

# Grevillea

November, 2003

Welcome to the second edition of **Grevillea** an e-magazine to stimulate your thinking!

Why "Grevillea"? The Macquarie Dictionary defines "grevillea" as any shrub or tree of the very large, mainly Australian genus Grevillea family. Many are attractive ornamentals and a number are useful trees. It is also worth noting that grevillea can be very toxic.

So Grevillea is an Australian e-magazine which will cover a large range of subjects as time goes on. We trust they will be interesting (not just ornamental), useful and stimulate (not irritate) your thinking. We aim to have articles that will be short, practical and worth your opening them as attachments.

This edition focuses on **Leadership**. We have an article on "Leadership in a Congregational Setting" by Chris Walker, the Mission Resource Officer for the Parramatta-Nepean Presbytery. Peter Powell, Executive Director of the Pastoral Counselling Institute, offers some thoughts on "Criteria for Leadership". Graham Anson, the Youth Worker for the Parramatta-Nepean Presbytery, writes about "Youth Leadership". The Parramatta-Nepean Presbytery is endeavouring to foster the development of new congregations and faith communities. So there is also a description of the establishment of a new congregation in the North West Sector of Sydney in the Rouse Hill area by John Thornton.

In times of rapid social change effective leadership becomes even more important than at other times. What is offered here are thoughts on leadership from a few different perspectives and examples of leadership. May they provide some ideas and encouragement as you engage in your own leadership roles.

In the last edition of Grevillea Mel Macarthur wrote of his bicycle pilgrimage to New Zealand. If you were challenged by that article to consider doing something similar yourself, Mel is now planning to undertake a bike pilgrimage in the USA late in 2004. If you are interested give him a call on 47 586475.

I received some positive feedback and some suggestions from the first edition of Grevillea. Email me if you have some thoughts to share. My email address is [chrisw@pnpuca.org.au](mailto:chrisw@pnpuca.org.au).

Grace and peace  
Chris Walker

# Leadership in a Congregational Setting

Chris Walker

## 1. What is leadership?

When we think of a leader we have in mind a person who has followers, the principle player (sport), the conductor (orchestra), the one who initiates (politics), the one who guides (tourism), and the one who provides direction (organizations). John Maxwell's conclusion is, "Leadership is influence." He says his favourite leadership proverb is: "He who thinks he leads and has no one following him is only taking a walk." Leadership then necessitates having followers. We all have some influence. Influence relates to power.

There are different kinds of power: designated or ascribed power (due to role or position), inherited power, charismatic power, reward power, expert power, information power, spiritual power, and others. Such power can be used constructively or abused. Most of us would probably like to have more power to influence our context. In a congregational setting it is important to discern who exercises power and influence and on what basis. These include: the church council chairperson, the treasurer, the respected long time member, the forthright person, perhaps the spouse of someone despite not holding an office themselves, the minister.

Ministers come to the congregation with designated power, some expert power and hopefully some spiritual power. Initially a certain amount of power or influence is granted. That power can be increased or decreased. If the minister demonstrates they are a person worth following, perform well on visible occasions and achieve some positive developments in the congregation their influence is increased. If they fail to exercise leadership, get key people offside and do not fulfill major expectations their influence is diminished. In the Uniting Church we cannot really function as authoritarian leaders, though we also need to ensure we do not allow others to control the church. A laissez faire approach is an abnegation of leadership rather than supposedly allowing others to lead. A collaborative approach is required - one that does lead but in consultation with others.

## 2. Leadership myths

Leith Anderson speaks of leadership myths. He says: "Discouraged leaders are easy to find. Leaders ready to quit are easy to find. Look in almost any church." The myths he speaks of include the following.

Myth 1. Leaders must have all the right traits. If you list the traits of a leader and then think of some of the most famous leaders in history you will discover that there is not a match. Here are a few of his examples. Ability to speak and desire to lead - Moses gave excuses to God. Moral - David was an adulterer and murderer. Relational - Paul couldn't get on with Barnabas and others. Tolerant - Martin Luther was intolerant often. Kindness - Adolph Hitler and Idi Amin were leaders who were ruthless. Hard working - President Eisenhower played a lot of golf.

