

## THE PARISH CHARTER - LEADERSHIP

Nic Denny-Dimitriou - 6th June 2004

Psalm 33: 13-21, Ephesians 4: 7-13, Mark 10: 35-45

### THEME: LEADERSHIP

We seek to empower, equip and commission leaders, both clergy and lay,

Who will inspire and empower others

For mission and ministry in all its different forms.

*[More points are listed in print than were used in the delivered sermons. Owing to time constraints; some points were left out at 7am, others at 9am.]*

#### **Introduction:**

- Very appropriate that the first two in this series are entitled “Leadership & Vision”
- Grown out of a process of Vision for our Diocese, initiated by several leaders including Bishop Rubin, various clergy and lay leaders, who have stated that they choose to be leaders of a vibrant church, not a dying one
- Last year, Diocesan celebration of 150 years; key bible theme John 10:10, Jesus saying “I have come to bring life in all its fullness (abundance)...”
- Recognition that all communities are a mixture of areas of strength and weakness
  - Consider where we are (reflection based on current and past experience) and...
  - Where we want to be (evaluative, inspirational, visionary, positively critical)
- Parish Charter is a tool to enable us to do these things, each parish and congregation within our Diocese of Natal separately and yet also together
- Ron Nicolson, writing in “The Link” newsletter of Howick & Karkloof Parish, wrote that, “...for me a Charter is a sort of founding document which sets out the mission of an institution and gives it authority to embark on its mission. Or perhaps it comes from a “chart”, the sort of map that ship and airline captains use to guide their journey. Either interpretation does for me!”
- The Parish Charter process (see pamphlet – more at the church entrance):
  - It is done under God and using Scripture as a base,
  - We are doing it prayerfully and seek the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit
  - And using some of the gifts which God has given the community (including discernment and wisdom).

#### **Today - 3 points:**

Leadership within the church and amongst the Christian community, is

1. God Given
2. Varied
3. Collaborative

## 1. Leadership is God Given

- A necessity not only for the church, but for society at all groupings & levels
- New Testament reading today – Ephesians chapter 4 – highlights spiritual gifts and gift of leadership; God’s gifts as a result of his grace – purpose of which is stressed in verse 12, to equip God’s people for works of service to build up the church
- If God given, to be exercised with due humility; not primarily for the ego; however we must also distinguish between humility and false humility (e.g. a person who knows they have a particular gift to offer, refusing to do come forward to offer it for fear people will think they are pushing themselves forward)
- If God given, then we are accountable to God for how it is used
- There will always be normal human attributes associated with leadership of any kind. Be aware of and address them rather than (a) pretending they are absent (b) regarding them as weaknesses that count us out of exercising leadership. These attributes / reactions include
  - Fears of failure or fears of not meeting people’s expectations of us;
  - Need for popularity; all leaders sometimes need to take action in ways that may diminish popularity with some people;
  - Yet all people – leaders included – have a normal human need of encouragement and affirmation; don’t withhold it;
  - Reluctance to face difficult situations; issues of self-confidence.

## 2. Leadership is Varied

- Many books / courses / opinions on; many styles and forms of leadership
- Ephesians – comment on passage again
- Bill Hybels’ (an American pastor, highly regarded by many – not on the ‘fringe’!) – research that noted 10 clearly identifiable forms of leadership (with varieties within them).
  - [Nic has these available in e-mail format if requested.]
    - Some for various times / periods / situation, which once passed require different form of leadership style
    - People have predominant styles – benefits (and by implication, drawbacks) to each
- Differing styles may cause misunderstanding. For example, one leader may take a strong, vocal up-front approach to matters, and when followed by another with a quieter, more-in-the-background collaborative approach, which achieves things in a different way, those used to the former may regard the latter as lacking leadership.
- Leadership a gift – so too the personality of each leader. Spiritual gifts are to be intentionally used, not ignored.
- ‘Cometh the hour, cometh the man’ (or woman!) is a popular phrase. Used of Churchill interesting to note it on this day – 60th anniversary of D-Day! More often used of politics or military campaigns, it is nevertheless also appropriate

within the church – a community praying that they receive the kind of leadership they require for their tasks at hand at that time. Applies not only to a parish, but also to other aspects of ministry and leadership within a parish.

- It may be said there is not one single, correct leadership style, nevertheless it can safely be said that amongst the leaders' tasks are the following:
  - Create the right “climate” within the organisation that it can set its goals ...
  - And achieve them
  - Wisdom – seek it out from others, together with discernment
  - To encourage and give direction; to encourage other leaders and also others in the use of their respective gifts
  - In giving direction, also to give perspective on past / current / future and to enable the people of the organisation (church) to work out / ‘buy into’ the vision as well.
  
- Issue of “vision versus managing” – vision is the preferred focus of a leader rather than micro-management of all details ... although few in leadership except perhaps in the highest echelons of big business have the privilege of never having also to manage details of the organisation, as certainly is required in churches.

### **3. Leadership is Collaborative**

- More than simply a comment on styles of leadership (some may be more collaborative than others), it is a requirement that leadership involve others, or it (a) excludes the gifts of others (b) runs the risk of arrogance or abusing power (c) is a biblical model (the Body concept of the church elaborated on the NT – familiar with but no time to delve into today).
- Ideally leadership is not ego-driven; collaboration with others help ensure this
  - Movie “Troy” just released – ancient story which shows how little has changed in the ways many are taken into war on the whims, personal agendas and egos of those who wield power
- Leadership is learnt in and from experience – “caught, not taught” – and needs to be modelled anew for each generation / new people coming into leadership positions
- Often a balance to be struck between task and process; (examples in our parish – Umngeni Aids Centre primarily a task-oriented process of involving the community in efforts which support the work and ministry they are doing, yet also has required processes of drawing people in; Centenary Faire – ultimate aim not only to raise significant funds towards our intended new buildings, but in the process to draw many into contributing towards it – sense of involvement, belonging and ownership – and to build a sense of fellowship within the community; these were achieved very well, as frequent comment and even letters of thanks testified).

### **Conclusion**

- Leadership not just an issue for those involved in it – it is an issue for all
- Encourage and develop; make allowances for failings – leaders also make mistakes

- Seek opportunities to use your gifts, rather than avoiding or shunning their use
- Leadership is required both in church and society. Wonderful roles many in this community play, in business, civic leadership, education and community affairs. Opportunities to lead for the good of all the community.
- Hold leadership accountable; pray, support and work alongside given leaders
- Challenge and critique – in positive sense! Nothing more dispiriting or draining than for leaders continually to deal with barrages of criticism esp. when limited positive affirmation is given or when complaints are often petty in nature

*[Words for use at the end of service:]*

**Commitment prayer to “raising up of new and especially young leadership”**

Almighty and eternal God, to whom we must all give account of our lives, our talents, our skills and our gifts: Empower us with the gift of discernment, that we may seek out young and vibrant people who can be encouraged to become the leaders of the future. Lord, open up opportunities for many to come forward in time, to be faithful leaders, to seek out their purpose and role in your Church, that they too may enrich the common good of all your people.

As we call upon you Lord to raise up new leadership, so we give thanks for everyone who has the gift of leadership both within and outside of our Church. Give them all courage, alertness of mind, and warmth of heart, that they may always be guided in helping to make the right decisions for the furtherance of your Kingdom and for the good of all people. **Amen.**

**The Blessing:**

Upon all people of this parish whose lives are dedicated to the service of others, May you Lord God bestow your blessings of faithfulness and peace. And May the blessing of God Almighty...

**The Dismissal:**

Go in peace to lead and be led wisely by those whom God has gifted. **In the name of Christ, Amen.**