

A bright sun shining through a blue sky with white clouds. The sun is positioned in the upper center, creating a lens flare effect. The sky is a deep blue, and the clouds are white and fluffy, scattered across the lower half of the image.

Leadership

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Preface

These reflections and resources on leadership have been compiled during four weeks of study leave, from readings, leadership resources and experience I have gathered over the years, the leadership discussions and concepts at East Taieri Church and through interviews with people involved in missional communities in Queensland.

This paper serves as a study leave report, but it also provides a means of summarising some leadership concepts I have been wrestling with and communicating them to leaders at East Taieri Church. I look forward to the dialogue that will result.

Martin Macaulay
July 2014
East Taieri Church

Introduction

Over many years East Taieri Church has been blessed with courageous, visionary leaders who have been able to lead the congregation in trusting God and facing change. Many well - led ministries and groups have been established. There has been considerable growth in the church in both numbers and Christian maturity. Some of those now in leadership have come to Christ at ET.

I think we have much to celebrate, but we cannot rest on our laurels. The leadership challenges are many and varied in a church of this size and diversity, with multiple congregations over multiple sites, including a staff team of 11, significant community ministries, and overseas mission interests. The last ten years have seen numbers at worship plateau and even decline in some services. More importantly, we have a sense that we need to do better at making mature disciples who can disciple others. Measuring participation in worship services is easy. Measuring growth in discipleship is much harder. We are doing some important work in reshaping our small groups and the way we go about youth discipleship. FUEL, our missional work in Fairfield is bearing fruit, but we want to see that grow in impact in the Fairfield community and in the discipleship of those already involved. East Taieri Church has a long heritage of community involvement and we continue to commit resources to this. In both discipleship and wider mission, there is a feeling that we are on the cusp of new and exciting steps.

If we are going to take these steps and be faithful and fruitful participants in God's mission, we will need godly leaders who have a missional imagination, are themselves growing in Christ and can facilitate such growth in others. We need a multiplying missional movement. Developing quality missional leadership is the key! This study will explore key aspects of leadership development in the context of God's mission through East Taieri Church.

In Chapter One we explore what kind of leaders East Taieri Church needs. When people hear the word "leader" they often picture the charismatic, confident leader for whom it just seems to come naturally. This is only one kind of leadership and only a minority of leaders fit this "Great Man (or Woman)" model. Many more leaders are of the quiet, reluctant type who wonder how they ended up in a leadership position and if they have what it takes. They can provide a collaborative, participatory leadership environment where everyone feels empowered to take risks in following God in mission.

Each leader will be different, using their individual strengths and gifts to lead in the way God enables them. People should not be put off “leading” because they think, “I could never lead like that person...” Of course they can’t. They have different strengths and gifts. They will lead in their own way.

NZ churches are not always good at building teams and dealing with conflict and East Taieri is no exception. We need leaders with self-awareness who can see where they contribute to team conflicts, and how conflicts may be resolved. Chapter Two explores self-awareness and self-deception. We also see too many church leaders who themselves are stuck in their spiritual development and display fatigue and spiritual emptiness. We need leaders who can maintain a vital, joyful relationship with Jesus while in the crucible of ministry. Such leaders are people of good character who can identify and uphold ministry values. Chapters three to five consider these issues.

I don’t believe that leaders must provide all the vision themselves, like Moses coming down from the mountain having met with God. However, it is the task of leaders to ensure that the vision of their ministry is clear and well communicated. Chapter six has steps for clarifying and casting vision. We can all get better at this.

We often talk about the challenge of “recruiting quality volunteers” and that 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. However, I am convinced that this is not simply a *volunteer* problem. It is also a *leadership* problem. As leaders, we need to take ownership of our contribution to the church system operating in the way it does. We need to get better at empowering others and releasing them into ministry. Chapter seven looks at unleashing the people of God by stepping away from control and seeking to empower people and teams. Chapter eight is about taking risks for the sake of the gospel.

We now turn to consider what kind of leaders we need and the different ways we can offer that leadership.



Chapter One

*What Kind
of Leaders Do We
Need?*

What kind of leaders do we need at East Taieri Church? There are many theories or models of leadership. Historically, leadership was regarded as something you were born with. This was the “Great Man (or Woman)” theory which is closely related to the trait theory.¹ However, the growing consensus is that although some people are born with some traits or gifts that are useful in leadership, we can all learn and develop leadership skills.

Very few people fit the strong, charismatic leader mould. This doesn't mean you can't lead. It simply means you lead in other ways. One of the first tasks in growing as leaders is to identify what kind of leader you are. This requires each leader to have insight into how God has made

Very few people fit the strong, charismatic leader mould

them and gifted them to lead. We also need to know the kind of leader we are not. The top down, senior pastor as Chief Executive Officer, chain of command model doesn't fit me well, and, many would argue, doesn't fit governance in the kingdom of God, where Jesus is the only King.² Murray Robertson once told a group of pastors that the underlying problem in churches where people are not empowered in ministry is pastors wanting to be in control. Pastors are afraid of anarchy, or at least things they don't like, happening around them if people are empowered and free to do things.

Controlling, overly directive leadership not only stifles the ministry of the people of God, it also hinders discipleship. Quite a few people at East Taieri seem to like it when I speak authoritatively and decisively on matters. It is almost like they want to be told what to do by an authoritarian leader. I recognise the need for clear decisions and consistent vision, direction and strategy. Indecision and lack of direction can be crippling. However, a leader's task is also a discipleship and mentoring task of empowering other leaders. This means that we mustn't do everyone's thinking for them and calls for a more participative, collaborative style of leadership.

We want to develop everyone's wisdom and leadership abilities, including their ability to make good decisions. Successful leadership is not solely measured by the ministry tasks we have accomplished, but also, and perhaps primarily, by the people we have grown. This more relational leadership model is often called *transformational leadership* where leaders motivate and inspire people by helping group members see the importance and higher good of the task. These leaders are focused not only on the performance of group members, but also on the transformation of each person so they can fulfil their potential.

Transformational leadership is often contrasted with *transactional leadership* where the focus is on achieving results rather than on transforming people. Transactional theories are often used in business. Employees who succeed in their allocated tasks are rewarded, while those who fail are reprimanded. Not only does this not work well when leading volunteers,³ it is focused on the tasks rather than the people.

¹The “Great Man” theory is often accredited to Thomas Carlyle. He was a Scottish philosopher who interpreted the rural-to-urban shift during the Industrial Revolution. His insights were grounded in the rise of wealthy industrial leaders, whom he viewed as strong individual leaders (“great men”). For a good summary treatment of Carlyle's work and life, see Michael Moran, “Thomas Carlyle,” *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Donald Borchert, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomas Gale, 2006), 32-35.

²See for example, Neil Cole, *Organic Leadership* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker, 2009), 87.

³M. S. A. Mahalinga Shiva and Damodar Suar, “Transformational Leadership, Organizational Culture, Organizational Effectiveness, and Programme Outcomes in Non-Governmental Organizations” *Voluntas* (2012) 23:684–710.

The Presbyterian Church of Aoteroa New Zealand has described the kind of leadership needed in the church today as Servant Mission Leadership.⁴ The servant aspect calls for humility and a focus on other people and their wellbeing. The mission aspect looks beyond the immediate needs of people in the congregation and functional requirements of the church institution to the call to take creative, innovative, courageous steps to join God in God's mission.

The transformational servant mission leadership we are aiming for at East Taieri Church has many parallels with what Jim Collins calls "Level 5 Leadership".⁵ He describes such leaders as having a paradoxical blend of personal humility (a compelling modesty) and a professional will (unwavering resolve to do what must be done). How do we become Level 5 leaders? Collins suggests we practice the other "good to great" disciplines and they will shape us into level 5 leaders. These disciplines are:

- **First Who, Then What:** Get the right people on the bus and then decide what role they take.
- **Confront the Brutal Facts:** This is part of identifying vision and includes creating a culture where the truth can be heard without people getting defensive. "Leading from good to great does not mean coming up with the answers and then motivating everyone to follow your messianic vision. It means having the humility to grasp the fact that you do not yet understand enough to have the answers and then to ask the questions that will lead to the best possible insights."⁶
- **Hedgehog Concept:** This is the one key thing we focus on. It is identified by asking three key questions: What are we the best in the world at doing? What drives our economic engine? That is to say, if we could increase one key measure that contributes to our health and growth as a church, which we could systematically increase over time, what would that be? Perhaps it is the level of our intentional disciple-making. The third question is: What are we deeply passionate about?
- **Build a Culture of Self-Disciplined People** who are working on the Hedgehog Concept.
- **Flywheel Concept:** This recognises that there isn't any magic bullet. We can't just chase the latest fad. Sustainable transformations follow a predictable pattern of buildup and breakthrough. Like pushing on a giant, heavy flywheel, it takes a lot of effort to get the thing moving at all, but with persistent pushing in a constant direction over a long period of time, the flywheel builds momentum, eventually hitting a point of breakthrough. "The good-to-great leaders spent essentially no energy trying to "create alignment," "motivate the troops," or "manage change." Under the right conditions, the problems of commitment, alignment, motivation, and change largely take care of themselves. Alignment principally follows from results and momentum, not the other way around."⁷ We have seen this developing momentum with Alpha, FUEL, the evening service, and with our community engagement as we keep working consistently in the same direction.

⁴Policy Paper on Leadership for Mission from Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, "Policy Paper," <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/national-ministries/national-mission/resources-for-mission/leadership-for-mission/policy-paper> (accessed July 10, 2014). The servant aspect of leadership is discussed further under the leader's character in Chapter 4.

⁵Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (London: Random House, 2001), 40.

⁶Collins, *Good to Great*, 75.

⁷Collins, *Good to Great*, 187.

In addition to growing transformational leaders, our leadership style needs to be able to adjust depending on the development level of the person we are leading and the situation we are in. When urgent decisions are needed the leader must be more authoritarian. There simply isn't time to consult all the members of a short term mission team when they are in the middle of a ministry moment. A more directive style is also useful for leading people when they are doing something for the first time. Situational leadership theory recognises these issues. We need to be more directive in our leadership style when someone is new to a role. They may be excited about doing a great job, but low on experience, and of low or unknown competence. As they gain competence in the role, they may begin to wonder what they have signed up for and we need to increase our levels of support while maintaining a reasonably high level of coaching and directive leadership. As their competence and confidence continues to grow their commitment may fluctuate. We then continue a high level of encouraging and supportive leadership, but reduce the amount of direction we give them. Finally, when the person reaches high levels of competence and their commitment is also high and largely self-sustaining, both our supportive and directive behaviour can be reduced.⁸

Summarising the argument so far: if East Taieri is to grow in size and kingdom influence, our staff and other key leaders need to become not only leaders of teams, but leaders of leaders of teams. This multiplication of leaders requires transformational leaders who can adapt to different leadership situations.

Within this broad model of transformational leadership, we must allow people to lead in different ways according to the way they are made and gifted, providing their leadership style isn't overly controlling and restricting the growth and contribution of their team.

*“A leader needs to know his strengths as a carpenter know his tools, or as a physician knows the instruments at her disposal. What great leaders have in common is that each truly knows his or her strengths – and can call on the right strength at the right time. This explains why there is no definitive list of characteristics that describes all leaders.”*⁹

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⁸Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams and Why People Follow* (New York: Gallup Press, 2008), 13.

