
CONSULTATION 2011

Sunrise Community Church

Celebrate God's Grace
Share God's Love

Facilitated by

Consultant 1 – Consultant 2

Sunrise Community Church

Consultation 2011

Final Report

Table of Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Consultation Process</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>General Recommendations</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>General Observations and Reflections</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Objective a) To facilitate a process by which the church can discern the leading of God for its future</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Objective b) To evaluate the implementation of the vision of the church</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Objective c) To identify the ministry needs of specific groups in the church</u> ..	<u>10</u>
<u>Objective d) To make submissions in relation to the appointment profile of the senior pastor</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Summary of Recommendations</u>	<u>18</u>

Introduction

We would like to thank the Sunrise Community Church for the opportunity to consult with you through this stage of your congregational life. In particular, the Church Council and Pastoral Leadership Team have placed considerable trust in us to facilitate this process. Thank you for the invitation and the support you have given us. We have enjoyed getting to know the church and trust that as you seek to discern your future direction before God you will know his leading and blessing. We pray that God may clearly lead both the future senior pastor and you as a church to each other.

The Church Council initiated this consultation with a request to the Denominational Consultancy Team for a consultation to work with the church in relation to future directions and the profile of the senior pastor. A consultation process was agreed to and the month of February 2011 chosen as a suitable time for most of our work with the congregation.

We appreciate the work ... has done in assisting us through arranging interviews and meetings as needed.

Throughout this process we have sought to listen objectively and to make observations and recommendations that are consistent with the purposes for which we were invited. We trust that as a congregation you will be able to move forward, building effectively on the significant heritage of the past. We trust also that as a church you will be able to creatively meet the needs of the current community who are Sunrise Community and with your new senior pastor see God's kingdom extended in the wider community of Sunrise.

May God bless you all,

Consultant 1

Consultant 2

May 2011

That you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:16-21

Consultation Process

The table below outlines the consultation process.

Date	Process
8/10	Application submitted
10/10	Team appointed and dates set for the end of beginning of 2011
30/11/10	The Objectives evening was held with the Pastoral Leadership Team and Church Council.
21/02/11	Comment Groups and Interviews
24/02/11	Comment Groups and Interviews
23/03/11	Four Interviews with leaders
25/03/11	Congregational meeting – Objective (a)
24/05/11	Presentation of Report to Church Council
17/06/11	Presentation of Report to Congregational Meeting

General Recommendations

- 1. That the Church Council releases this report in full at a congregational meeting.**
- 2. That the Church Council appoints an implementation group of three, including at least one member of the PLT, to accept responsibility for implementing the recommendations that are adopted by the congregation.**
- 3. That a further consultation be held two years into the pastorate of the new senior pastor to reflect on the emerging directions and growth of the church.**

General Observations and Reflections

1. The most significant strength of Sunrise Community Church is seen as its people. The congregation is described as friendly, welcoming, caring and stable with a strong sense of community. There is wide appreciation of the diversity in age, background and interests of members. Specific mention was made of the presence of young families, older folk and new arrivals in the church. Many people feel that they have found a sense of belonging at Sunrise Community. This is seen especially in small groups that gather within the life of the church.
2. The church's tradition of clear, relevant and practical Bible teaching is a strength. The teaching and teachers are both varied and balanced. This is coupled with good leadership, an openness to change and growth, and an ability to work through issues and problems without dividing the church. The Pastoral Leadership Team is seen as a strength of the church.
3. The current emphasis on outreach is appreciated. The 'Contact' service is seen as a key element of outreach as well as being a valued part of worship. The 'Chat 'n Choose' program is an important way of building bridges to the community. Alpha has had a significant role in evangelistic outreach.
4. Other areas that were highlighted as strengths included; music, facilities, Sunday School, the church's reputation in the community and home groups.
5. There is significant concern in the church over the level of commitment and involvement of the congregation in leadership and programs. A sense of tiredness and even burnout exists among some and there is concern about the low numbers of people involved in leadership, small groups, training and discipleship.
6. Some concerns are expressed about general levels of communication, and the structure and role of the PLT.
7. Unity is a specific concern at the moment. This is most visible in relation to a sense of fragmentation in the church over the existence of two services. A key part of this concern is the future viability of the 'Celebration' service as its numbers have decreased over recent years. As a result there is discussion about bringing the two congregations together and running one service. While the possibility of one service appeals to some, it raises difficulties for others.
8. Youth needs are highlighted as a significant issue in the church. There is concern expressed for the small number of girls involved in youth activities and the need to train and equip more leaders.
9. A need for appropriate church services for youth to participate in was emphasised.
10. There is a range of concern expressed that reflects different values in relation to worship. The most common of these surround the balance of hymns and choruses, the importance placed on congregational prayer, the reverence displayed in services and the service times.

