

Appointment of Leadership in CCE

February 2012

We believe that leadership, as found in the Scriptures and particularly in the New Testament, is found in the plural¹, and as we read the stories of the early church we see new leaders emerge² from within a community of disciples to join with others in leading that group of Christians³. These leaders are called by God⁴, and that calling is recognised by other leaders, and the wider congregation.

We see Paul, as a travelling ministry, gathering believers and from within that group appointing leaders, often after some months or years. We also see Paul⁵ (along with others Biblical examples, such as Jesus⁶, Moses and Barnabas) calling others to work with him in plurality & team in the work of ministry that God has called him.

While we understand that other Church traditions read these Scriptures differently, our reading of these Scriptures have over many years informed our understanding & practice in CCE:

- Leaders are called by God
- They emerge from within the community
- Are invited by other leaders, and recognised by the rest of the congregation.
- Leaders are found in plurality/team, with different gifts in that team

So in CCE our current 'best' practice is:

- i. We are looking for people (both men and women) who **emerge** within our community, to become leaders of our community.
- ii. Leaders are not self-appointing, but the call of God is **recognised** by the existing leaders of the community.⁷

¹ Various terms are used in the NT: leaders (Hebrews 13:7), elders (Acts 20:17), overseers or bishops (Phil 1:1), and servants or ministers (1 Thess 3:2), but always in the plural.

² Eg. Acts 13:21-23; Titus 1:5. Leaders are part of the community, and emerge as leaders of that community. Their leadership and ministry is recognised by the travelling Apostles and the rest of the community. We believe this is the norm of leadership within a church, although it is noted that Barnabus went to get Saul (who later became Paul) from Tarsus to help in the leadership of the church in Antioch – Acts 11:25,26.

³ It is interesting to note that Acts 14:21-23, Paul and Barnabus return to places that have travelled to before to preach the gospel to select or appoint elders/leaders. It is only at that point that the disciples in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch are called "church".

⁴ For example, this is clear from Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians elders (leaders) where he says: "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock **of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.**" Acts 20:28

⁵ Eg. Acts 15:40; 16:3.

⁶ Jesus appointed his own disciples – eg. Mk 3:14

⁷ A clear example of this is found in Acts 13:1-3 where (some of) the leaders of the church in Antioch were praying and fasting, and the Holy Spirit said to them to send Barnabas and Paul to travel as Apostles and plant churches.

- iii. Specifically, it is the responsibility of the team leader to invite new leaders to the Leadership Group (currently called “Community of Leaders”), in **consultation** with the rest of the existing leaders, where we are looking for ‘*consensus*’⁸ on the appointment of new leaders.
- iv. When someone discerns the call of God and accepts this invitation from the team leader, we are looking for the **endorsement** from the rest of the community – this is both a “is there any reason why not?” as well as “does this get your Amen?”
- v. There would be a period of time for feedback on proposals for new leader(s) from the rest of the congregation, at which point the team leader, with the rest of the existing leaders will discern together if there are any changes to be made to the proposals. New leaders would be appointed by laying on hands⁹ and prayer in a community gathering.

It is possible in some situations we would not be closed to our practice changing from that out-lined above (ie. if there was specific need and no one from in CCE could be found we might appoint someone from outside the church) but this would be an exception, rather than the norm.

⁸ **Consensus** is defined as all of the existing leaders ‘can live with the proposal’. It does not necessarily mean that it is what a person would do if it was their decision. There would not be consensus if someone in the existing Leaders could not live with the proposals of the team leader.

⁹ 1 Tim 5:22 in the context of talking about elders (leaders), their remuneration and discipline, Paul encourages Timothy not to be hasty in laying on hands (ie. appointing new leaders).