Myth 2. Leadership is all about leaders. He points out that some notable leaders failed in some situations. Jonathon Edwards, the key figure in the

Great Awakening in North America, was voted out of his church. Some congregations expect to fail. They go through ministers. Other churches help people to succeed. Anderson therefore says that leadership is about leaders, followers, organizations, circumstances, power, history and more.

Myth 3. All leaders are heroes. It is in fact dangerous for Christian leaders to aspire to hero or celebrity status. What matters is having a long series of wise decisions and good behaviour.

Myth 4. Pastors must have the gift of leadership. Most do not have the spiritual gift of leadership. That does not disqualify one from leadership. Leadership is about getting the job done. Sometimes it just takes persistence until one does succeed and develop skills. Anderson says that leaders step up and do what needs to be done. That does mean discerning whether a particular task is something the leader needs to take on, perhaps for a period before handing over to someone else, or whether it can be left because it is not so important.

### **3. The congregational setting**

The congregational setting has changed yet many are reluctant to accept this. We are no longer in a context in which people are loyal to the churches of their denomination. Mainline churches have lost people to charismatic and evangelical churches, especially younger and middle aged people. Consumerism now influences choice of church as it does other choices. People have less time yet expect more. Fewer people are available for church roles. The society and government regulation place more demands on congregational leaders.

The way in which churches function has changed. The past model was that of a pastor and the people with Sunday school a major concern. People grew up into the church. People participated in worship, committees, choirs, some groups and special events. It was assumed what the church was about, namely to educate children into the faith and provide a place for adults to worship and have fellowship.

Now churches need to be much more intentional as to what they are about. They have to identify their mission and way of being the church. People have to be recruited and formed into teams serving the mission of the church which should be the mission of God for them. They cannot do everything and appeal to everyone and so have to be more specific as to their identity and major activities.

In the Uniting Church we have moved away from the idea of parish to emphasize the congregation. Linked congregations need to be clearer as to what they are about and what role the shared minister can do for them. We have issues of membership and voting rights. While we have a good Basis of Union and a conciliar polity, many people are not familiar with how the Uniting Church functions. We would do well to educate our lay leaders and people more about the nature and polity of the Uniting Church.

#### **4. Issues for leaders**

Some of the main issues for ministers in relation to leadership are as follows: setting priorities, use of time, identifying needs, finding and motivating people who are time poor to do tasks, training and empowering people, assisting some people to let go of roles, involving non Anglo people, involving young people which relates to how we structure our church and conduct meetings, avoiding allowing some people to dominate the process (whether Anglo or Pacific for example) but also avoiding being excessively democratic so that decisions are taken and action follows. Making a real difference in people's lives and the community is the goal.

Management in the church is often an issue. Having a church office with a part time paid person who takes care of much of the administrative load is strongly recommended. This releases the minister from much of the routine organizational tasks to do more important leadership ones.

Traditionally the primary roles of ministerial leadership have been: leadership of worship, pastoral care and organization. Let me suggest in the changed context we now have they should be: a) worship - but with oversight and preaching as the main tasks, b) oversight of pastoral care - with small groups a priority, c) leadership development - recruitment, training, support and d) mission and evangelism - with specific and integrated activities taking place. The church is unlikely to grow if the leader is not intentionally working on it. Nor will the church impact people and the community if the leader is not seeking to do so. Leaders have to give time, thought and prayer to the overall picture and functioning of the congregation.

The secondary roles can be many: from RE classes, to preparing newsletters, to property and finance committees. Many of these can be delegated or done for a season as required. They should not come to dominate and take time from the primary roles.

#### **5. Leadership Styles**

There are a number of different leadership styles. It is important to identify your leadership style and the styles of others on your leadership team so as to match particular styles with specific leadership needs in your church. Without going into detail, there are leaders who are visionaries, those who help make wise decisions, those who are strategic thinkers, those who are managers and we need them to get things done, those who are very relational, those who are good at building teams, those who are initiators, those who are trouble shooters, those who are diplomats and others.