⁹Rath and Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership*: 13.

In the body of Christ there is a rich diversity of gifts and strengths. 1 Corinthians 12 emphasises that each person has a contribution to make. All are valued. We need to apply the body of Christ image to leadership. We need to be able to create space for different kinds of leadership to make their unique contribution to God's mission, without causing teams to self-destruct. The use of insights and common language from StrengthsFinder and Network are helping teams to do this, but these tools must be combined with emotional and spiritual maturity.

Each person has a contribution to make

their organizations will be.”¹¹

All leaders need to cast vision, identify and uphold values, establish strategic priorities and resource those priorities. In addition to these leadership tasks, Gallup conducted a formal study into why people follow and discovered four things followers want and need from the influential leaders in their lives: trust, compassion, stability and hope.¹² Leaders with different strengths provide these things in different ways.

We need leaders at East Taieri Church to commit to three areas of leadership development:

First growing their skills with vision, values and strategy.¹³

But secondly, we need them to lead in a way that is consistent with their gifts and strengths. Each *Strengths Theme* has been analysed for how that theme can contribute trust, compassion, stability and hope.¹⁴ So far elders, ministry team, FUEL leadership team, and some others have completed StrengthsFinder. Each of these leaders need to review their top 5 themes and identify their particular leadership contribution. They will also benefit from reviewing the top strengths themes of the people they are leading and considering the section in Strengths Based Leadership that gives coaching tips on leading people with this theme. For example, when asking someone with strong “context” theme, leaders need to take time to explain the thinking behind a request for them to carry out a task. Such people need to understand the background of a course of action before they can commit to it.¹⁵

Leaders need to be comfortable in their own skin and able to surround themselves with people who can do specific things much better than they can.

¹⁰Rath and Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership*, 50-54.

¹¹Ancona D, Malone TW, Orlikowsky WJ, Senge PM. In Praise of the Incomplete Leader. Harvard Business Review; 2007.

¹²Rath and Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership*, 82.

¹³See chapters 5 and 6 of this study.

¹⁴Rath and Conchie, *Strengths Based Leadership*, 101-235.

¹⁵Rath and Conchie, *Strength Based Leadership*, 149. This book can be accessed from the Admin Office on the shelf above our Strengths jigsaw. Sign the notebook if you take it away

Brian Harris helps us discover more about our particular leadership style by noting that we are simultaneously:

- ***Like every other leader.*** We need to pay attention to general leadership principles that every leader faces. We live in a fallen world, have only 24 hours a day to complete the tasks facing us.
- ***Like some other leaders.*** We will identify with some leaders more than others. They may have a strengths theme in common with us, or face similar budget constraints, or be working in a similar organisation of cultural climate.
- ***Like no other leader.*** Your particular combination of gifts, strengths, challenges, context and resources makes your leadership unique.¹⁶

It is helpful to list areas that are true for you in each of these three categories and review them for your leadership advantages. How can you use them to shape your leadership for maximum impact?

Thirdly, we need leaders to commit to personal transformation. Skills alone will not enable us to lead strong teams. We need to be growing as disciples of Christ, able to work with others, following the Spirit's lead, and participating in the mission of God in imaginative ways. We need to be able to do this while gathering others around us and seeing them grow in these ways also.

Personal transformation begins when we are able to recognise that we need to change. That requires a level of self-awareness that isn't always present. The next chapter considers the way we can be self-deceived and the limits that will place on our relationships and personal transformation.

¹⁶Brian Harris, *The Tortoise Usually Wins: Biblical Reflection on Quiet Leadership For Reluctant Leaders*, (Milton Keynes, Paternoster, 2013.), 58.



Chapter Two

*Self-Aware
Leaders
Leadership and
Self-Deception*

Many of the different apparently unconnected symptoms we call “people problems”, from problems in leadership to problems in motivation, are caused by the deeper issue of “self-deception”.¹ This is where we can't see we have a problem and are allowing our negative emotions to contribute to conflict. Lacking insight into our own attitudes, we view other people as the cause of problems. The Arbinger Institute calls this “being in the box” toward someone.

No matter what we are doing on the outside, people respond primarily to how we are feeling about them on the inside.² Are we seeing them as people or objects? How do we regard the people in ET Church? What we do (our behaviour) might be polite and appropriate, but what is our heart attitude towards them?

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“We often can sense how others are feeling toward us, can't we? Given a little time, we can always tell when we're being coped with, manipulated, or outsmarted. We can always detect the hypocrisy. We can always feel the blame concealed beneath veneers of niceness. And we typically resent it.”³

How do we get into this place of self-deception with someone?

We first develop this attitude when we have an opportunity to do something right, but in a moment of “self-betrayal” choose not to. We then start justifying ourselves and blaming others. This distorts our view of reality. We become “self-deceived” or “in the box” in that situation, toward that person. We can be “in the box” toward one person and “out of the box” toward another. However, over time, certain self-justifying behaviour and related self-deception becomes characteristic of us and we can carry that with us to new people or new situations.

¹The Arbinger Institute would say all “people problems” come from “self-deception”. *Leadership and Self-Deception: Getting Out of the Box*, (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc, Kindle Edition., 2010) 21. The Arbinger Institute was founded in 2000 by C. Terry Warner (PhD from Yale University and an emeritus professor from Brigham Young University - Church of Latter Day Saints – Mormon) to study and train on dealing with the issue of self-deception and taking responsibility for our negative emotions.

²*Leadership and Self-Deception*, 32.

³*Leadership and Self-Deception*, 28.

The Arbinger Institute identifies four main styles of justifying behaviour.⁴

- “Better-Than” behaviour where I look down on others as inferior to me in my virtuous place where I’m right. I view the world as competitive, troubled and needing my help.
- “I-Deserve” behaviour where I’m the mistreated victim and I feel deprived, resentful and entitled to something better. I view others as mistaken, mistreating and ungrateful and feel the unfair unjust world owes me. This often goes with “better-than”
- “Must-Be-Seen-As” behaviour where I need to be well thought of. I view the world as dangerous, watching and judging me and so I view others as my audience who are judgemental and threatening, making me feel anxious, stressed and overwhelmed.
- “Worse-Than” behaviour where I view myself as broken, deficient and worse than others who I see as advantaged, privileged and blessed. The world seems a hard difficult place that is against me, leaving me feeling helpless, jealous, bitter, and depressed.

We will use different justifying styles depending on the circumstances and our personal background. For example if we have been raised in a critical or demanding home, we might tend toward “worse-than” or “must-be-seen-as” behaviour. “If I need to be seen as smart, for example, I will get anxious whenever I think my intelligence might be at issue – as, for example, when I am asked to speak in public or when I believe others are evaluating me.”⁵

When we complain about another person’s behaviour and the way they mistreat us, we find it “strangely delicious”.

“It’s my proof that others are as blameworthy as I’ve claimed them to be — and that I’m as innocent as I claim myself to be. The behavior I complain about is the very behavior that justifies me.”⁶

When two people are “in the box” toward each other, they are in a downward spiral, giving each other reason to *stay* in the box by the way they mistreat each other, and by the way they talk about them behind their back.

⁴The Arbinger Institute, *The Anatomy of Peace: Resolving the Heart of Conflict* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc, Kindle Edition., 2006), 110-112.

⁵*The Anatomy of Peace*, 132.

⁶*Leadership and Self-Deception*, 104.

Clinical Psychologist John Gottman of Washington State University has described a similar mental state in marriage as “negative emotional override”.⁷ Ultimately our negative emotions toward someone become so strong that there is nothing they can do that will be enough to please us.

Why does being “in the box” get in the way of us achieving results? First, because in the box we are focused on justifying ourselves rather than results. Second, because we are focused on ourselves rather than others.

What doesn't work in the box:

- Trying to change others: That's the reason I'm in the box to begin with – I see all the problems other people have.
- Doing my best to “cope” with others: This is simply another form of blaming. They are doing bad things, but I will cope with them.
- Leaving: I'll simply take my self-justifying ways and my problems with me.
- Communicating: I end up communicating all the things I'm blaming them for.
- Implementing new skills and techniques: These can be helpful, but if I'm still in the box they may simply provide me with more sophisticated ways to blame.
- Changing my behaviour, focusing on myself: Only changes what I do, in the box.

⁷John Gottman of the Gottman Institute, Washington State University.

“In the box, every change I can think of is just a change in my style of being in the box. I can change from arguing to kissing. I can change from ignoring someone to going out of my way to shower that person with attention. But whatever changes I think of in the box are changes I think of from within the box, and they are therefore just more of the box—which is the problem in the first place. Others remain objects to me.”⁸

In the end, the Arbinger Institute material is rather vague about how we actually change or “get out of the box”. It isn’t anything we *do* (in terms of new behaviour) that gets us out of the box. Breaking down self-deception begins when we use the experience of being “out of the box” with some people to reflect on our “in the box” relationships. Who can I spend time with and not feel defensive? Someone I view as a person and not an object? Someone I’m not blaming for things? In that space I can look more objectively at my own virtue, question how my distorted view of other people affects the way I respond to them, and admit the way I’m contributing to the problem. I start to see and get to know the other person as a person and not an object. Ultimately this is about developing what Daniel Goleman’s books have popularized as emotional intelligence.⁹ This is the ability to identify and understand our feelings, fears and motivations and to consider the intentions and desires of others.

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It might be that the only person you are “out of the box” with is God. If you aren’t blaming God, and feel safe and non-defensive, you might pray a prayer for self-awareness such as the words in Psalm 139:23-24 “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

⁸*Leadership and Self-Deception*, 139.

⁹Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More than IQ* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995)

Leaders at East Taieri can help each other to become more reflective and aware of self-deception by inviting team members we feel safe with to help us identify our blaming behaviour when we are criticising others to justify ourselves. This can be threatening. It will be most helpful when those we have invited to help us ask questions, rather than making statements. For example, they might help us ask:¹⁰

- What are that person's challenges, trials, burdens, and pains? This helps us to consider the person as a person and not just an object of blame.
- How am I (or we as a team) adding to these challenges, trials, burdens, and pains?
- In what ways have I (or our team) neglected or mistreated this person?
- In what ways are my better-than, I-deserve, worse-than, and must-be-seen-as behaviours obscuring the truth about others and myself and interfering with potential solutions?
- What am I feeling I should do for this person?

When I'm out of the box, I can see more clearly where I have appropriate opportunities to do something for people. That doesn't mean we become overwhelmed by trying to do everything for others. We have our own responsibilities to attend to.¹¹

This will help us to take risks without fear of people "blaming" us if things go wrong. When I'm out of the box toward someone, I don't need to justify myself and I can assess responsibility clearly. Holding them responsible for something that is actually their responsibility isn't trying to excuse my own role in the problem.

Family Systems Theory speaks of "the differentiation of self" as being "the ability to remain connected in relationship to significant people in our lives and yet not have our reactions and behavior determined by them."¹² The next chapter will use family systems theory to explore practical steps for personal transformation. Steps that will help us live reflective lives that are freer from self-deception.

¹⁰*The Anatomy of Peace*, 185.

