in all I do."

Summation on Motivation

I used this quote from one of the participants in Chapter 4—"previously we knew what to do, but now we know why!"—because it sums up quite succinctly the point at which participants found themselves after the seminar. While the understanding of excellence had been very high prior to seminar, the reasons for a life of excellence were varied and other-centered. Reprimands, punishments, fear, and "feeling" were all motivators for excellence. The whole idea of excellence is not touched upon so much in

the churches and, hence, when discussed comes with corporate overtones. Reprimands, punishments, and incentives are all words that a company executive understands—they are what motivate him or her to excel. To look at a new motivation—love for God, his expectations for his children, intimacy with the Creator—was alien but, as posttest results showed, welcomed with promises to appropriate.

My premise after the research done in Chapter 2 was that the motivation for excellence, if sustainable over a lifetime, had to be dynamic. It had to come out of intimacy with God. Fear could not be that motivator. Fear would rob the joy of pursuing excellence; fear would turn it into a legalistic effort, but love could. Love could be the motivation to do all things “as to the Lord” (Eph. 6:7). Sternberg’s Triangular Theory of Love helped flesh out the different components of love—intimacy, passion, and commitment—and showed participants that consummate love, a combination of all three, must be the kind of love they seek to have with their heavenly Father (see Table 5.1).

To love God in this way, with consummate love, is difficult. To sustain this kind of love is only possible in God’s strength—by a God who loves his people with this kind of agapé love. Sternberg concludes by saying: “We do not seek consummate love in all our loving relationships or even in most of them. Rather, we tend to reserve it for those loves that mean the most to us and that we want to make as nearly complete as possible” (129). Participants expressed their desire to pursue this kind of a love relationship with God. This chart had a tremendous effect on the participants as they realized how easily they could slip into a “romantic” or “friendship” love with their creator God.

Table 5.1. Taxonomy on Kinds of Triangles of Love

Type of Love	Intimacy	Passion	Commitment
Non-love	No	No	No
Friendship	Yes	No	No
Infatuated love	No	Yes	No
Empty love	No	No	Yes
Romantic love	Yes	Yes	No
Companionate love	Yes	No	Yes
Fatuous love	No	Yes	Yes
Consummate love	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Sternberg, "Duplex Theory" 187.

One participant came to me after the seminar and struggled with trying to hold her emotions in check. She could not and told me she would speak to me later. After fifteen minutes she came and said that she was going to pursue a love relationship with Jesus, not based on time or circumstances but on a determined understanding of God's requirement and her own commitment. These were the caveats of the project, seeing men and women commit to deepening their love for the Master.

Being made in the image of God was enlightening for many participants. Sheets' fine work on articulating what it means to be made in his image helped make this point powerfully. Many participants were challenged to rethink what it meant to be made in his image. Clearly this thinking had significant overtones. To live life with no responsibility or care for one's behavior was one thing, but to allow one's behavior and actions to reflect on the God of the universe was entirely different. Dr. Melvin Lorentzen's quote that excellence must be stressed over mediocrity when done in the name of the Lord put a lot of misconceptions to rest, especially his ending line that Christians must "not repel

people but attract people to God” (qtd. In Engstrom 23).

In helping participants to move from an other-centered (reprimands, fear, incentives, promotions) to a Christocentric motivation, scores showed that participants accepted this changed “motivator” with open hearts and acquiescent wills. In fact, for the first time they saw that motivation can be intrinsic and completely dependent on a love relationship with God. Responding to the question whether motivation can be either positive or negative, they replied with a significant shift towards “no,” implying that reprimands, incentives, and promotions were momentary motivators that might end in success but only positive motivation—intimacy with God—could lead to sustained long-term stimulus that culminated in an excellent way of life.

The other key area that participants got a clearer understanding of was in the area of subjectivity, of feeling, of doing things well as long as they “felt” like doing it well. If God’s will and desire is to do everything as “unto the Lord,” then feeling does not play any part in motivating one to go after excellence. Feeling must follow faith. If Christians believe that what God says they ought to do, they must do, what God wants and believe that the right feelings will come. The lyrics of the song “I Whistle a Happy Tune,” from the Broadway musical The King and I underscore this principle. Anna gives Lois some great advice regarding feelings:

Whenever I feel afraid
I hold my head erect
And whistle a happy tune
So no one will suspect
I’m afraid.