Bill Hybels suggests the following: 1. Identify your leadership style or styles. 2. Determine if your style fits your current leadership situation. 3. Identify the leadership style of each member on your team. Make sure each person is matched up with the right leadership need and determine if there are leadership gaps on your team that need to be filled. 4. Commit yourself both to developing your strong leadership styles and growing in your weaker leadership styles.

## **6. Teamwork and team building**

In the Uniting Church we do not often develop teams well, in particular ministerial teams. We emphasize democratic processes yet team ministry is often more a matter of allocating separate areas of responsibility than really working closely together as a team. It takes work to ensure that teams function well. Let me offer some comments on team building. First it helps to have a designated team leader. That does not mean superiority; it does mean that there is a structure of responsibility. Time has to be given to team development. Weekly team meeting meetings are required to keep in touch. Retreat times and social times foster appreciation for one another and enhance working together.

In building a team Hybels uses three main criteria in the selection process. First is character, then competence and finally chemistry. When searching for someone to add to a team, whether a volunteer or paid staff, character is first. There is the need to have confidence in the person as a Christian and as a person of integrity. Character is placed above competence, the next criteria. Demonstrated competence and not just qualifications are to be sought. The third criteria is chemistry or relational fit with the other team members. It is important that people get on well with one another. If the chemistry is not there then the team will not function as well as it could.

A task of leaders that I have become increasingly aware of is the need to recruit and equip other leaders. People often say there is a lack of capable leaders in their congregation. That may be so but we need to be assisting and encouraging people to become leaders. We have to find those with gifts in relation to evangelism, pastoral care, teaching and administration. And we need to enable our people to do those tasks by training people to share faith and providing opportunities to do so, teach and model for people how to appropriately show pastoral care, encourage people to study and learn how to teach and lead a group, involve people in administrative tasks with someone more experienced. We should be encouraging each person in a leadership role to raise up someone else to take over. This means giving mentoring a priority in how we function as a congregation. Mentoring can be short term or it might be longer term but we can foster it in our congregations. I believe people will respond to challenges if they think it will mean using their time and talents well or if they feel they will grow as a result. We have to make it worthwhile in a world in which time is a precious commodity.

## **7. Self-leadership**

The final thing I want to say is that we ought to recognize the importance of self-leadership. We have to be able to lead ourselves and grow in our capacity to lead if we are to be effective in leading others long term. It means coming to a clear recognition of our strengths, limits and weaknesses. Only then will we stay true to our calling and keep discouragement and temptation at bay.

Let me offer some leading questions that relate to self-leadership. Are we staying true to our calling? Our first priority is to live as a disciple of Jesus. Related to that is discovering where we can serve and what role God would have for us.

What is my vision? As a leader we ought to have a vision for the situation we are serving in. It is not a matter of simply maintaining what is. Nor is it a matter of imposing our will. But in conjunction with other leaders we should have an idea as to what God is wanting for and from us and our congregation. Leaders of congregations in my experience would do well to be clearer on this given our changing world.

How is my motivation? If our motivation lags it will inevitably affect the congregation. We have a responsibility to ensure we do those things that enable us to stay motivated. What are they for us? Is it taking time out for retreats? Is it attending conferences? Is it visiting other churches to see what they are doing and talking with the leaders? As leaders we need to meditate, read, attend, go and visit, do what it takes to keep us motivated for ministry. It is easy to become discouraged. Burnout is less a matter of overwork than becoming discouraged.

Is my character growing in Christ? As leaders character is imperative. We have to be people of integrity. We should not be fearful in ministry but be prepared to take action for the sake of the congregation's overall health and growth. All of us have experienced hurts, losses and disappointments. We may have to work on them so they do not negatively impact what we say and do.

Is our love for God and the people increasing? At the heart of our leadership is God and the people we serve. If our love is not growing but diminishing then it will affect our leadership. We have to ensure that our love for God and the people we are serving is strong. This may well mean having to give more not less time to prayer. For praying puts us directly into the presence of God and intercessory prayer for our people helps us to share God's love for them.

Nurturing our leadership takes various forms or pathways. This connects with our personality and temperament. We need to know what helps us to be refreshed and make time for those activities. Discipleship and ministry is for the long term. May we as leaders take to heart this benediction: "Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit."