Objective a) To facilitate a process by which the church can discern the leading of God for its future.

Observations and Reflections:

1. The Discernment afternoon was held at the church between 1.30pm and 3.00pm on Sunday March 25. ... began the gathering with a time of meditative prayer. ... and ... led the meeting through personal reflection, small group discussion and public sharing. The purpose of the meeting was to discern the leading of God for the church. All participants (60 attended) were invited to journal their reflections throughout the afternoon as it progressed. At the end participants were asked to bring their reflections to the front and place them on the Lord's Table. These reflections form the basis of the observations that follow.

2. Prayer

A strong theme that surprised us in the breadth (old and young) and high number of people who felt this, was the call to prayer. Many people who felt that unity and community was important, saw that prayer was the basis on which this would be built. There were significant calls for both corporate and individual prayer. The need for times of silence and reflective prayer were especially highlighted.

"God is calling us to prayer, quiet and meditation as we seek to build a community of caring, unified people."

3. Unity and Community

A second consistent theme that ran through both the meeting and the written reflections was the call to unity and community in the church. At a surface level this appeared to be related to the existence of two services in the church. There were a number of expressions of the desire for only one service, with all worshipping together. However the call for unity and community seemed to go much deeper than the issue of worshipping together in one service. Many saw unity as an issue that was over and above the question of services. There was a call for more acceptance, tolerance and grace spreading through every area and group in the church. There was a sense of recognising, understanding and accepting the differences between people rather than taking them away. The idea of a diverse family who cares for its members was strong. There was much emphasis on the need to put aside 'self' and serve the needs of others. 'Humility' was a further key word.

"We need to celebrate our diversity as being from God and accept each other's differences, while focussing on God as the unifying factor in our fellowship."

"I feel God is saying we need to work more closely with each other and get to know each other better. To break down the age barrier."

"We have acknowledged a love for each other, a desire to support each other, a desire to pray together – we recognise this as the work of the Holy Spirit."

4. **Children and Youth**

Within the framework of those to be cared for and nurtured in the church community there was a significant priority placed on the needs of children and youth. This was highlighted through the reflective statements we collected. Children and young people were seen as needing well thought out programs. There were several indications of the need to support and develop leaders of children's and youth ministries.

5. **Evangelistic outreach**

Outreach was also a significant concern that was reflected in the notes given to us. There was a desire for the church to be a 'light to the community' so that people might come to know Jesus. The sense of oneness and community mentioned above was often seen as the basis for this commitment to evangelism. The church cannot be a witness in the town without being a true community at heart. Love in action should be visible to the community.

6. **Change**

There were several quite strong calls for the need to remain open to change. It was noted that the church has been through a lot of change in recent years yet it still needed to be willing to accept further changes for the sake of growth and outreach.

7. **Senior Pastor**

Several other points came up a number of times. There were calls for the new senior pastor to be a strong positive leader able to draw the congregation together. The senior pastor was seen as someone who was a prayerful visionary not so much a program based visionary leader.

8. **Training and Equipping**

There was a highlighted need for discipleship, equipping and training of people into their areas of giftedness.

"We are all individuals. We need to value each other. The unity we desire may be brought about in a way that is totally different to what we think. By prayer, waiting and seeking our direction from God it will be achieved".

"God wants us to be a praying and unified church that loves Him and each other with Christ's love so that our light will shine out into the community to draw people into the family of God".

Objective b) To evaluate the implementation of the vision of the church.

Observations and Reflections:

The Vision Statement of Sunrise Community Church is:

To be a Spirit-led, compassionate church growing through vibrant worship and relevant evangelistic outreach.

In assessing the implementation of the church's vision we looked at the four key elements of the vision as expressed above.

- Being a **Spirit led** church
- Being a **compassionate** church
- Being a church growing through **vibrant worship**
- Being a church growing through **relevant evangelistic outreach**

We asked individuals and groups to indicate how well they felt the church was implementing each element of the vision and in what way.

