**Healthy Church Leadership:**

**Relationship and Authority**

Writing to the saints at Philippi, Paul calls them his brothers, his beloved, longed for, joy and crown (Phil. 4:1), not terms used in a professional relationship. Nowhere to be found are the formality and externalism which sometimes characterise the modern church. A culture of deep, genuine relationship creates the context within which godly authority is best exercised.

**Mike Betts** leads Relational Mission, a network of churches which is part of the global Newfrontiers family. He is the author of *From the Inside Out*, *Relational Mission: A Way of Life,* and *The Prayers of Many*. Mike is passionate about the church enjoying her inheritance in Christ, involving church planting, gospel expansion, corporate prayer, and seeing the next generation grow into all that God has for them. Mike is married to Sue, and they live in Lowestoft, Suffolk, UK. He is part of the eldership team at Lowestoft Community Church, which he, Sue, and a number of others planted over 30 years ago. At that time Mike and Sue sought help and advice from Terry Virgo, who had begun to serve emerging churches. Terry’s work and relationships with churches became the start of Newfrontiers. In 2011, Terry handed over responsibility for Newfrontiers to a number of his spiritual sons, and Mike began to lead the network that is now Relational Mission. Relational Mission works predominantly in the UK and mainland Europe but with growing connections across the world. Its network includes some 70 churches of which 30 are church plant and pioneering situations.

1. **Friends on the Journey – The ‘Smell’ of the New Testament**

* ‘Therefore, my brothers,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%204%3A1&version=ESV#fen-ESV-29427a)] whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.’ *Philippians 4:1*

1. **Concept of Biblical church authority**

‘When I choose to obey true authority I do not feel inferior or put down in any way because true authority respects my moral freedom.  Obedience is my free choice.  But when so-called authority seeks to impose another persons’ will on mine, or brings emotional or intellectual pressure to bear, it does not respect my moral freedom.  I can conform or rebel, neither is likely to bring any real satisfaction’ - *Tom Marshall - ‘Understanding leadership’*

‘Spiritual authority is never there to make the rebel conform; it’s only purpose is to enable the obedient person to live a holy life.  Therefore it rests on submission and obedience freely given.  Furthermore, spiritual authority has only spiritual means at it’s disposal; it’s only weapons are prayer, scripture, counsel and the power of a holy life’ - *Menno Simons (1496-1561)*

“When a man, in virtue of an official position demands obedience of another, irrespective of the latter’s reason and conscience, this is the spirit of tyranny.  When on the other hand, by the exercise of tact and sympathy; by prayer, spiritual power and sound wisdom one is able to influence and enlighten another, so that he through the medium of his own reason and conscience is led to alter one course and adopt another, that is true spiritual leadership” – *D. E.  Hoste*

1. **Expression of Biblical Authority**
2. **Leaders and Churches**
3. **Leaders and Accountability**
4. **Church Discipline**