¹¹*Leadership and Self-Deception*, 152

¹²Jim Herrington, Robert Creech, Trisha L. Taylor, *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Leadership Network Series, 2003), 18.

Chapter Three

*Leaders on
a Personal
Transformation
Journey*

Churches and families are living systems in which people interact. No man is an island. East Taieri can have qualified, competent, even brilliant people, but unless they are mature in Christ and continuing to grow through personal transformation, our relationships and life together will suffer. Conflict and behaviour resulting from self-deception will hinder our work and relationships.

How can our mission life together be healthier? How can we avoid unhealthy relationship triangles?

“The key is to work seriously on the disciplines required to become more emotionally mature; no gimmicks or techniques are going to effect change in the system. Change requires serious engagement in personal transformation. It is the transforming person, not the clever person with a bag of tricks, who affects the functioning of the system for the better.”¹

This shouldn't be a surprise. It has always been God's way to take “ordinary, unschooled people” and make them into leaders who impact the world. (Acts 4:13) Neil Cole argues from Luke 10:3-20 that the mission field or harvest field is where we should be looking for our future leaders. It is as the Seventy Two are sent out by Jesus and they enter a village that they sometimes find “people of peace” there. *“Perhaps instead of looking only at the local Bible institute for future leaders, we should look at the local bar with more interest... We need to be a band of madmen who welcome other madmen who need to belong to something that gives them purpose and makes them better for it.”*²

While the work of the Arbingner Institute is quite sparse on how people actually change to get “out of the box” of self-deception, the Christian tradition is not. We have centuries of experience of God's essential work in changing lives. *“Spiritual Formation in Christ is the process by which one moves and is moved from self-worship to Christ-centred self-denial as a general condition of life in God's present and eternal kingdom.”³*

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Transformation is not only the key for developing existing leaders, but also for developing people we meet who will become Christians and leaders in the future. “The impetus of a changed life provides the momentum of a movement. The transformed life is contagious, drawing others in and keeping us holding tightly to Jesus through thick and thin.”⁴

This transformation is related to self-deception as Herrington shows. “Personal transformation happens best as an inside-out process. This assertion may seem obvious, but we often seek to change our lives by focusing only on the external things demanding change; we blame other people when things do not go well.”⁵

¹Jim Herrington;Robert Creech;Trisha L. Taylor. *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation* (Jossey-Bass Leadership Network Series) (Kindle Locations 696-698). Kindle Edition.

²Neil Cole, *Organic Leadership: Leading Naturally Right Where You Are* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 138.

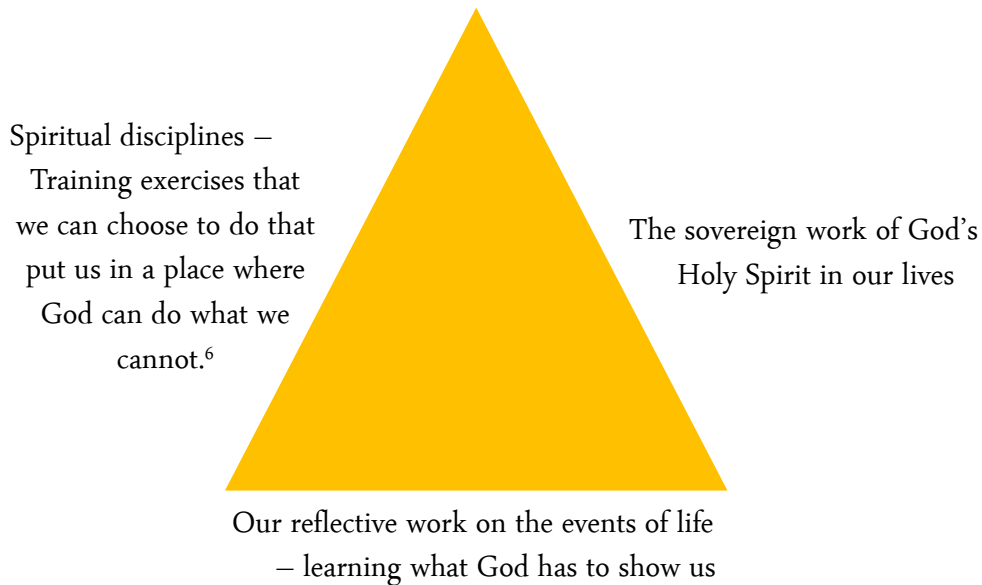
³Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 77.

⁴Cole, *Organic Leadership*, 138.

⁵Herrington, *The Leader's Journey*, (Kindle Locations 135-136)

God's work of personal transformation is not an easy path. It often occurs through suffering and trials. Transformation involves: obedience to the way of Christ, reflective living, and a supportive community of grace and truth. This has obvious parallels with Dallas Willard's golden triangle of spiritual formation which comprises:

The Golden Triangle of Spiritual Formation



It would be possible to mistakenly interpret Willard's triangle as individual activities, but properly understood, the Spirit's work, reflecting on life, and spiritual disciplines are not solitary activities. They function best in what Herrington describes as "a community of grace and truth".⁷ We can choose to incorporate such activities in our lives in order to reshape the way we relate to those we lead. They help us lead without controlling. They help us resist people's demands when they could compromise our vision or values.⁸

The health of any system is largely determined by two key variables: the emotional maturity of the people involved, especially the leaders; and the level of chronic anxiety. The greater the emotional maturity, the more chronic anxiety that can be managed.⁹

⁶Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988), 67.

⁷Herrington, *Leader's Journey*, Loc 156.

⁸Herrington, *Leader's Journey*, Loc 596.

⁹Herrington, *Leader's Journey*, Loc 422.

Herrington identifies four symptoms of Chronic Anxiety in a living system such as a congregation or a ministry team.¹⁰

1. Conflict:

People begin to insist on their way as the only way. Others disagree, anxiety rises and conflict increases. Sometimes we blame one person for the conflict. “If they would only leave all would be well.” Other times we treat the symptom and require everyone to undergo conflict management training. Both of these responses ignore the nature of the system, whose anxiety produces the conflict in the first place.

“The apostles took a systems approach in the conflict faced by the early church in Jerusalem. A system problem kept Hellenistic Jewish widows from being cared for, and conflict arose. Rather than dealing with the conflict and trying to get everyone just to communicate better, they restructured the system, putting seven Hellenists in charge of the ministry (Acts 6). The conflict was a symptom. The solution was in the system.”¹¹

2. Distancing:

As anxiety rises, people might avoid conflict, but withdraw emotionally, keeping the relationship peaceful but superficial. In extreme distancing, they might break off the relationship altogether.

“Distancing can show up in a church in many ways. Cold worship services, people falling through the cracks, prayer requests that seldom go beyond the superficial, a problem with retention of new members, passive-aggressive behavior of a church leader or staff member-these and a host of other behaviors may be evidence of a congregation dealing with its anxiety through distance and cutoff.”¹²

3. Overfunctioning or Underfunctioning:

This response to anxiety is where one person or group of people take on too much responsibility for others. In a financial crisis, most members might not give enough, but a small portion overfunctions, giving more than their share and so covering for the failure of others.

¹⁰Herrington, *Leader's Journey*, Loc 718.

¹¹Herrington, *Leader's Journey*, Loc 741-744.

¹²Herrington, *Leader's Journey*, Loc 754-756.

4. Projection:

The anxiety is projected onto another member of the system.

“Anxiety that might otherwise express itself as conflict between spouses, for example, is managed by projecting it upon a child. As tension increases in the home, Mom and Dad begin to observe, talk about, and worry over their son’s performance in school. They talk to him about it, and they worry over him. They also worry in the presence of his teacher, who then begins to see the child differently. The child grows anxious as these important people worry about him (who would not?) and loses a sense of competency. His grades drop, reinforcing his parents’ anxiety, his teacher’s opinion, and his sense of incompetency. The feedback system is in place. By this time, everyone has a part to play in keeping the symptom alive.”¹³

Edwin Friedman describes five ways humans function when their anxiety grows.¹⁴

1. **Heightened Level of Reactivity:** people react quickly, take things personally, interrupt each other, finish one another’s sentences. Playfulness and humour disappear, and everything becomes dire and serious.
2. **Herd Instinct:** People feel pressure to conform and radical ideas aren’t welcome.
“The system consistently chooses peace over progress, comfort over experimentation, and the security of the port over the adventure of the open seas. Black-and-white, all-or-nothing thinking marks the system.”¹⁵
3. **Blame Displacement:** The Blame Game keeps people looking at others and diagnosing their faults, rather than looking inward and taking responsibility for themselves.
4. **A Quick Fix:** Anxious people expect others to solve their problems and to do it now.
5. **Poor Leadership:** A highly anxious system lacks a leader who can operate with a clear vision and thoughtfully held principles, while remaining in relationship with those they lead.

The Leadership Challenge is to recognise anxiety for what it is, calmly take a more objective view, avoid counter-attacking when provoked, and courageously act on principles rather than react to pressure from others.

“Don’t pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults-unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. It’s easy to see a smudge on your neighbor’s face and be oblivious to the sneer on our own. Do you have the nerve to say, ‘Let me wash your face for you,’ when your own face is distorted by contempt? It’s this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor” (Matthew 7:1-2, The Message).

¹³Herrington, *Leader’s Journey*, Loc 778-783.

¹⁴Herrington, *Leader’s Journey*, Loc 783 summaries these.

¹⁵Herrington, *Leader’s Journey*, Loc 802-80).

Becoming a Calm Leader¹⁶

Each leader must develop their own personal strategies for lowering their own anxiety, gaining time and perspective that will allow a thoughtful response consistent with the groups vision and values.

We don't have to be non-anxious (that's impossible). We simply aim to be the least anxious person in the room. Imagine the intensity of the anxiety in the very public encounter with the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11). Yet Jesus listened. He reflected. He communicated his values with clarity.

Here are some suggestions:

Increase Your Self-Awareness

Find a few safe people you can ask for ongoing feedback about your behaviour. Learn to recognise where, with whom, and in what circumstances, and in what ways you become anxious.

Monitor Your Thinking Patterns

Your ways of thinking have been shaped by many influences in our fallen world. Some of your thinking patterns will be faulty and need to be changed. This isn't easy. First, identify the faulty thinking. Share your desire to change with a trusted person, asking them to gently and privately point out the faulty thinking when they see it. Identify stressful settings in which you are tempted to think in this way and practice the new way of thinking before you go into those settings.

Common ways of thinking that result from increased anxiety are:

- All-or-nothing thinking: you see things in black-and-white categories. For example, if your performance falls short of perfect, you're a failure.
- Overgeneralization: you see a single, negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
- Mental filter: you pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively, so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like a drop of ink that discolours a whole beaker of water.
- Disqualifying the positive: you reject positive experiences by insisting that they don't count for some reason or other.
- Jumping to conclusions: you make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion.
- Mind reading: you make assumptions about someone else's thoughts without bothering to find out what he or she is thinking.
- Fortune telling: you anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is a fact.
- Magnification or minimizing: you exaggerate the importance of negative things or inappropriately shrink positive things.