While shivering in my shoes
I strike a careless pose
And whistle a happy tune
And no one ever knows

I'm afraid.

The result of this deception
Is very strange to tell
For when I fool the people
I fear I fool myself as well!

The lyricist's words are true. People ought to take steps of faith because they know they are the right thing to do rather than waiting to "feel" like doing something.

This particular question (on feelings) had the largest shift (2.3) in the 22-35 age group and was one of the questions (along with the one on success) that showed significant movement across age-groups and gender as well. Apparently, participants made many decisions on excellence based on their feelings, and the seminar helped nail that issue as a fallacy. Ironically, this mindset would never work in the corporate world where hard-nosed, clinical facts, not feelings, determine decisions. The repercussions for somebody not "feeling like making targets" or not "feeling like putting the extra effort to be on time" or not "feeling like paying taxes" would be disastrous to say the least, and yet their "feelings" often allow them to make "blemished offerings" to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. As God inquired of Malachi more than two thousand years ago, "Try a trick like that with your banker or your senator—how far do you think it will get you?" (Mal. 1:18, Message) Not very far, one might add.

Intervening Variables

Age, gender, and educational qualifications had no effect on the participants' understanding of issues or their responses to issues, which was good. Excellence must be understood and sought after by all if it is a mandate from God. It must cut across all classes and divisions. In fact, one of the rural pastors, speaking for the rest, commented before the seminar that they could not pursue excellence because they did not have LCD

projectors in their churches. I was able to tell them that excellence did not depend on how much one had but on what one did with what they had—the parable of the talents being a case in point (Matt. 25:26-30, NIV). During the seminar I asked the participants how their family life was, their relationship with spouses and their children, pointing out that excellence tends to be associated with the more tangible things such as jobs and cars and clothes rather than the intangible ones like relationships and thought patterns and addictive behaviors. The significant shift on the question of family life itself was worth all the effort that went into producing this seminar.

Clearer Understanding of Scripture

I remember many years ago sitting in a seminar listening to a speaker articulate various controversial points in a marriage context. My pastor sitting beside me could take it no longer. Raising his hand he asked, “Can you tell me where in Scripture it says that,” to which the speaker replied, “It’s not in the Bible.” My pastor replied quite pointedly, “I thought so!” Scriptural support is so irrefutable. No longer is the allegiance to a person (a pastor) but to God. Participants were taken aback by the “image of God” motif that surfaced through the teaching. God’s poignant cry in Malachi regarding worship touched home. Participants responded to questions about whether their preaching, worship, guitar playing, keyboards, or preparation for Sunday school was a “blemished offering.” Stevens elucidates this point by saying, “Human beings made in God’s image have the enormous privilege of entering into God’s ongoing work in every kind of good and humane occupation” (6). Participants were challenged by these new concepts, and responses after the seminar were wide-ranging, from “a fresh beginning” to “sitting at His feet and reading His word,” and “pursuing excellence for His glory.” I was encouraged to

see the way God had used his Word to bring conviction and commitment to the participants.

The Great Commandment found in Mark says that people ought to “love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our strength and with all our mind.” I believe if they follow this command then excellence will become a by-product of their lives. The participants too left the seminar with that same thought: Love for God is their motivation for excellence—not out of fear or retribution, not because of reprimands or punishments but solely “because Thou art my God and my eternal King.” (Xavier 612-13). That alone must be their motive. That motive will see Christians take excellence to another level in the workplace, at school, at college, and in homes. That was the challenge that went out with the participants—not to settle for the average, mediocre things of life, but to seek after the more excellent things of God. The question to ask is how this loving relationship can be sustained and the answer would be to continuously seek his presence. God demonstrated his love for his people through his Son, and intimacy with the Son will produce a loving relationship. I believe that if people can change their hearts into hearts that passionately seek him, then their wills will become clay in the Potter’s hand—readily moldable, easily accessible, and freely usable.