1. Vision

The vision statement for the church is clear and represents the inner sense of direction for the church as whole. There was substantial ownership of the vision. While vision was present and owned there was not a clear connection between the vision of the church and the ministries the church engages in.

2. Compassion

The tendency of both groups and individuals was to rate compassion as the most effective value of the church. This was seen primarily through the 'Chat'n'Choose' program, through pastoral care and visitation, through prayer for needs, giving and fellowship. It was noted by some that there were individuals who needed pastoral contact. There was an identified lack in the area of social concern outside the fellowship. Responses to social justice issues both on a global scale and in the community were areas that could be developed.

3. Vibrant Worship

Of the four elements of vision, the most diversity was found in attitudes to worship. A significant number placed it at the top and others placed it at the bottom of their ratings. These differences highlight the varying attitudes to worship that exist in the church. People find their own preferred styles of worship 'vibrant' and other styles appear to have less life. This difference over worship styles is common to almost every growing church that has significant numbers of mature age Christians, young families and new Christians. A number of people felt that the vibrancy of worship could be found in different ways in

both services. Some felt that there was a lack of cohesive leadership that gave direction to the worship life of the whole community.

The existence of two or more services in a church the size of Sunrise Community is the normal pattern. Usually some are more of traditional and others more contemporary or aimed at particular groups. All fulfil important needs in the community. Most growing churches find that a single service is unable to accommodate adequately the needs of all. In this regard, the decision to have two services is a question of the mission of the church.

4. **Spirit Led**

Being Spirit-led was an element that was seen in home groups, through the Alpha course, within the leadership of the PLT and through the teaching in services. There was a wide spread desire that the church continue to develop this area of vision. Quite a number mentioned that this was a crucial element of the vision and needed to be sought more deeply. However some felt that they didn't know how or what to do to see this value developed in the life of the church.

5. **Relevant Evangelistic Outreach**

The 'Alpha' program was mentioned positively by many people, as was 'Chat'n Choose'. However there was still a strong sense that evangelism was the element of vision that needed the most development in the life of the church. There was a desire both to see 'Alpha' develop further but also to utilise other tools and approaches to evangelism. There was clarity needed in the implementation of the Alpha program.

Objective c) To identify the ministry needs of specific groups in the church.

Observations and Reflections:

1. Youth (12 - 20 years)

There was consistently high concern and commitment to responding to the needs of young people across all age groups in the church. Several needs were pointed to:

- 1.1. There is a specific need to develop the youth group and its leaders both for the young people currently in this age group but also for the significant numbers of children who will become teenagers in the next 2-3 years.
- 1.2. There is concern about the imbalance of boys and girls in the current youth group. Because there are so few girls others are reluctant to participate.
- 1.3. There is a lack of numbers in Boys Brigade.
- 1.4. A suggestion was put forward of running a youth Alpha.
- 1.5. In looking at the future of youth ministry in the church, all programs need to be thought through in terms of their relevance to the needs of young people from church families and from the community.
- 1.6. The church should consider running periodic youth services.
- 1.7. Social contact and congregational fun times should be designed to cater for the needs of young people as well as adults.

2. Children (less than 12 years)

There was widespread and deep concern for the needs of children in the church community. Behind youth, this was consistently the highest priority group. Several key issues came to the surface:

- 2.1. Crèche and Sunday School – The programs for children are appreciated and are meeting needs. There were calls for more teachers and support for Sunday School and more carers for crèche. The issues of how well the church teaches the Bible to children and how strong evangelism with children should be emphasised were raised.
- 2.2. There was concern expressed about safety issues and the need to complete the proposed landscaping.
- 2.3. Some older folk found the noise level from children in services disturbing to their sense of worship.
- 2.4. Concern was raised about finding ways for children to feel more a part of the congregation and to experience church as relevant to them.

2.5. There was also concern that congregational social times intentionally include children and need to be fun times for the whole family.

3. Retired and Elderly (over 60 years)

There was general recognition that this group is well catered for in the life of the church.

3.1. The “Wrinklies” fellowship was commonly mentioned as a good opportunity of gathering and spending time together.

3.2. The Monthly Fellowship club meets an important need

3.3. BWF meetings are significant for those involved.

3.4. There was a need expressed for more day time groups for retired people.

4. Adults (20 - 60 years)

Adults were generally felt to be the best catered for of all groups in the church.