### **Recommended reading**

Leith Anderson, *Leadership That Works*, Bethany House, 1999

Bill Easum, *Leadership on the Otherside*, Abingdon, 2000

George Hunter III, *Leading and Managing a Growing Church*, Abingdon, 2000

Bill Hybels, *The Courage to Lead*, Zondervan, 2002

John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*, Nelson, 1993

John Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, Nelson, 1995

Herb Miller, *Leadership is the Key*, Abingdon, 1997

R. Paul Stevens and Phil Collins, *The Equipping Pastor*, Alban, 1993

# LEADERSHIP CRITERIA

Peter Powell,

The material in this article emerges from the particular context of my work in situations where there has been a breakdown in ministry. One way to develop leadership criteria is to ask questions about the nature of various ministerial breakdowns and what leadership deficits might have contributed to those breakdowns. The obvious follow on is to investigate what leadership qualities might have made those breakdowns less likely to occur. By comparing leadership qualities in well functioning ministries with leadership qualities in dysfunctional ministry situations, important principles for developing effective leadership can be established.

Two areas of leadership assessment will be described. Firstly, areas where underlying personality factors may hide some critical issues. Secondly, behaviours indicating functional and dysfunctional ministry.

## **Underlying personality – the hidden factor**

What will not be immediately obvious when assessing a leader are the underlying personality characteristics. Some personality issues will be more to the surface but others, particularly the more difficult ones, may be hidden for some time. Even though some personality characteristics may remain hidden, there will usually be revealing signs that the careful observer can see. What follows describes some of the key personality issues though it is not, by any means, an exhaustive list.

### Attachment and intimacy

Some leaders have early childhood experiences of not being well attached to their families. This can lead to them seeking attachment through leadership roles. One of the tell-tale signs in ministry is the leader who, while being well liked by the congregation and appearing emotionally healthy, demonstrates poor intimacy with his own immediate family. Such leaders may unwittingly 'use' church members for their own emotional needs. They are often 'emotionally hungry' people who need to be needed and are often uncomfortable in silence or spending reflective time alone.

### Narcissistic personality

Marked by grandiosity, need for admiration and lack of empathy. Narcissistic people see the world through their own experience. It would be unusual, though not impossible, for the church to tolerate for long a person with a serious disorder in this area; however, dimensions of narcissistic disorder are frequently seen in church leaders.

They may appear warm and caring at first, but it will soon become clear that they demand the 'song of life' be played to their tune. They tend to divide the church into disciples who follow them and disciples who 'betray' them. They

are easily hurt and offended and resist group processes where their ideas are contradicted.

### Histrionic personality

Marked by a pattern of excessive emotionality and attention seeking. This personality is best seen in some U.S.A television evangelists. They are extremely outgoing and can easily attract people to themselves. Unfortunately, this attraction has a 'seductive' element to it. People can feel conned and manipulated by such people. People with this type of personality need to be the centre of attention and often dress and act in ways that make them look younger than they are. They are often full of grand plans but are not always able to distinguish the effective plans from the unrealistic dreams. They will usually resent someone challenging their ideas, even if this is done gently. It is not uncommon for the person making the critique to be accused of, 'lacking a vision from the Lord'.

### Obsessive compulsive personality

Marked by a pattern of preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism and control. Such leaders will normally become tense unless things follow in a particular order. They have trouble thinking 'outside the square' and tend to work within well-understood parameters. They have extreme difficulty developing any visionary dimension to their ministries. They try to please others, particularly those in authority. In supervision and training they attempt to find the 'right' way to do things and find any errors that they make extremely stressful.

## **Dysfunctional leadership behaviours**

The following is a description of some of the most critical dysfunctional behaviours, but again it is by no means an exhaustive list.

### Defensive leadership position

Such leaders resist feedback and supervision, isolate themselves from peers and lack genuine openness towards fellow workers. They have a need to be right and tend to divide people into those 'for me or against me'. They can become dogmatic and aggressive and are generally quite inflexible.

Healthy leaders welcome creative feedback and supervision. They are prepared to work with others in a team and see differences of opinion as a natural part of group process. They do not fear being 'wrong' because their self-esteem is sufficient to sustain such events.