Summary of Application

I ended the questionnaire with a life application question: How will you apply them (aspects of seminar that challenged you) in your life? The answers were positive with most respondents making commitments to apply various aspects of this seminar to their lives. Deepening their relationship with God and looking at excellence as a way of life were predominant themes. A desire to be committed and disciplined came next along

with pursuing excellence through love for God, pushing past mediocrity, and doing all things for God's glory were also recurring themes.

Besides the content of the seminar, many aspects of the form, too, had a bearing on the respondents. At one point in the seminar I found that participants were trying to write down the quotes I was using. To continue to have their undivided attention, I offered to mail the quotes to all those who were interested. The participants also appreciated the use of a remote to move from slide to slide while I kept talking. The many references that were made to the Bible also anchored these thoughts on excellence strongly in the Word. Many commented about how clearly God's will on excellence is in the Bible but how blurred it gets in their lives. The ambience and logistical planning for the seminar was also one of the aspects of the seminar that challenged many. Each participant had their own writing pad that had "Excellence in Leadership" printed on it along with their own uniquely designed bookmark as a takeaway. The bookmark featured the verse from Ephesians: "With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph. 6:7, NASB). These items were all inexpensive additions to the seminar that were meant to show that a good presentation was possible within limited resources.

At the end of the seminar, I noticed palpable resoluteness in the eyes and faces of the participants and was encouraged and heartened to see the way God had touched each one of them. I believe God instilled a new level of understanding and motivation in them and gave them fresh purpose—people committed to doing all for the glory of God.

Limitations of the Study

Hindsight, as the old adage goes, has 20-20 vision. At the end of this project a few

things done differently might have strengthened it. I think running this seminar for leaders from other churches would have provided greater depth to the findings. It would have provided a fresh perspective on an oft articulated value and would have revealed the thinking on excellence in other churches. Only the seminar would have validated or negated that assumption.

I would also have done another test after three or four months to monitor sustainability. The narrow focus of the study, that is, the leadership of The Church at Powai, made the logistics of getting everyone who needed to be at the seminar very difficult. The length of the seminar—a whole day—itself was a deterrent. Not too many people want to give up a holiday for another seminar. Therefore, getting all forty-eight of the church's leadership to be present on any given day proved to be complicated. After changing the dates a few times, I realized I should set a date and then try to get everybody to come. I chose a public holiday but missed around eight of my leadership who were either working or traveling during this date.

Another aspect that I think might be helpful in the future would be to ensure that all participants answer all the questions on both the pre-- and posttest questionnaires. I was disappointed and frustrated to see skipped questions, because the n factor came down considerably because the question became invalidated.

Serendipitous Observations and Recommendations

I remember many years ago when I was getting my voice trained, my voice teacher told me that for six months I was not to sing in any choir or vocal group. I was devastated and horrified at that thought; I loved singing and tried to sing everywhere I could, plus I was only twenty. I eventually left her because I could not comply with her

rigid requirements, but since then I have come to appreciate the value of her stand. Her contention was that until something new had become second nature it would always be in danger of being blown away by winds of habit and custom. She wanted six months for a new singing style to become second nature to withstand the wrong techniques that would undoubtedly surface in singing with and in choirs.

After the seminar I have seen a few folks who were quite animated about excellence slip into mediocre ways and settle for less than their best, and I realized that they are so bombarded with exhortations and challenges to better their lives in myriad ways that unless a stringent program is available after the seminar to help a participant make these values second nature, the winds of mediocrity might prevail.

I have the opportunity to do this seminar with different churches around India as well as with Christian business networks and will work on an effective follow-up to ensure permanent change in behavior (as much as it is in my power to do so). I will try and create small groups after the seminar so that participants can meet together and discuss practical ways of incorporating excellence into their lives. These small groups will also serve as accountability structures—holding each other accountable for promises made. Because I will also have a database of participants, I will also keep in touch with them reminding them of concepts we had studied and encouraging them to press on towards an excellent way of life.

Postscript

At the end of this project, I am challenged and humbled by my findings: challenged to apply these findings in my own life and humbled by God's grace in helping me to complete it successfully. I would like the final words on this project to be a prayer

to my Father in heaven.

Lord, give me the wisdom to take this knowledge and apply it to my life, to come against the mediocrity of the flesh with the splendor of your majesty, to place before you offerings of the highest quality, more than fit for the governors and statesmen to whom I give allegiance. Let me understand that excellence is the wrapping of all your deeds, the garments that clothe your will, and, therefore, must be mine as well.