¹⁶Herrington Chapter 5

- Emotional reasoning: you assume that your emotions necessarily reflect how things really are ("I feel it, therefore it must be true").
- Should statements: you try to motivate yourself with "shoulds" and "shouldn'ts"; the emotional consequence of this is guilt.
- Labelling and mislabelling: instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself. If someone else rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to him. You use labelling language that is emotionally loaded.
- Personalization: you take things personally. You see yourself as the cause of things that in fact you are not primarily responsible for. You interpret things personally that may have nothing to do with you.

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom 12:2)

Manage Your Feelings:

Identify how you are feeling: mad, sad, glad or scared? Take responsibility for the feelings. Not denying them, or repressing them, or blaming someone else for them.

The Psalms can help you learn to express our feelings to God (e.g. Psalms 6, 23, 27, 31, and 64). That can help process the feelings and help you decide whether or not to share them in the relationship.

Slow the Pace:

- Build spiritual disciplines into daily life – especially prayer and solitude.
- Clarify an issue before responding.
- Breathe and count to ten.
- Wait to think before responding.
- Ask for time out.

Significant causes of anxiety can be our nuclear family and our family of origin. We need to apply systems thinking there also.

Progress is made as the Holy Spirit is at work through the spiritual disciplines we practice. We also need to recognise the importance of a “learning community”. We aren’t expected to do this on our own. Find people in the body of Christ who will work on this with you, ideally those in your leadership team.

Chapter Four

*The
Leader's
Character*

This is a difficult chapter because all leaders remain “fallen image-bearers” who harbour their share of brokenness and sin. The objective of this chapter is not condemnation and despair because no leader has the Christ-like character needed to lead. The objective is repentance, restoration, healing, and hope, because our Saviour who calls us has that character.

“The Bible is much more concerned about *who* a leader is than *what* a leader does. Why? New Testament leadership is about reflecting the character of *the* Leader and Shepherd of the flock, Jesus Christ.”¹

The ultimate goal of personal transformation described in the previous chapter is not that we might be effective leaders, but that we may be more like Christ. What are some biblical models of Christ-like leadership?

Servant Leaders

Actually it’s often a lot easier to put away the chairs after an event than it is to sit down and carefully evaluate what worked well, what didn’t and what we might need to do differently next time.”

Jesus’ reply to those who sought positions of importance was that he had come not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45) The PCANZ has long talked about Servant Mission Leadership. What does it mean to be a servant leader?

Brian Harris has helpfully pointed out three directions of service.²

First, the leader is to serve Christ who has called us. Second, we are to serve those we are called to

lead. This does not mean the leader must always wash all the dishes and put away all the chairs, though they may well help. “Deserting their leadership role to fulfil tasks that a hundred other people can perform is to abandon their duty – it serves the interests of no one... Actually it’s often a lot easier to put away the chairs after an event than it is to sit down and carefully evaluate what worked well, what didn’t and what we might need to do differently next time.”³

Third, leaders serve those who are lost. This is easily forgotten but is essential for missional leadership. Too often church life becomes oriented around those who already follow Christ. Those who are not yet convinced, perhaps not even seeking, are without a voice, and it is the leader’s task to serve them.

This third area of service helps maintain a proactive stance that takes mission courageous mission initiatives, rather than falling into the trap of being a chaplain only responding to the needs of the existing congregation. The Presbyterian Church of Aoteroa New Zealand has described the kind of leadership needed in the church today as Servant Mission Leadership⁴ Such leaders need more than leadership skills, they need Christ-like character.

¹Greg Ogden and Daniel Meyer, *Leadership Essentials* (Downers Grove: IVP Connect, 2007), 15.

²Brian Harris, *The Tortoise Usually Wins* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013), 20-24.

³Harris, *Tortoise Usually Wins*, 21.

⁴Policy Paper on Leadership for Mission from Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, “Policy Paper,” <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/national-ministries/national-mission/resources-for-mission/leadership-for-mission/policy-paper> (accessed July 10, 2014).

Leaders as Shepherds

Jesus was the good shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep. (John 10:11) The shepherd is there for the sake of the sheep. Biblical shepherds knew their sheep. This reminds leaders that there are not only tasks to be completed, but relationships to be built, and people to be nurtured and developed along the way.

We need to love those we are seeking to lead. Ask yourself: “Am I praying for them? Do I know their names? Am I aware of (at least some of) the issues they face? What do they hope they will become and how are we helping them take steps toward that?”

Leaders as Stewards

Part of the leader’s task is “overseeing Gods resources for the good of God’s work in the world.”⁵ Jesus told parables about good stewardship (Luke 12:42-46 and Matt 25:14-30). We want to make good use of the time, talents and money God has given us. Missional leaders cannot shy away from the task of helping people discover the kingdom resources God has for the mission they are called into.

Other Character Qualities

1. **Holiness:** Leadership tests character. Under pressure flaws often come to the fore. Yet we are to be holy in all we do just as the one who has called us is holy. (1 Peter 1:15)
2. **Perseverance:** Change often comes slowly amidst opposition, setbacks and disappointments. If leaders lack the tenacity to hang in there, they will do little more than daydream. Jim Collins describes perseverance in the consistent progress shown by Amundsen in his push to the South Pole. Every day they aimed to complete a 20 mile march. They both persevered day by day when conditions were bad, and they avoided over-extending themselves when conditions were good.⁶
3. **Restraint:** When emotions are running high, leaders need to be able to resist dumping on others or making an angry remark they will later regret. Sometimes restraint shows as the ability to say nothing, even when you know the answer, but it is not helpful for the development of others for you to voice it. Despite the scepticism of others, an event may have turned out well, but a leader with restraint can avoid saying “I told you so.”
4. **Trustworthiness:** People need to be able to trust leaders to behave consistently in different situations. How can we build such trust?⁷
 - Do what we say we will do, and don’t promise what we can’t.
 - Be open and honest about our mistakes and apologise.
 - Be there. Turning up regularly builds confidence.
 - Don’t speak badly of others behind their back. Would we copy the other person on the email we are about to send about them?
 - Learn to disagree without bloodshed.

⁵Harris, 28.

⁶Jim Collins, Great By Choice (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 39-67.

⁷Harris, 167

The challenges of this chapter turn us back to the need for ongoing personal transformation as discussed in the previous chapter.

Key behaviour that results from Christ-like character can be identified as the way we want to treat one another in a team setting. These are the team values, discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Values

Values describe how we want to behave as we serve alongside each other in God's mission.

Values aren't so much thought up, as identified. "This is the kind of team God has called us to be and this is how we have found we like to relate to one another." Good teams will have good strong leaders in them and adherence to the team values ensures good working relationships.

Values should be relatively simple. There seems little point in listing 10 values if no one can remember them.

Values are to function as a day to day check on behaviour. Each member of the team should feel free to challenge other members if they violate a team value.

The ET Ministry Team has the following values:

Trust:

We are 100% honest about things that affect our ministry and relationships within the team. This occurs within the safety of knowing we respect each other, keep each other's confidences, and have each other's backs, so we can be non-defensive in our interactions.

Encouragement:

We celebrate and enjoy ministry together, and positively encourage each other on to good things in ministry and in our own growth in Christ. We support each other and own one another's ministries.

Grace:

We look for the best in each other, working with each other's God-given strengths, while facing up to mistakes and failures, and forgiving each other.

It is not expected that all other teams at East Taieri will have exactly the same values, but they should not be in conflict with these three.



Chapter Six

Vision
and
Strategy

*One people in mission for
God's glory.
Growing in Christ and making
him known in love through
word, sign and deed.
Because all people matter to
God.*

Our East Taieri Church Mission statement describes our purpose – why we are here.

One people in mission for God's glory...

*Growing in Christ and making him known in love through
word, sign and deed...*

Because all people matter to God.

Vision answers the question: Where are we going? It describes our ideal picture of the future of East Taieri Church. A strategic plan describes the particular things we will prioritise to achieve our vision. The strategic direction will include some overall goals, 5 year objectives and strategic actions we will take to get things underway.

Each team at East Taieri must clarify their vision for the future, identifying how they are contributing to the overall mission of East Taieri Church, and what strategies they are using.

The overall vision and strategic plan is not intended to stifle organic mission initiatives or restrict or control people. Chapter seven shows the way that vision and strategy can contribute to empowering people in mission by establishing appropriate boundaries.

Clarifying vision for a team is a consultative process involving team members, but leaders of the teams need to lead the way.

Where does vision come from?

The traditional “Great Man” leadership model assumes that leaders use their intrinsic abilities and power to discern the vision and direction, and then communicate it to people who duly catch the vision and follow along. I have already rehearsed the flaws of the “Great Man” model in chapter 1. We clearly cannot simply revert to this model when it comes to vision. It leaves congregations dependant on a key leader for discerning their future direction. What happens when the leader goes? What if the leader isn’t visionary, or gets it wrong? Now, leaders clearly have a key role in writing down the vision and communicating the vision, but they don’t need to be the one who sees it before the rest of the congregation. “It is not the pastor's job to announce the last word (the vision and goals); rather, the pastor is called to announce the first word (God's) and to foster a conversation where people own, process, and apply the word to the lives and mission in which they participate.”¹

Daubert goes on to argue that vision isn’t so much about seeing forward in time to a preferred future as it is about the direction of looking - outward to where God is at work in mission.² Leaders in a missional church need to equip each member to serve as missionaries in the various places they serve every week. This means they must be able to look out, and not just forward in time, to see what it means for the reign of Jesus as king to be present now, in anticipation of the fullness of the kingdom to come at the end of the age. This is being visionary in their daily setting.

In the post-Pentecost church we should expect “young men to be seeing visions and old men to be dreaming dreams”. All are equipped by the Holy Spirit and called into the mission of God. All should be involved in discerning the vision God has for us as they participate in the things God is doing each day.

Many people feel inadequate when it comes to writing vision, but it is something we can all develop. Imagine your ideal holiday. Everyone can do this. Everyone is involved in mission life as they go to work or school, or take part in the life of their community. If we truly believe that God is at work in those settings, we simply need to get better at recognising what God is doing, and then discerning what the our missional community’s role in that is to be. This is what East Taieri Elders and Ministry Leadership Team have sought to address using the discernment process Ruth Haley Barton outlines.³ It helps keep us focused on looking for what God is saying and doing rather than looking for our own good ideas.

We should expect
“young men to be
seeing visions and
old men to be
dreaming dreams”

¹Dave Daubert, “Vision-Discerning vs. Vision-Casting: How Shared Vision Can Raise Up Communities of Leaders Rather than Mere Leaders of Communities” in *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation: Helping Congregations Develop Leadership Capacity*, ed. Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009)(Kindle Locations 1714-1716). Kindle Edition.

²Daubert, “Vision-Discerning”, Kindle Loc 1700.

³Ruth Haley Barton, *Pursuing God’s Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012).

Vision comes from many sources:

- Sometimes it comes directly from God, particularly through the Scriptures, but corporate prayer and prophetic words are also important.
- Through engaging our community and talking with the people of God.
- We can grasp vision from key people we meet who inspire us and help us reflect on our call. Other Christians who work in a similar vocation are often inspirational. This is a key part of the value of groups such as Christian Medical Fellowship.
- Through reading. Read the stories of other ministries, missionary biographies, etc. Include books from another era such as Rowland Allen's *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It*.
- Through visiting other places and seeing what God is doing there. East Taieri has found it helpful visiting churches such as Spreydon Baptist and Hope Presbyterian.