### Excessive working hours

Such leaders have difficulty saying no. They need to be needed. Their low self-esteem, which they hide behind their activities, means they are never sure if they have done enough. Guilt and obligation dominate their work. Such leaders will often be appreciated by those they care for, but a closer examination of their family life will find them isolated from loved ones.

Healthy leaders manage their time well and know how to receive as well as give. They work within the limits of life and don't suffer excessive guilt when they have to say no. They intentionally take time to relax and engage in true intimate relationships with their family and friends.

### Recurring interpersonal conflict

Such leaders develop patterns of getting into difficulty with others. When these leaders are in ordained ministry they will move from church to church leaving patterns of destruction behind them. Because some church systems resist confronting the hard issues, it may be many years before this pattern is finally challenged.

Healthy leaders are marked by an ability to work with conflict when it arises without becoming offended. They become facilitators without becoming threatened by the process of conflict.

### Seductive and manipulative style

Often adored by their 'disciples', such leaders can sometimes create large followings. They can be quite entrepreneurial and in the process can mix very effective ministry and care for others with less healthy behaviours. Some of these leaders are unaware of their manipulative style whereas others use it in a more conscious way. Both types are a high risk for personal boundary violations, particularly in the area of sexuality.

Healthy leaders might also be outgoing and entrepreneurial. But they don't divide their followers into disciples and they have a healthy 'scepticism' about how 'wonderful' they are.

### Resistance to ambiguity

Such people tend to hide behind the role of being the leader. They tend to resolve issues indirectly through people of power rather than directly with the people concerned. They may use threats or coercion to get their own way. It is difficult to dialogue with them because they will see issues in black and white terms. The 'grey' areas of life are not accepted or understood well at all. Moral issues are seen as either right or wrong, thus they have extreme difficulty in pastoral situations where complex issues are being addressed. They lack the curiosity to explore areas of conflict and stress.

## Addictive behaviour

This covers a broad range of behaviours including alcohol abuse, gambling, pornography, sexual affairs and other sexual dysfunctions. Such leaders often experience anxiety and depression. They usually have difficulty reading social cues and will often demonstrate poor understanding of emotional and physical boundaries. Such leaders are likely to be the focus of complaints, particularly from members of congregations. The leader may be totally unaware of the impact on others.

Healthy leaders, by contrast, are relatively free from addictions or are very conscious of them. In the latter case, such a leader will be intentionally focused in supervision and peer review in order that the addictive aspects of their personality does not intrude on others.

## **Summary**

A number of the key personality characteristics and behaviours that either hinder or enhance the quality of leadership have been described. While not an exhaustive list, it gives some indication of what to look for when selecting leaders and some of the warning signs that may appear when leadership is at risk.

## **Youth Leadership – The Ministry of Formation**

Graham Anson

It was a dark and stormy night. The weather had only been so-so. Two of the group had got themselves into trouble with the Putt-Putt centre manager. Two others had picked fights with the 'locals'. One of the 'couples' of the group were fighting, two people had brought friends without asking (an issue when the bus has limited seating), and three had come without any money. I'd had one leader do a no-show, and had a pick-up mix-up with one of the others. No-one had seemed very interested at all in complying with anything I was asking of them. The bus was now broken down and it was 30 minutes past the time I said I would have the young people back to the church. It was pre-mobile phone days and, what's more, it was pre "safe place for children". The safest place for the youth in my care that night was out of my sight and out of range of my voice. Parents would be waiting, the Church Council secretary would be waiting, the minister would be waiting, all there for the return of their precious ones.