Prevent me, O Lord from so focusing upon this quality of excellence that I forget how important people are to you; that it might never be a stumbling block, but only an inspiration; never an impediment, only a standard; and never a barrier but always an aspiration.

Grant, I pray, that all who see it modeled will be pointed to you, the eternal source of everything good and perfect, and may this value always be the outcome of an endearing, intimate walk with the Ancient of Days. Amen.

APPENDIX A

Cover Letter to Seminar Participants

*Mr. Abhisaar Markhan
A 301 Brentford
Hiranandani
Thane*

6 February 2007

Dear Abhisaar:

I greet you in the beautiful Name of the One we love—the Lord Jesus!

As you are aware, I have been pursuing a doctorate in leadership from Asbury Theological Seminary over the last three years. I am now at the point where the end seems to be in sight, if not tantalizingly close. The remaining areas include a project, completing my last two chapters, a defense of my dissertation, and my graduation in May. Your prayers for me are coveted.

In addition to your prayer support, I would like to invite you to a seminar that I will be conducting for CAP leaders on “Leadership Excellence,” to be held on the 16th February 2007 from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the CAP Worship Centre.

Sheila and I would be delighted if you would also join us for lunch.

I thank you for your support, prayers, and time.

Sincerely,

Rev. Cecil Clements

P.S. A line to confirm attendance would be a favour.

APPENDIX B

Pre--Seminar Questionnaire

LEADERSHIP—EXCELLENCE**NO.***Dear Friends:*

In preparation for the seminar, please take a few moments to fill out this questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed for anonymity. Therefore, please only put the number you have drawn in the box provided. Please answer the questions candidly—there are no right answers, just individual perspectives. Your input is valuable and your time appreciated. Thank you.

Please tick the appropriate boxes.

1	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
2	I Have attended The Church at Powai for	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than a year <input type="checkbox"/> Between 1 to 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> Over 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> Don't attend The Church at Powai
3	I was born into a Christian family	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

4	Educational level	<input type="checkbox"/> Below high school <input type="checkbox"/> High school <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate (Circle one)
5	Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Below 22 <input type="checkbox"/> 23 to 35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36 to 45 <input type="checkbox"/> 46 and above
6	Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Single
6	Area of church activity (May tick <u>more</u> than one)	<input type="checkbox"/> Management (Finance, HR, Madurai, Kharghar) <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching (Sunday school, Youth, Jr. Youth) <input type="checkbox"/> Administration (Special events, Office, Reflections) <input type="checkbox"/> Worship services (Hindi Church, Sound, Worship team, Preachers, Ushers) <input type="checkbox"/> Social concerns (CAPCare, Counseling) <input type="checkbox"/> Any other

Please complete the following sentences:

Excellence may be defined as

My motivation for excellence

Please circle one number to the right of each statement, which most closely corresponds with your view.

No.		Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Excellence is a way of life.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	God has modeled excellence in all he has done.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Excellence is not limited by limitations.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Reprimands and punishments are good motivations for excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Excellence is not a spiritual issue.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Made in the "Image of God" aids in my understanding of excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Excellence is mostly a matter of luck.	5	4	3	2	1

8.	A successful person is one who has modeled excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
9.	My relationship with God plays an important part in my pursuit of excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	A disability is a deterrent to excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
11.	Excellence and perfection are the same.	5	4	3	2	1
12.	God expects excellence from us.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	I choose to do things excellently when I feel right about it.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	Made in the "Image of God" aids in my motivation for excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Charismatic leaders model excellence more easily.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	God is proactive in our efforts to excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
17.	Pursuit of excellence might result in burnout.	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Intimacy with God ensures a sustained life of excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Excellence involves building up others.	5	4	3	2	1
20.	I choose excellence because I love God.	5	4	3	2	1
21.	Motivation for excellence can be either negative or positive.	5	4	3	2	1
22.	Not pursuing excellence is a sin.	5	4	3	2	1
23.	Sometimes, my motivation for excellence is out of fear.	5	4	3	2	1
24.	Family life may suffer in my pursuit of excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
25.	Excellence is a habit.	5	4	3	2	1

26.	I press for excellence because of my faith.	5	4	3	2	1
27.	Incentives motivate me to strive for excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
28.	Excellence is doing the best I can.	5	4	3	2	1
29.	Excellence glorifies God.	5	4	3	2	1

If there are thoughts, feelings, reflections you would like to convey, please do so here:

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire. Your input is valuable and much apPre-ciated.