Don't make it too wordy. Keep it less than one page. Summary phrases as rallying cries are helpful. "All people matter to God" from our mission statement has functioned like that, along with yearly themes such as: "Blessed to be a Blessing"; "Called on By God Together"; and "Making Space for the Gospel".

Christians should not be paralysed if they do not have a clear vision provided for them from the leader. We have an overall sense of purpose expressed in our mission statement. We have some guiding principles from the Bible that define for us boundaries within which we can serve. We simply engage our community asking: "What is God doing and how has God gifted me to help?" Anyone can ask that question. The only additional question needed for maturing people of faith to become leaders is: "Whom can I get to accompany me and help me in this work?"⁴

Communicating the Vision:

We usually under communicate or sometimes send mixed messages. Bringing others on board is the biggest challenge and it is an ongoing challenge. It always begins with helping people understand our current reality and why "we can't stay here". Unless people grasp the problem with where we are, they aren't interested in a vision for a different future.⁵

Vision leaks. We need to keep reminding people of why we are here and where we are going. Cast the vision from the pulpit, in newsletters on the website and on blogs, in team meetings and in one on one conversations.

⁴Daubert, "Vision-Discerning", Kindle Loc 1840

⁵Bill Hybels has an excellent talk in the Global Leadership Summit 2010 called "From Here to There". (Available from Martin's office)

Some Key Elements in the Effective Communication of Vision

- ***Give and Take:*** Listen and be listened to.
- ***Simplicity:*** Keep it clear and simple so the vision is understood and remembered. Eliminate jargon and technobabble.
- ***Context:*** Connect it to the past, present and future. People won't reach for the future until they have touched the past. Those who weren't there at the beginning, will get a sense of security, while those who were there gain a sense of value.
- ***Metaphor, analogy, and example:*** A verbal picture is worth a thousand words.
- ***Stories:*** Tell stories to bring relationship and warmth to the vision and celebrate steps along the way. Principles fade, but stories are memorable.
- ***Multiple Forums:*** Big meetings, and small, memos and newspapers, formal and informal interaction - all are effective for spreading the word.
- ***Repetition:*** Especially by senior leaders including references to the vision in their everyday conversations and interactions. Ideas sink in deeply only after they have been heard many times.
- ***Honest explanation of problems and seeming inconsistencies:*** We tend to cover-up problems and mistakes in order to maintain confidence and momentum. But speaking about the problems (and our problems & weaknesses) shows people that we are realistic about today and so realistic about tomorrow. Unaddressed inconsistencies undermine the credibility of all communication. If you can't eliminate a mixed signal, explain why, simply and honestly.
- ***Purpose:*** Explain how the vision gives purpose and direction to everything we do.
- ***Defined goals:*** Expressing goals and strategy make the vision real and attainable. This stops a vision being mushy. Goals are the stepping stones to the vision.
- ***Challenge:*** Call people to be involved and give them a variety of ways. This will inspire those who are committed and unsettle those who are comfortable.
- ***Passion:*** This brings fuel to the vision and shows people you are committed.
- ***Urgency:*** This sounds the starting gun. "As of tonight", "starting now".
- ***Conclusion:*** Wrap up with heart and hope. Look forward to the celebration in five years time.
- ***Leadership by example:*** Walk the Talk. Behaviour from important people that is inconsistent with the vision overwhelms other forms of communication.

A young Bill Hybels provides a helpful example of casting vision at one of Willow Creek Community Church's "vision nights" although this is more traditional church and "Great Man" leadership, rather than missional leadership.⁶

John Kotter identifies eight stages in the process of leading change that overlap with this discussion of vision and strategy:

1. **Establish a Sense of Urgency:**
This connects with Hybels' "we can't stay here". Kotter writes, "Creating a strong sense of urgency usually demands bold or even risky actions that we normally associate with good leadership. A few modest activities, like the customer panel at the annual management meeting, usually fail in the face of the overwhelmingly powerful forces fueling complacency."⁷
2. **Gather a Guiding Team.** Don't go it alone, get a team around you. It may well *not* be an existing committee.
3. **Develop a Vision and a Strategy**
4. **Communicate the Vision** (as above)
5. **Empower others to act** (see chapter seven)
6. **Produce Short-Term Wins.** These need to be visible, unambiguous and clearly related to the change effort.
7. **Don't Ease Up.** Press harder and faster after the first successes.
8. **Anchor the Change in Your Culture:** Hold on to the new ways of behaving, and make sure they succeed, until they become strong enough to replace old traditions and hidden values.

⁶Bill Hybels, *Casting a Courageous Vision* (DVD, Willow Creek Association). This is available in Martin's office. Hybels expressed appreciation for the Willow leadership and congregation. He acknowledged the many hours of meetings, asking hard questions, and looking ahead to the next 5 years (not 20 years). The second part of the DVD shows John Maxwell analysing Hybels' vision cast.

⁷John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 43. Kotter has also written an entertaining short fable about penguins working through this change process. John Kotter and Holger Rathgeber, *Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions* (London: MacMillan, 2006)



Chapter Seven

*Empowering
People in God's
Mission*

When we wrestle with a shortage of future leaders, we need to question where we are looking and how we are recruiting. We often look for leaders within East Taieri Church. This has the advantage that people already know our culture and we know them. However, this doesn't seem to be providing sufficient leaders. We have recruited leaders from Bible Colleges, or from other churches, and employed them on our staff ministry team. This brought us some excellent leaders, but it hasn't always been successful. It also has the inherent danger of unintentionally communicating that "ministry is to be done by the professionals (on staff), and not be the lay people." At East Taieri Church we want to see everyone empowered to participate in the mission of God. There are good reasons for this:

We can't let people sell themselves and the church short, by simply coming along to receive as passive observers.

The example of Jesus as a servant mission leader who recruited and empowered a team to serve others. (John 13:12-17; Phil 2:3-8; Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:8)

This challenges the consumer mentality of our day. We can't let people sell themselves and the church short, by simply coming along to receive as passive observers.

"It must break God's heart when people come to church with a consumer mindset, content to eat and run. "Serve me," they say. "Teach me. Pray for me. Fix my kids. Counsel my spouse. And if you don't do all of this up to my standards, I'll go down the street and see if another church will pay better attention to me." I've learned that you can't possibly build a God-honouring church with a congregation full of consumers. Neither can you build a God-honouring church without teachers, leaders, and pastors committed to equipping."

- **It is God's Strategy and for God's Glory** (Ephesians 2:4-10; 3:20-21; 4:11-16)
- **It is the best way to foster Spiritual Growth in Those Who Serve**
- **We need each other** – None of us has all the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12, Rom 12)
- **So that God's Mission Prospers**, and a few people don't become bottlenecks.
 - In existing ministries. After observing that Moses was struggling to act as judge for all of Israel, Jethro advised Moses to share the load! Ex 18:17-23.
 - In planting new ministries. While we need to be wise about what we start and what we stop, new kingdom ministries require new people. In fact, mission occurs when God's people have the missional imagination to notice the things that God is doing and join in.
- **Because the Harvest is Plentiful, but the Workers are Few**

Jesus instructs his disciples in Matt 9:35-38 to pray for workers. "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

- **Because it brings a sense of Belonging**

This is true for Christians in church. It is also increasingly true for those still exploring Jesus. So often belonging precedes believing.

¹Bill Hybels, *The Volunteer Revolution* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 63.

Helping People to Participate in God's Mission

Alan Roxburgh argues that the core strategy of church leadership is to foster the missional imagination of the congregation.² At East Taieri Church we want to take a missional stance that seeks to empower people to notice what God is doing in mission and to join in. This will involve people having permission to experiment with new things and follow God's leading and their passion in creative ways. This is contrary to the usual mindset of seeking recruits to fill various ministry "vacancies" in the church. This is a "both/and" issue in that there are some ministry roles that need to be carried out in a church of our size and structure. If we are going to gather for Sunday worship we need people who can preach and lead worship. However, we do seek to ask the missional question and help people discover what God is calling them to do during the week in their homes, workplaces and communities. When the Network Course is used properly, it begins with the person and finishes with possible ministry areas, rather than beginning with a ministry vacancy and hunting a warm body to fill it.

Sometimes we are reluctant to talk to people about participating in God's mission because we think they are too busy, or not really interested. I remember a wise elder once telling me, "Don't say people's 'no' for them. Let them say 'no.'"

"If you ask the average volunteer why he or she started serving at a particular time in a particular place, most will shrug their shoulders and say, "Because someone asked me."

*I believe that in churches all over the world there are people who love God, the church, and other people but have never crossed the line into intentional servanthood simply because no one has ever asked them to."*³

²Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 151.

³Hybels, *Volunteer Revolution*, 105.

How do we go about asking people?¹

Set the Scene

- It is important that you provide a context for the discussion that is about to take place. Let the person know why you are there and what you hope to gain from the conversation.
- We want to support you in following God's call on your life. What do you believe God is calling you to do in mission (at home, at work, at school, in the community, at church)
- (If the person isn't sure): We would like to help you discover more about what God is calling you to. We have some resources about "noticing" what God is doing. Would you like to explore those? Have you ever done Network? Is there a ministry you would like to explore?

If there is a specific role we are looking for someone for:

- We are looking at recruiting some new volunteers (people) for Children's Ministry/Mainly Music Ministry... Briefly cast the vision for what this ministry is doing.
- Your name came up as someone who would be skilled at working in this area and we wanted to talk with you about the opportunities that exist.
- Would you have some time to meet now (or in the near future, set a time and place and keep it)

Create the right kind of environment

It is important that you find an appropriate place to meet with the individual. Some conversations would be considered confidential and so the right environment is critical in order to protect that privacy, but even conversations that are not considered confidential may require some sensitivity in order to allow the person the opportunity to reflect and consider without being overheard by others.

- Choose a private location.
- Arrange for tea or coffee if appropriate. It also keeps things relaxed and helps you get to know them better.
- Ask if you can take notes if you will need to.
- Indicate if you have some specific questions to ask or if you just want to explore some options.
- Share a copy of the ministry description for the position(s) in question and allow time to read through and reflect on the details.
- Cast a vision for the ministry being discussed so that the person can grasp the kingdom impact of this ministry.
- Describe the support and training that can be expected when serving in the ministry being discussed.
- Ask if they have any questions.
- When we have asked someone, don't be afraid to let the silence come and leave them to speak next. Don't answer for them.

¹This process is based on work done with Sharon Searle as part of developing an Administration and Leadership Manual for St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Katikati, New Zealand, 2007.

Questions

Ask open ended questions using “what”, “when”, “where”, “why”, and “how”.

Questions commencing with “Do you”, “Have you”, etc., tend to get a “yes” or “no” response.

Examples:

- What other Ministries have you been serving in?
- Have you considered how you might like to use your skills, experience and talents here at East Taieri – in the church or in your neighbourhood?
- How would you see yourself best fitting in with this Ministry?
- Where would you see yourself best serving at East Taieri?
- Why do you feel this isn't an appropriate Ministry for you (if they seem negative)?
- What time commitment would you be willing to make?
- When would you be available? To start? Duration?
- What further information could I provide you to help with your decision?

