

Preface

MUCH CONTEMPORARY DISCUSSION CONCERNING Christian leadership places significant emphasis on strength as a key characteristic for those who find themselves in, or seek, such a role in ministry. From a variety of perspectives this book challenges our perceptions of personal strength in leadership and even our understanding of God's own vulnerability in relationship with us. The nature of strength in ministry is discovered most significantly in an acknowledgment and embracing of personal weakness. The Christian leader's vulnerability within the context of relationship with God can be the place from which empowered ministry emerges to flourish on eagles' wings.

The contributors to this book follow this biblical paradigm with scholarly competence and enthusiasm. As editors we are grateful for their willingness to contribute to such a project. It has been interesting to observe the coherence in the volume despite the diverse backgrounds and research interests of the authors. Perhaps this says something about the truth and significance of the central conviction that strength is found *in* weakness, not simply despite it.

We are also grateful to the editors of Wipf and Stock for publishing the work and to Clark Pinnock for suggesting that route to publication. Thanks, too, to Derek Tidball for his generous reading of the entire text and his Foreword to the volume. We are both grateful to our wives and families for their continued encouragement of our research and scholarly endeavours—without them this volume would not be the volume it is!

Finally, a word regarding the dedication. We have both known Noel Vose for some years as a colleague and as a friend. He has been a tremendous advocate of Christ in Western Australia and throughout the world. In his eighties now he still reflects and demonstrates the kind of strength we envisage here in these essays. This book is a small thank you to God for his life-example and ministry among us. It also marks the beginning of a new era for the Vose Seminary of Western Australia as it is renamed Vose

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Seminary this year in honour of Noel Vose's role as founding principal of the College.

David Cohen, Australia
Michael Parsons, England
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