APPENDIX C

Post-Seminar Questionnaire

LEADERSHIP—EXCELLENCE**NO.**

Dear Friends:

In conclusion, please take a few moments to fill out this questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed for anonymity. Therefore, please only put the number you have drawn in the box provided. Please answer the questions candidly—there are no right answers, just individual perspectives. Your input is valuable, and your time, appreciated. Thank you.

Please tick the appropriate boxes.

1	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
2	I have attended The Church at Powai for	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than a year <input type="checkbox"/> Between 1 to 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> Over 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> Don't attend The Church at Powai
3	I was born into a Christian family	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

4	Educational level	<input type="checkbox"/> Below high school <input type="checkbox"/> High school <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate
5	Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Below 22 <input type="checkbox"/> 23 to 35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36 to 45 <input type="checkbox"/> 46 and above
6	Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Single
6	Area of church activity (May tick <u>more</u> than one)	<input type="checkbox"/> Management (Finance, HR, Madurai, Kharghar) <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching (Sunday School, Youth, Jr. Youth) <input type="checkbox"/> Administration (Special events, Office, Reflections) <input type="checkbox"/> Worship Services (Hindi Church, Sound, Worship Team, Preachers, Ushers) <input type="checkbox"/> Social Concerns (CAPCare, Counseling) <input type="checkbox"/> Any other

Please complete the following sentences:

Excellence may be defined as

My motivation for excellence is

Please circle one number to the right of each statement, which most closely corresponds with your view.

No.		Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30.	Excellence is a way of life.	5	4	3	2	1
31.	God has modeled excellence in all He has done.	5	4	3	2	1
32.	Excellence is not limited by limitations.	5	4	3	2	1
33.	Reprimands and punishments are good motivations for excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
34.	Excellence is not a spiritual issue.	5	4	3	2	1

35.	Being made in the “Image of God” aids in my understanding of excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
36.	Excellence is mostly a matter of luck.	5	4	3	2	1
37.	A successful person is one who has modeled excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
38.	My relationship with God plays an important part in my pursuit of excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
39.	A disability is a deterrent to excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
40.	Excellence and perfection are the same.	5	4	3	2	1
41.	God expects excellence from us.	5	4	3	2	1
42.	I choose to do things excellently when I feel like it.	5	4	3	2	1
43.	Being made in the “Image of God” aids in my motivation for excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
44.	Charismatic leaders model excellence more easily.	5	4	3	2	1
45.	God is proactive in our efforts to excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
46.	Pursuit of excellence might result in burnout.	5	4	3	2	1
47.	Intimacy with God ensures a sustained life of excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
48.	My achievements speak for my excellent lifestyle.	5	4	3	2	1
49.	Excellence involves building up others.	5	4	3	2	1
50.	I choose excellence because I love God.	5	4	3	2	1
51.	Motivation for excellence can be either negative or positive.	5	4	3	2	1
52.	Not pursuing excellence is a sin.	5	4	3	2	1

53.	Sometimes, my motivation for excellence is out of fear.	5	4	3	2	1
54.	Family life may suffer in my pursuit of excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
55.	Excellence is a habit.	5	4	3	2	1
56.	I press for excellence because of my faith.	5	4	3	2	1
57.	Incentives motivate me to strive for excellence.	5	4	3	2	1
58.	Excellence is doing the best I can.	5	4	3	2	1
59.	Excellence glorifies God.	5	4	3	2	1

What aspects of the seminar did you find most helpful?

a)	
b)	
c)	
d)	
e)	

How will you apply them in your life?

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire. Your inputs are valuable and much appreciated.