Closure

Determine the next steps. If the person has expressed interest, clarify the process that needs to be followed or identify who the decision makers are if it is not you. There may be an application process or police checks required. You should be aware of these requirements before your discussion, so that you can be clear in your communication of expectations.

The person may not be interested at this time. Don't feel rejected; determine what the barriers are and how they might be overcome.

- If not available now, when could you be available? When would be a good time for me to follow up with you?
- If not interested in this opportunity, what other areas might interest you and why? Can I have someone follow up with you? (Remember we are serving our Lord ultimately and the good of the greater Kingdom of God)

Empowering People

Leadership is not about controlling people and ministries, but about empowering them to get on with it. Our objective is to see everyone running after Jesus, worshipping God and enjoying being part of God's mission, serving others in fulfilling ways.

East Taieri has a heritage of team ministry, but teams need to be well led, and team members need to be empowered, otherwise they are only "helping the leader by carrying out tasks".

How can we empower individuals and teams more? Empowerment can be a buzz word that actually doesn't mean much. How do we actually achieve it?

- 1. The First Key Strategy of Empowerment is: We need to *share information* with everyone so they have the information they need to make good decisions, set appropriate priorities, monitor progress, and act responsibly.**

This information includes Biblical/Theological concepts. For example, if people aren't aware of the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the gifts He gives, they won't be experiencing His power at work through them. If people don't have an appreciation that the wages of sin are death, they won't be motivated in sharing the free gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. If people aren't aware of the spiritual practices of prayer, study, solitude, silence, fasting, worship, giving, celebration,... then they won't be empowered for growing to be more like Christ and being a vital member of the body of Christ. If people aren't aware of ways of reflecting biblically and theologically on the events of life, they are less equipped to learn what God is showing them every day.

The information to be shared includes details of the financial resources of the church, mission vision and strategic planning and budgeting. Sharing information communicates that we trust people with that information.

Other information includes the perennial challenge of communicating what programmes and resources are available to be used in the mission of God. For example, a young person cannot join a small group bible study if he or she doesn't know it is happening.

*"People without information cannot act responsibly.
People with information are compelled to act responsibly."*⁴

⁴Ken Blanchard, John P. Carlos, Alan Randolph, *Empowerment Takes More Than A Minute* (San Francisco: Berrett Koehler, 1996), 34.

2. **A Second Key Strategy of Empowerment is: We need to *create autonomy through boundaries.***

“Boundaries have the capacity to channel energy in a certain direction.”⁵

Our primary source of boundaries is clearly the Bible as it reveals God and God’s ways to us. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.” (Ps 119:105) We need to be real about the difficulties of interpreting and applying the Bible to life today, but some biblical boundaries are clear (and so probably don’t need to be included in a list of values).

- We will love God and seek to help others love God also.
- We will express our devotion and dependence on God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit by being constant in prayer.
- We will love and forgive others as Christ loved and forgave us.
- We will be honest in our dealings with all people.
- We will put the interests of others ahead of our own, seeking to serve and not be served, giving our whole selves as living sacrifices, an offering of worship.

Part of empowerment is being led by the Holy Spirit. Acknowledging the Lordship of the Spirit creates both freedom and boundaries. However, we all know situations where people have been convinced they were being led to do something that clearly wasn’t the Spirit’s leading. Prophetic words, inner convictions of the Spirit and other forms of directive guidance need to be tested in Christian community and with church leadership. This is not easy to do without people feeling like they are being controlled.

People can also feel controlled when leaders set other helpful boundaries such as Mission, Vision and Values statements (creating the big picture), and Strategy, Goals, Roles and Organisational Structure and Systems (create the week to week picture). Being clear about these boundaries can create a direction and framework within which people are free to carry out the mission and ministry they are gifted for and passionate about. As much as possible we aim to involve a wide group of people in developing the vision and goals so people have ownership and understanding. We also want to avoid our structures, systems and policies becoming long lists of what people *can’t* do.

“Reality often dictated that leaders had to be involved in setting limits. This meant that our leadership needed to learn to take the staff’s point of view. The person being limited had to be involved in understanding and setting the limits, so he or she didn’t feel controlled or manipulated by them.”⁶

⁵Blanchard, *Empowerment*, 40.

⁶Rob Lebow and Randy Spitzer, *Accountability: Freedom and Responsibility Without Control* (San Francisco: Berrett Koehler, 2002), 118.

Mission: What are we here for? What is our purpose?

Vision: Where are we going? What is our ideal picture of the future of East Taieri?

Values: What are our operational guidelines? How do we want to behave as we are working toward our vision?

Strategy: What particular things will we prioritise to achieve our vision?

Goals: What, when, where and how will we take steps in the strategy?

Roles: Who does what? Each piece of the jigsaw puzzle that contributes to the big picture.

Organisational Structure and Systems: How do we support what we want to do? Are there safety or legal requirements that need to be met?

We need to communicate vision, values and roles well.

Vision leaks, so we need to communicate it over and over again. People don't attend services every week, so we need to communicate vision in many different ways: from the pulpit, in the bulletin, through small groups, on blogs and websites. As part of this communication we mustn't forget to listen.

Team members need to put values into practice and hold each other accountable to them. Roles need to be clear and fair.

"People will never be empowered if they're not sure what their job is. Is it maintenance tasks, or is it end results?"⁷

"Vision comes alive when everyone sees where his or her contribution makes a difference."⁸

3. A Third Key Strategy of Empowerment is to: *Replace Hierarchical Thinking with Empowered Teams.*

Sometimes people and teams at ET look to their leader or to the senior pastor or to the elders and say, "They need to tell us what to do." If leaders haven't adequately clarified and communicated vision or strategy and priorities, then this needs to be done. But, otherwise, this kind of hierarchical thinking can disempower teams. For example, it could prevent R4M working on actively resourcing bigger picture priorities if they only react to maintenance needs.

⁷Blanchard, *Empowerment*, 47.

⁸Blanchard, *Empowerment*, 49.

Vision leaks,
so we need to
communicate it
over and over
again.

“We completely discarded the popular notion of a strong leader as someone who sticks to his guns, a commanding-general/godlike figure, someone to be revered and feared.”⁹

We are generally weak at teamwork in New Zealand churches. All team members need to grow in team skills and put their team values into practice. These skills include how to make decisions as a team, managing conflict, running effective meetings and problem solving.

Good decision-making requires reports and background information to be communicated with the agenda ahead of a team meeting. The boundaries within which the team is empowered to operate need to be clear to everyone. There is no point in spending a lot of time on making a decision if the team doesn't have the authority to make that decision. The Council of Elders, R4M and SHFT are comprised of elected officers. Strictly speaking decisions are made in these meetings by voting. Meetings are more effective if the person responsible for an issue provides the meeting with a written recommendation that can be moved, seconded, discussed and voted on. This gives the person who is to action the decision the authority of Session, R4M or SHFT to take action. If the person needs freedom to act, they can be empowered with that freedom within appropriate boundaries.

Other leadership teams such as the Ministry Leadership Team are not elected officers, but usually make decisions through consensus. Consensus doesn't mean everyone agrees, but that those who disagree are prepared to go with the majority view for the sake of the mission of the team. On occasions when no consensus has formed, and yet a decision needs to be made there and then, the leader of the team will weigh what has been said and make the call.

⁹Lebow and Spitzer, 124.

Meetings need to be well managed. Leaders spend a lot of time in meetings. We need to make sure this time is well used.

A ‘top ten’ checklist for meetings is:¹⁰

1. Is the purpose of the meeting clear? What decisions need to be made? What communication needs to occur? What level of personal interaction is expected? Don't meet if there is no need to meet.
2. Are the right people in the room? Don't waste people's time by having them there if they don't need to be. On the other hand, ensure everyone who needs to give input is there.
3. Send out invitations and the agenda in advance. If there are priority items, highlight them. Attach all necessary progress updates, reports, background information and recommendations.
4. Set a definite start and end time and stick to it. If you start late and six people wait ten minutes you've wasted an hour.
5. Train the chairperson so they can be pleasantly firm, ensuring that matters get a fair hearing, while covering the agenda. The chair needs to ensure everyone contributes and no one dominates or plays trump cards that stop others voicing their view. Listen for the lone voice that God may be using to guide discernment.
6. Take time to pray at appropriate points.
7. Ensure accurate minutes are taken, including decisions clearly recorded and action items listed with the person responsible, timeframe, and any resources allocated. Aim to distribute minutes the day of the meeting wherever possible.
8. Progress Updates on actions should be circulated with the agenda under matters arising. These should be real updates and not just the title of the issue.
9. If significant conflict occurs, the chair needs to ensure the conflict is named and doesn't become the "elephant in the room". The chair must decide if the conflict can be worked through there and then, or whether that issue needs to be parked to allow people to cool down and be revisited later. Check in with people at the end of the meeting. Is everyone OK? "People can be asked how they are feeling after a meeting and to give a rating of 1 (flattened), 2 (fine), 3 (delighted). A single 1 might be reason for the group to take some time to explore why, or the leader might follow through on it; several 1s should result in time for relationship building being prioritised."¹¹
10. Does the team have a means of reviewing a decision they made in the meeting? New information may come to light, or circumstances may change. While we don't want to second-guess our decisions all the time, we also don't want teams locked into a decision that is obviously flawed. In the absence of a process, individuals might simply abandon the team's decision without consulting the team, becoming a lone ranger. If called to account, they might simply protest, "but it was obvious it wasn't working."

¹⁰Adapted from Brian Harris, *The Tortoise Usually Wins*, 158-160

¹¹Brian Harris, *Tortoise*, 142.

Appendix One: Leadership in New Missional Ventures

I interviewed three people involved in new missional ventures:

Steve Drinkall works for the Church of Christ Queensland establishing a network of missional ventures of all kinds of denominations, encouraging and supporting their leaders.

Scott Guyatt works for the Uniting Church Queensland Synod as their Project Officer for Mission Engagement.

Phil Smith is the pastor of a new missional community in Coloundra, Queensland called BELLS, a BBQ church which meets once a fortnight at 5pm on a Sunday evening in a large school in a rapidly growing new housing district. See Appendix 2 for information about BELLS from their website.

Steve Drinkall, “Pathway” – Holland Park, Brisbane — stvedrinkall@gmail.com

Pathway is a missional church Steve established that meets in people’s homes (mostly his). Steve is employed by the Church of Christ to be a part of the missional church movement, learning lessons and giving support to missional leaders regardless of their denomination. (see <http://ourpathway.com/>)

When asked what Pathway is, Steve has explained that it is “simply a collective of ordinary local people who were trying to take Jesus seriously by living out the common stereotypes of Monks, Cheerleaders and Activists.”