Ah, youth leadership, the memories. As I reflect on that night, and the many other nights, events and incidents like it that I have experienced, the questions I often find myself asking are "how was I raised for this ministry?", "how was I trained?", "how was I formed?". The reality is, I don't know what conversations went on about me, when I was in my teenage years, in my youth leaders' lounge rooms, my Elders Council meetings or my Ministers phone calls, but my hunch is that there was only a little bit of planning that went into my formation, and only a little intentional direction given to me to help in forming me as a youth leader. I would still say that it was me who sought out the training courses, me who thought I should volunteer my time

and energy, me who tested my gifts and graces. At no time did anyone sit me down and have an intentional conversation with me about who I was, what my ministry passions were, what my gifts might be, how I might exercise them in youth ministry, youth leadership and the life of the Church. All of these things just happened. I got a lot of encouragement along the way, but it was all reactionary to what I was doing. I don't remember too much that was proactive and visionary. I got a lot of "well done"s and "great work"s, but very few, if any, "have you ever thought about ..." or "I can see you doing ...." or "maybe this program will help you do what you are doing better." I worked my way through those questions pretty much on my own. Don't get me wrong, the journey has been a rich and rewarding one, and I have certainly known both God's gentle and intervening guidance, but I feel that by the time I became a full-time youth worker I had got there pretty much by accident and my own determined exploration than by the planning and design of the people in leadership over and alongside me.

The concerning thing is that many, if not most, young people in the Church experience the same vacuum of visioning for their leadership formation external to their own wondering. There is a wealth of leadership that is wandering about uncharted and rudderless amongst the young people of our church. What the rest of this article is about is identifying leadership potential and giving direction to young people as they form in leadership and other ministry gifts.

The two issues: There are two different issues that get confused when people use the term 'youth leadership'. One is the leadership of youth ministry in a place or at a time, the other is the raising of young people into leadership. For clarification, this article is focusing on the second issue. It is not about how best to run youth ministry in your congregation, but about how to raise the young people of your congregation into leadership in the church, and perhaps the wider community.

Unhelpful Assumptions: Unfortunately it is still the case that too often the person who is given responsibility for youth leadership is often chosen on the basis of their (youngish) age. When it comes to youth ministry the younger you are the greater the assumptions that all you really want to do when it comes to youth ministry is lead the youth group. If you are a young adult, you must want to work with youth. Recognizing someone's abilities in this area of ministry needs to be done on a wider basis than relative age. This phenomena works in reverse to other leadership responsibilities in the church where the older you are the greater the assumption that you have the required experience, knowledge and giftedness for the task. The other unfortunate assumptions that are made are that every young person's gift is leadership, and that their abilities need to be exercised in youth ministry. The resultant failings are that there are many young people pushed into leadership training and roles when their giftedness and ministry interests lie elsewhere, and, their giftedness is not recognised as being relevant to the whole church body, just to youth ministry.

Recognising leadership potential in young people: This is an important role in the development of good leadership for our church. Putting energy into recognising who the emerging leaders are is something we have not been good at. We too have been guilty of assuming it will just happen. And yet it is not all that hard and the benefits of doing so are many. The following questions are designed to help in the task of identifying emerging leaders -

- Who are the people who respond favourably to responsibility? Who does it feed? Who does it drain? Who grows and performs, who struggles and heads towards distress?
- Who are the ones that show signs of being self aware?
- Who displays signs of being group aware?
- Who shows signs of being able to explore, express and/or explain a vision, a theological concept, a programmatic change, shift or dilemma

You may well have your own criteria and assessment tools. For most people they are usually implicit and rarely talked about. Have a think about the qualities you would look for in a potential leader and use them to help ensure potential and emerging leaders aren't missed.

Growing, Developing and Forming Leaders: The bottom line is that this requires good action-reflection processes. This is rarely balanced well or done well. Most congregations can find something for their emerging leaders to do, but very few structure a process of learning and reflection. The development of emerging leaders cannot happen in a vacuum and nor can or should not be a purely theoretical, or purely a practical pursuit. Recognising the need for practical outlets to test and exercise a gift is just as important for young people as for anyone else, but so too is the opportunity to gain theoretical knowledge and reflect on lessons learnt.