APPENDIX D

Definitions of Excellence before and after the Seminar

#	Pretest	Posttest
1		
2	to be able to work at my best or to achieve the best I can	seeking God's will to discover where He wants me to excel & pursuing that
3	doing what it takes to do the best you can in the job you've undertaken	the path on this life towards eternal life, by love for God i.e. His love & our love for Him is the wind in our sails
4	going beyond one's comfort zone & doing the best one can in one's ability in a given situation	pushing past the "default" & doing everything as if I were doing it for God
5	doing the best I can	striving for the best & not settling for less than what I can do within the situation I am in
6	a process of continuously going beyond one's self	living up to God-given potential—a lifelong process
7		
8		
9	BLANK	BLANK
10	BLANK	adhering to God's plan if we can sense how things can take shape in the largesse
11		
12		
13	giving the extra effort to bring the best out of every assignment given	excellence is a way of life to follow in all that we do with a consummate love relationship with God in focus
14	doing some things to the best of my potential, ability & satisfaction w/ tangible results/success	excellence is that which comes from within, is a consistent effort towards achievement which should be a way of life
15		
16	God's reflection in you for others	being perfect in every act that God entrusts us with, spiritual or otherwise
17	BLANK	BLANK
18	consciously improving one's own abilities at all the time	a pursuit to find out what the will of God is
19	doing the best	a way of life
20		
21	as a virtue where nothing exists above neither in works or thoughts. It is the ultimate bar	way of life, cannot be substituted with any other virtue
22	Jesus Christ—to whose perfection we aim for	the pursuit of the full potential in you—Jesus Christ
23	a capability which God has given me & us to glorify His kingdom on earth & among men here	excellence is a way of life. The decision to stay or pursue excellence is what brings out the quality of excellence in a person
24	a paradigm shift towards being finer in any approved tasks in life. Maybe we as human beings can try to excel but never be excellent as God alone deserves & is excellent	"something that comes whole-heartedly with pure & good motives." Getting to basics & getting it right that God loves excellence

25	a consistent approach of going above & beyond what is required	consistent ongoing commitment to strive to go above & beyond the accepted norm so that God may thereby be glorified
26		
27	a focused & dedicated approach to meeting an objective in the best possible way using all the resources & knowledge available	uncompromising pursuit of achieving an objective within the realms of God's will, with utmost dedication & commitment
28	doing your best & letting God do the rest	striving to do one's uttermost for God's glory
29	to put in 100% effort & know you/I did your/my best to achieve your/my goal	way of life. To put in your/my best everyday walking through life in His Word. To follow/represent Christ in our/my thoughts & actions. To be committed to God's will in my life—100% guided by His standards & trust the Holy Spirit to lead, guide & achieve the goals committed to
30	doing the best in my ability using the gifts & talents given by God to the fullest potential possible for His glory	
31		a way of life
32	nothing better	the best
33		
34	having Christlike nature	trying to give our best
35	going ten steps ahead than what is expected of you	joy in pushing yourself to attain the best from you, simply because you love God
36	what God wants me to do in my fullest capacity	
37	delivering more than what is asked for	doing my best so God gets the glory
38	work done by one satisfies him/her & helps in continuity in walk with Lord Jesus Christ	continuity' in walk with the Lord Jesus in anything we do. That leads to peace.
39	a higher level of perfection	a way of life—the decision to stay with a god & improve the output thereof is excellence
40	the best possible job that can be done	a lifestyle dedicated to doing the best I can at everything I do because I know it's in service of God
41	BLANK	BLANK
42	BLANK	BLANK
43	a joyous exercising of one's God-given abilities & resource to achieve the best within a given time frame	allowing Christ in me, who is the glory of God live this life through me, as I walk in intimacy & obedience to Him. It is being transformed from glory to glory through the working of His Spirit, & thus being a "living sacrifice"
44	the best that a person can perform taking into account all the aspects & areas of their life	habitually doing my best for God in all aspects of my life by God's grace
45	a reachable utopia	a continued relationship with God
46	excellence is next to godliness	as a way of life, is a means to an end. It's an attribute that marks Christian behavior
47	well above average, outstanding, very good quality	a life-long pursuit; motivated by love relationship with God, with a goal to glorify God
48	doing your best/giving your best/pushing oneself to move further	doing your best / do not live in fear / build up others / God made everything in an excellent manner

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