“When you think of a Monk you think of someone who is devoutly chasing after God. You think of someone who believes that God can be known personally and is prepared to discipline themselves to finding and relating to that God. At Pathway we encourage people to chase after God, to see if he can be known personally and to dare to explore what he might want of us. We encourage the Monk in people. But we are also a community who values Cheerleaders. We think it desirable that people chasing after God should play a part in encouraging others on the road. The Pathway collective should really be a place where those seeking God can both cheer and be cheered on by others who have walked before them and even picked up by others when they falter and fall. It is an individual race but is also a team effort. Finally we suggest that Jesus very words and actions showed that he was deeply committed to putting the world back together, one life at a time. At Pathway, we don’t believe that God is fatalistic about the world he created but that he is a God who is busy reconciling people back to himself and back to each other. God is still desiring that our shattered world be put back together. We understand that to mean, putting food in the stomachs of starving kids, lifting the spirits of those with broken hearts, advocating for those without a voice and even building communities by helping to shovel sand. Pathway encourages people to search their own circle of influence to find a place where they can be active in putting the world back together. We may all go in different directions but we strive to be educated activists like Jesus.”

Pathway has grown primarily by friends inviting friends. I asked Steve what discipleship and spiritual growth look like for Pathway. He described the way people would invite one another to do “A Big Year”. This is effectively a twelve month discipleship curriculum that goes through twelve key behaviours of disciples. They aim to take Jesus at his word and try living his WAY. People do this in small groups of friends or workmates. Each month, nine challenges or activities are published, three for each category of monks, cheerleaders and activists. People choose which challenges they will attempt. The approach is to “act our way into a new way of thinking” rather than “think our way into a new way of acting.” This is opposite to the way most church ministry and programmes work by trying to change people’s thinking first and hope that new behaviour will result. A website <http://www.abigyear.net/> and a smartphone application have been developed.

The missional church network Steve described is a sending movement rather than a gathering movement. The key role of leaders in this movement is to help people discover what God is calling them to do. This contrasts with a more traditional church where leaders spend significant amounts of time recruiting people to carry out tasks necessary to keep the church functioning.

Pathway appoints a leadership team which they call “the brains trust” at the start of each year. They involve a large proportion of people in leadership by asking “who wants to take a lead for a year?” They might also have different people or families taking the theme for the month. This helps involve the whole body of Christ in God’s mission. Their church meets in someone’s home once a fortnight. It ends each year in December. After the summer holidays people are asked “Who wants to sign up to be church with these people for this year?” This helps renew and revitalise their vision. It does have an inherent danger that it could be seen as promoting a low level of commitment to the community. If someone didn’t feel like being part of this group of Christians, they would simply opt out at the end of the year.

Scott Guyatt and “Seeds of Hope” Uniting Church of Australia:

Scott and UCA leadership realise the desperate need for new, innovative, missional church plants. Many UCA churches are small and elderly with little mission vision.

They have identified key qualities of effective church planters and these are included as Appendix 3. This provides a very effective checklist. Planting a missional church places high demands on leaders. The only negative of having highly committed and competent church planters is the leader can be seen as the one who carries the day and must make things happen. Scott recognised this while in leading a missional community that met in their home. He recognised that the leader of the group must empower others in God’s mission. Their missional community had a constantly evolving leadership group. Every six months one person would step down. I asked Scott if this caused tension if new leaders didn’t keep the standards set by earlier leaders. This hadn’t been an issue as by and large they had quality people.

Most missional communities are small and don’t have paid staff. The experience in the Uniting Church was that when seed funding was provided to enable staffing, the missional community hadn’t usually survived after the seed funding finished. Scott recognised the need for many years of outside funding to establish a new work.

The Uniting Church has officially made room in their polity for faith communities that aren't "congregations" with "members". These faith communities can't call ministers but are part of the Presbytery and have approval for the sacraments.

When asked how they have sought to keep focused on outward mission to the community and involve the whole body of Christ, ensuring all the work doesn't fall on the key few, Scott made the following points. The story of the missional community must be constantly retold. They rehearse why they started in the first place and why they exist today. They refuse to let the community settle. The constantly changing leadership team helped with that. They sought to keep the excitement moving on, and avoid the typical S life cycle curve of organisations from Man to Movement to Machine to Monument.

Mission questions that they sought to keep before people constantly and help them answer are:

"Who is God?" [This is both a knowledge and experiential question]

"What is God up to in the neighbourhood (in the part of the world I have access to)?" [This is a noticing question.]

"How do I join in?" [This is a discernment question, which must include corporate discernment as well as individual discernment.]

Scott used the special imagery of "In, Out, Up, and Part of something more than ourselves".

The missional communities he had contact with had often met in people's homes and seemed less like traditional church than BELLS. One had "banned" singing and developed different rhythms of Christians spending time with people (some of whom would not be Christians). Such rhythms included a playgroup focused around the Mums, a cycling group, a community garden.

Scott had appreciated contact with the UK Fresh Expressions movement which has recently reported on the state of the movement after ten years of having formal shape and recognition. Significant conversion growth has occurred and although these communities can come and go, some are here to stay. The UCA has negotiated with Fresh Expressions to use the 24 week Mission Shaped Ministry course in Australia to train missional leaders. Scott offered the following connections and resources:

Dave Male (UK) at the Anglican Centre for Pioneer Learning. His personal blog at <http://davemale.typepad.com/churchunplugged/> is a goldmine of material around pioneering leadership and fresh expressions. Dave can be contacted at dm432@cam.ac.uk Dave would have good advice about study plans in UK exploring discipleship/mission/missional community nexus. Dave has made regular trips to Australia.

<http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/> is the UK Fresh Expressions website packed with news etc from around the UK. It also has the Mission Shaped Ministry and Mission Shaped Introduction courses (24 & 6 sessions respectively) under the "Training" tab. If you follow the links it takes you to <http://course.missionshapedministry.org/> where you can register (free) and download the MSI 6-session course (free).

Scott has written about his own travel to the UK, where he visited various fresh expressions. On the importance of loitering with intent: <http://blogs.victas.uca.org.au/tasmission/2010/11/09/oxygen-1-on-the-importance-of-loitering-with-intent/>

On the topic of pioneering: <http://blogs.victas.uca.org.au/tasmission/2010/11/26/oxygen-2-the-pioneer-questions/>

On Jesus as Pioneer: <http://blogs.victas.uca.org.au/tasmission/2010/12/02/oxygen-3-jesus-the-pioneer/>

Daily Reflections Day 1-6: <http://blogs.victas.uca.org.au/tasmission/2010/08/>

Daily Reflections Day 7-10: <http://blogs.victas.uca.org.au/tasmission/2010/09/>

Scott has had helpful contact with Phil McCredden who is the pastor from Northern Communities Church of Christ (Melbourne). Phil now leads “Ecclesia Consulting”.

BELLS BBQ church in the new housing development called Bells Reach, Coloundra:

Phil Smith is the one who initiates almost everything at BELLS. They have some musicians, and people who contribute hospitality, and people willing to help with elements of worship such as readings and prayers, but Phil is the chief organiser. Phil is an outstanding preacher and communicator with a background in Radio broadcasting. He opens the Scriptures in a relaxed casual way that connects with the people coming to BELLS. Phil has accepted a call to serve as BELLS half-time pastor. He will effectively be paid for doing what he has been doing voluntarily, although they hope to increase the frequency of BELLS meetings from once a fortnight to weekly. Phil sees a big part of his role as providing the learning content and organising Sunday worship. He also sees a key part of his role as spending time in this new community and knocking on doors. The pastoral relationships within BELLS are growing and people are caring for each other, so Phil doesn't need to focus on this.

Phil also works half time as a school chaplain or “campus minister” at Unity College, Bells Reach, Coloundra. This is an ecumenical school embracing the Catholic and Uniting Church traditions. Phil doesn't see his two half time roles as needing to be divided up in a strict hours or days basis because his ministry in the school and in BELLS overlap so much.

Phil's spouse Kaylene is very involved at Phil's side. When we visited they were in the process of renting their home in North Brisbane and moving into a rented property in the Bells Reach subdivision. This will involve Kaylene commuting back to North Brisbane for her work.

Phil realises that he will need to concentrate on developing and equipping new leaders. They are aware that BELLS will need to grow (in some way) as the new housing development is planned to house 55,000 people by 2040. The Unity College roll is already over 1200 students. In addition to Phil, the school also has a half time catholic chaplain. The school are very supportive of BELLS. They provide a location for the Sunday BELLS gathering, and advertise BELLS in their newsletter and on their school website on the campus minister's page. The company who are developing the huge Bells Reach subdivision regard BELLS as the local church and have invited them to lead various community initiatives including welcoming new people to the area.

BELLS is formally part of the Uniting Church as a Presbytery faith community, under the Uniting Church of Coloundra. The Coloundra church is small with an average age of 67 years. They are supportive of BELLS. In fact the Sunday we attended, there were more older people from Coloundra Uniting Church than younger people from BELLS. They said they were aware of the danger of swamping new people with old style worship ideas, but don't seem to have figured out how to regulate that. There were at least 4 current or retired UCA ministers in the small worship gathering we attended and the "liturgy" was reasonably obvious to me. The worship gathering is apparently more informal when they meet outside in summer, but the winter experience felt somewhat restrictive and formal. It was quite difficult to queue for the food during the meal break which is part way through the "service".

The Coloundra Uniting Church provides BELLS with a bank account and handles their finances for them. Interestingly, the public liability insurance of the UCA proved useful in enabling BELLS to become the manager of old Stocklands Sales Office building which has become the new small "community hub". Phil attends the Coloundra church council meetings to keep them up to date on BELLS so that they can pray.

Decision-making structures are informal and most decisions are basically made by Phil, although he has established a leadership team of three key families who have come to BELLS and grasped the vision. They also have some "wiseguys" who provide wisdom and advice. This includes an elder at the Coloundra church, and a retired minister.

The vision of BELLS is to be a relational, belonging, welcoming, community-creating group.

BELLS are very ready to work with other community groups as they seek to engage their neighbourhood.

Appendix Two: The Story of BELLS BBQ Church

<http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/stories/bells>

Phil Smith is a lay pastor in a Queensland school and he is also helping to grow a faith community around a barbecue. Phil Smith spun yarn@bigpond.net.au

We are based on Australia's Sunshine Coast in a new real estate development where there is no church building. I work half time for the Uniting Church as one of two campus ministers at the Unity College ecumenical school in Caloundra.

In Bells Reach and Bell Vista, people are moving from the colder southern states to live the dream in Queensland but many find it's just another suburb - like the ones they left behind.

The estate surrounds the school, which is supported by Roman Catholic and Uniting Church parishes, and those involved in BELLS are people who live, work or go to school in that area. Using the College, BELLS has connected with 65 people in its first six months, meeting fortnightly on Sunday afternoons to hear one another's stories and ask where we see and hear God at work in our lives. We don't have a building or rows of pews; instead we get together either at Unity College or in the nearby park.

Our first big breakthrough came just before Christmas 2013 when the developer asked us, as the local church(!), to welcome people and provide a short chat and some worship songs at the open-air carols and movie evening. We introduced ourselves to 1,000 people, with the help of the Uniting Church, Churches of Christ, The Salvation Army and a local Christian radio station which provided cards and CDs to give away.

BELLS (Belonging, Eating, Listening, Learning and Serving) is an acronym which describes what we stand for:



- belonging together and within the community, a blessing we share;
- eating, always part of our gathering, whether that's barbecue or breaking bread;
- listening to one another's stories;
- learning where Jesus' story intersects with ours;
- serving and sending us out into the community.