Following are some clues to things that should or could be done to help nurture and develop emerging leaders –

- A mentoring program. Having this in place as a starting point is extremely important. Having someone who takes an interest, who is assigned to listen, reflect, challenge and support is a major benefit;
- Passions assessment. Take the time to help emerging leaders explore what their ministry passions are. Discuss with them what they enjoy, what energises them in ministry. Don't make assumptions, don't just push them in directions that fill a gap or need;
- Giftedness assessment. Doing giftedness assessment with emerging leaders will help them match their gifts with the ministry opportunities. There are a few programs around that can help with this;
- Teamwork and team ministry. Give them positive team ministry experiences, with egalitarian team leaders. Growing skills in this area is imperative;
- Personality exploration. Getting good self-understanding is a very empowering thing. To have some understanding of why and how we act and respond, how others might perceive and experience us, what energises us and why others are different, is particularly powerful in ministry;
- Accountability. In some ways this comes through a good mentoring program but it means more than that. Knowing what needs to be done

and who a person is accountable to help young leaders understand and practise good boundaries and disciplines;

- Financial support. If it can be given, benefits will be found in sponsoring emerging leaders to attend relevant training, retreat and personal development programs.

This list is by no means exhaustive. You may have your own ideas on other things to do to grow leaders. We have found through the EMERGE leadership program that many of the things on this list are very enlightening, useful, meaningful and powerful when addressed, explored and reflected on.

I will always hold to the tenet that good leaders do not happen by accident, whether they are young or old. Good leaders are usually the product of a number of things, but having good models, good guidance, good training and good opportunities to perform, rate highly on the list. Good leaders are formed over time both intentionally and relationally. Starting good practices early can only be of great benefit to the Church and wider community.

## **Establishing a New Congregation in the North West Sector of Sydney**

John Thornton

The church plant commenced in September 2002 with John and his wife Veronica moving into the Rouse Hill area and gradually building a network of relationships.

Other denominations, Church of Christ, Baptist and the SDA's have also begun establishing churches in this new developing area and John meets monthly with them for prayer and encouragement.

Other local surrounding UCA congregations and ministers have been very supportive in many ways: supplying musicians for a public Easter service, gifting a keyboard and beginning to see the need for the new congregation and not see it as a threat.

Rouse Hill's first ecumenical Carols by Candlelight in 2002 drew over 2,500 people and was sponsored and organized by the local pastors.

From a Bible study in November 2002 with one other couple, John conducted a "Christianity Explained" course at the beginning of the year with a couple reached through a letterbox drop. In February they commenced meeting at the manse on Sunday evenings but soon felt the need to meet in a more public and open space. In March they began meeting in the newly opened Rouse Hill Public School library block on Sunday mornings.

John has used public mail outs to the post code area to invite people to special events. These mail outs don't always have immediate results but sow the seed. John gives one example. A woman rang who had recently given birth to a first child. "They felt so grateful... but they didn't know who to be grateful to". John suggested they meet to have a chat.

In June the 'North West Uniting Church' held a public forum using the well known family therapist and author Steve Biddulph.

In July the emerging congregation moved again into the new Rouse Hill Community Centre. This gave more space, greater visibility and storage!

Worship on Sunday is very informal and relaxed and has grown from CD's, to live music both contemporary and secular. It is very much a 'work in progress' John says, as they experiment with various aspects of presenting the gospel in a cultural and contextually relevant way.

Another staff person has been added with Kath Illidge joining the team in August specializing in family and children's work and creative worship. This has been a key appointment allowing family ministry to move forward in a dynamic way. They have recently completed their first school holiday program and are running a lunchtime activity at the local school along with a Friday after school program.

From zero people twelve months ago weekly numbers at worship now average around 25-30. There are four home groups operating and the team is much more intentional about ministry with families and pastoral care. The key is not so much the attendance numbers, but rather the continual building on the edge of the new church. The constant growth of contacts within the community is vital and ongoing. When given a choice of attending a church meeting or build another contact, the decision is not difficult! With the various activities and ongoing contact the new church is now touching 100+ people in a variety of ways.

John says: "A few things I have learnt. Church planting is a lonely business. It is less structured than regular church. You must intentionally look after yourself and your spouses' worship life. The lack of structure means very deliberate focus and discipline in your personal devotional life. (Hard for an undisciplined person!) Nobody knows how to do this thing called church planting but the local network of pastors is a very supportive community. You have to build a network of key people, friends who will love you, pray with you, correct you and encourage you, resource people who will equip you, and spiritual mentors who will show you guidance. The building of contacts within the community is vital and ongoing.

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