BELLS originally grew from an occasional discussion group for senior high school students from Unity College in 2012. It became known as The God Stuff amongst eight or 10 regulars who said they couldn't cope with a traditional church service. Why? Their comments included, 'We don't know when to sit down and stand up' and 'We only usually sing when we're a bit drunk at karaoke nights'.

It was all very different with us because of it being story based. We would have coffee by the beach in late afternoon and explore how our experiences that week had been touched and shaped by what Jesus said. Christians in their mid-20s would come and tell their stories.

Then, at about the same time as Caloundra Uniting Church started praying about mission in the development around the school, a handful of 'non-church' staff, parents and students at Unity College also began asking about developing The God Stuff.



A group began to explore these issues on the understanding that there would be no plans for a church building (with a big cross at the front of it) or expectation that people would drive in from all over the place to sit in pews there.

Our questions and discussions centred on the nature of church, an understanding of Luke 10, and Jesus sending 'beginner disciples' into the villages where he had not yet been - to build relationship with people of peace, engage with

them and accept their hospitality.

Rather than create something and ask people to come to a specific event, we put the word around that we were simply going to buy pizza one Sunday evening in June last year and see who turned up. We hoped for 15 but instead 37 people came to tell us what a gathering might be like and what it would achieve. Their main message was, 'don't call it church'.

Caloundra Uniting Church endorsed this organic development and sponsored us. Members donated some \$5,000 to support what we were doing, and a handful of them come each fortnight to make the coffee, turn the sausages and pray for the group.

That same church is now seeking three years of funding to create a half-time pastor's position for me to grow BELLS as a faith community, a fresh expression of church. This neighbourhood is set to grow dramatically over time with Caloundra South housing 50,000 people in the next 15 years.

Eating is a major part of what we do! People relax and talk when there's food and for Australians a BBQ is standard. Bringing food to a BBQ is an act of sharing; this may well be a ritual/liturgical aspect of BELLS, although one might not recognise it!

At the moment, we are focused on Luke's gospel for the messages to think about in our fortnightly meetings; considering how the Jesus story can be lived out in a culture that does not take it as 'given'. We prepare for that by putting out a trailer out on our YouTube channel a week before the meeting. The BELLS crew then begin to think of their own life experiences in relation to the message. We put up posters around the place and on the school noticeboard; it's also in the school newsletter and Community Association website.



Our meetings start with a 'sixty Seconds with...' slot when a volunteer is asked three questions in a minute. This not only acts as an ice-breaker but it provides an opportunity for an initial personal reflection on the message theme. The table groups then chat around those questions as we eat.

Two of our team sing for us and we now have some neighbourhood kids who are beginning to bring their guitars and jam along.

Someone will tell their story related to the message, perhaps on how they have experienced forgiveness – or something similar, then I talk about the scripture for five minutes. We pray simple thanks and requests in different ways, talk about our next opportunity for belonging or serving... and finish our dinner.

When we think about how we might grow the faith community, the school connection is certainly a 'foot in the door' and we have also had much encouragement from many other people of peace locally. The school principal offered the covered BBQ and canteen area for us; the real estate developer now views us as *the* local church; the publican and the Community Association advertise our gatherings and we actively engage with them in community events, such as park concerts and Christmas carols.

In seven months, four core households have emerged. Younger couples with kids have taken on the leadership in exploring opportunities for belonging, eating (looking at hospitality), listening - as in leading our worship times - and finding ways for us to serve.

As the pastor, my responsibility is the learning content. We also have three older, mature Christians - including two retired, ordained ministers - who pray for us and seek the big vision. They help give a framework of theological understanding to what we are exploring.



In the light of Caloundra Uniting Church being our supportive 'mothership', I attend their church council meetings. Their insurance and finance people also look after our necessary bureaucracy.

At this stage I add all preparation for BELLS to my workload at school - hence our meetings being fortnightly. We very much want to become a weekly gathering and develop some discipleship/home groups. If funding becomes available in June 2014, I will be paid a stipend to spend half the week in the neighbourhood.

Our costs at this stage only involve the provision of food because our venue is free. Donations from individuals with a vision as to what we are doing here have amounted to about \$7,000.

Long-term commitment is very important. A significant part of building relationships of trust with community groups, the local council, and so on, is the assurance that we will be here in 15 years' time. God knows what the neighbourhood, or our faith community, will look like then but we are here to grow with the neighbourhood from stage one.

I first heard of fresh expressions of church when researching new forms of church online and then followed up on that with a call to a couple of Uniting Church ministers in South Australia. It's exciting to see what God is doing in Caloundra as part of that fresh expressions movement worldwide. Our accountability is formally through the local Uniting Church but we are also blessed by encouragement and regular contact with other denominations with a heart for the new neighbourhood.

How might things develop from here? Well, after six months, and - it seems - the ongoing possibility of personnel and time resources, we have a few challenges and questions to consider.

More than 100 people have connected with us but the fortnightly gathering is always around 30. Half of that is core and constant. How will we go beyond that initial contact to build good daily friendships?

How will we offer discipleship/faith exploration programs and what will they be? (Our neighbourhood isn't asking the questions Alpha is answering, yet).

We are being deliberately engaged in the Community Association, events in the park and so on but there are new opportunities too. There are hoops to jump through but the developer's former sales office may be handed to Caloundra City Council to become a small community hub. Could we become the managing agents? If so, we could engage with many other community groups, have a highly visible venue for gatherings of different kinds.

From the one page basic website: www.bells.org.au

Welcome to Bells Caloundra

"Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them a place where change can take place" by Henri Nouwen

BELLS is an effort to help build a neighborhood in the real estate development of Bells Reach and Bell Vista, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

Join us second and fourth Sundays, 5pm at Unity College for a BBQ or BYO dinner.

We are people who live, work or go to school here. The name is an acronym as well as a location:

Belonging together and within the community is a blessing we share.

Eating is always part of our gathering, whether that's barbecue or breaking bread.

Listening to one another's stories.

Learning where Jesus story intersects with ours.

Send us into the community.

We don't have a building or rows of pews. We meet either at Unity College or in the park, 2nd and 4th Sunday afternoon each month.

Check the Unity College school sign on Lomond Drive or call Phil Smith on 0414 823125 for more info.

Bring a friend, hope to see you all there! Click on our YouTube channel below for a preview of our next conversation.

Appendix Three: **Effective Church Planters**

Church plants can thrive or fall over. A major factor in the resilience of the plant is the 'team leader'. In the Seeds of Hope movement we take seriously the recruitment, assessment, placement and coaching of team leaders. As part of our commitment to new church planters we offer an assessment process, helping identify strengths and areas for future development. We spend five to six hours with the prospective team leaders, and their spouse where applicable, to work through 13 characteristics.

Dr Charles Ridley published a report on the characteristics of effective church planters, based on research with thirteen denominations. Dr. Ridley did an extensive job analysis field study of successful planters. From this research he developed a Church Planter Performance Profile (CPPP). Out of forty-eight behaviours identified, thirteen are found to be critically important. An essential truth which Dr. Ridley shares related to these behaviours is, "The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour." This is another way of saying, "By their fruits you shall know them. Prayerfully reflect on these behaviours together with your spouse or a close friend and ask the question, "Is this a reflection of me?" The ideal church planter is one who possesses the following qualities:

1. Visionising capacity

- being a person who projects into the future beyond the present
- developing a theme which highlights the vision and philosophy of ministry
- persuasively selling the vision to the people
- approaching challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles
- coping effectively with non-visionising elements
- not erecting artificial walls or limits either overtly or subconsciously
- establishing a clear church identity related to the theme and vision
believing in God's capacity to do great things

2. Intrinsically motivated

- having a desire to do well and a commitment to excellence
- stick-to-itiveness and persistence
- having initiative and aggressiveness without the negative connotations
- having a willingness to work long and hard
- being a self-starter with a willingness to build from nothing
- having a high energy and vitality level;
physical stamina

3. Creates ownership of ministry

- helping people to “buy in” and feel responsible for the growth and success of the church
- gaining commitment of the people to the vision
- establishing a congregational identity
avoiding stereotyping of congregation by imposing unrealistic goals for which it cannot claim ownership

4. Relates to the unchurched

- communicating in style that is understood by the unchurched
- understanding the “psychology” or mentality of the unchurched
- moving and functioning in the “personal space” of the unchurched without fear
- quickly getting to know the unchurched on a personal level
- breaking through the barriers erected by the unchurched
handling crises faced by the unchurched

5. Spousal cooperation

- having an explicit agreement regarding each partner’s respective role and involvement in ministry
- having explicit rules regarding the use of home as an office
- evaluating the consequences of ministry demands upon the children
- functioning as a team through individual and collective action
- having a strategy for dealing with strangers
- modeling wholesome family life before church and community
- agreeing upon and sharing the ministry vision
deliberately planning and protecting private family life

6. Effectively builds relationships

- responding with urgency to expressed needs and concerns of people
- displaying Godly love and compassion to people
- getting to know people on a personal basis
- making others feel secure and comfortable in one’s presence
- not responding judgmentally or prejudicially to new people
- appreciating and accepting a variety of persons
spending quality time with present parishioners without overstepping them for new people

7. Committed to church growth

- believing in church growth as a theological principle
- appreciating steady and consistent growth without preoccupation with the quick success factor
- committing to numerical growth within the context of spiritual and relational growth (more and better disciples)
- recognizing that non-growth is threatening and self-defeating
- establishing the goal of becoming a financially self-supporting church within a specific period of time
- not prematurely falling into a ministry of maintenance
seeing the church project within the larger context of God's kingdom

8. Responsive to community

- understanding the culture of the community
- identifying and assessing community needs
- responding to community needs on a priority basis such that resources are most efficiently used
- determining successes and failures of other organized religious attempts to respond to community needs
- not confusing what the community needs with what the church wants to offer
- acquiring and understanding of the character and "pulse" of the community
adapting the philosophy of ministry to the character of the community

9. Utilizes giftedness of others

- releasing and equipping people to do the task of ministry
- discerning of spiritual gifts in others
- matching the gifts of people with ministry needs and opportunities
- delegating effectively in areas of personal limitation
- avoiding personal overload by delegating effectively
- not prematurely assigning ministry assignments before people are adequately equipped
not placing unwarranted restrictions on other's spiritual giftedness

10. Flexible and adaptable

- coping effectively with ambiguity
- coping effectively with constant and abrupt change
- adapting oneself and one's methods to the uniqueness of the particular church planting project
- shifting priorities and emphasis during various stages of church growth
doing "whatever" is necessary "whenever" necessary

11. Builds group cohesiveness

- developing a nucleus group or groups as a foundation
- quickly incorporating newcomers into a network of relationships
- engaging others in meaningful church activity
- monitoring the morale of people
- utilizing groups effectively
dealing with conflict assertively, constructively and tactfully

12. Resilience

- experiencing setbacks without defeat
- riding the ups and downs (i.e. attendance)
- expecting the unexpected
rebounding from loss, disappointments and failure

13. Exercises faith

- possessing a conviction regarding one's call to church planting ministry
- believing in God's action
- having expectation and hope
having a willingness to wait for answers to specific prayer requests

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