4.1. The ‘Meet and Eat’ program is much appreciated and has given many people a chance to get to know each other better.

4.2. ‘Alpha’ has had an impact on the Spiritual lives of those who have participated.

4.3. Home Bible Study groups are a key aspect of the growth of adult believers.

4.4. There is a desire for whole family activities that involve the congregation in fun social times.

4.5. There is an expressed need for the development of opportunities for quiet retreat days, worship and prayer.

4.6. In conjunction with retired men, an opportunity exists for men to gather around a practical workshop focus perhaps building items for the children’s ministry or other community activities.

Recommendations arising from Objectives a) – c):

4. Prayer

That the Pastoral Leadership Team gives a priority response to the expressed desire for increased prayer in the church.

- 4.1 That the PLT appoints a Prayer Co-ordinating Group made up of 3-5 people with a heart for prayer by 31 July, 2011.
- 4.2 That the Prayer Co-ordinating Group in consultation with leaders prepares a brief outline for the development of the church as a praying community by 31 August, 2011. When approved by the PLT this is implemented.
- 4.3 That resources on prayer be collected by the group and made available.
- 4.4 That the brief of this group include organising retreat days of prayer.
- 4.5 That the PLT gives consideration to a teaching series on prayer that would provide the basis for encouraging the church community in prayer.

5. Vision, Planning and Evaluation

That the Church Council instigates an annual planning cycle that connects vision to church ministries.

- 5.1 That a prayerful 'Vision and Objectives' day identifies the specific objectives and values that arise from the vision of the church that are to be a priority for each coming year. These specific objectives provide the basis for planning for church ministries and programs each year.
- 5.2 That the church vision and annual objectives are communicated clearly in various forms throughout the year.
- 5.3 That Church Council plan and implement the processes required to reach each objective.
- 5.4 That there be a thoughtful and prayerful evaluation of how the church has grown in each area on an annual basis in February.

6. That those concerned and involved in the development of Children's and Youth Ministry convene a workshop with a guest facilitator to prepare a framework for the ministry including programs, leadership development and integration into church life.

- 6.1 The crucial need at the moment is a framework for development.
- 6.2 This workshop would benefit from facilitation by an outside specialist in children's and youth work.
- 6.3 Leadership development needs to be addressed as a priority.

6.4 Integration of children and youth into church services is a priority.

- 7. That those in the church with a heart for evangelism form a short term outreach task force to develop a cohesive approach to reaching the community through the groups, contacts, relationships and programs of the church.**
 - 7.1 That the Outreach Pastor convene the task force as a think-tank group to meet on several occasions to share ideas, reflections and dreams about the growth of evangelism in the church as a whole.
 - 7.2 That this task force develop an evangelism strategy for the church and submits it to the PLT for approval by September 31.

- 8. That the PLT establishes a worship team with a ministry leader that meets regularly with the team apart from practice times for encouragement, teaching and support.**
 - 8.1 That the PLT appoint a ministry leader for the worship team by August 31.

- 9. That the PLT affirm the ongoing development of home groups as a means for developing community.**
 - 9.1 That the PLT include teaching on the basis of fellowship and community encouraging people to participate in small groups before the end of 2011.
 - 9.2 That the small groups co-ordinator organise further leadership training for existing and potential small group leaders on developing community in and through small groups by the end of 2011.

- 10. That the church considers further training and equipping of the pastoral care team.**
 - 10.1 That an equipping course for pastoral carers be held subsequent to the small group leaders training preferably before the end of 2011 due to the impending retirement of the pastor responsible for overall pastoral care.
 - 10.2 That the pastoral care team structure and function be developed to enhance a smooth transition on the retirement of the pastor responsible.

Objective d) To make submissions in relation to the appointment profile of the senior pastor.

Observations and Reflections:

1. The strongest element looked for by the congregation in the future senior pastor is visionary leadership. This value was twice as high as any other quality sought. The need for a visionary leader concurs well with our observations of the life-cycle of the church.
2. Sunrise Community has a tradition of clear, relevant and practical Bible teaching and the desire for the senior pastor to lead in this area was very strong.
3. The strong emerging emphasis in the church on listening prayer, seeking God through times of quiet, growing through a deeper relationship with God, brought out an emphasis on the personal spiritual life of the senior pastor. There is an expressed desire for a leader who has mature personal spiritual disciplines of intercessory and contemplative prayer, discernment and reflection.
4. Similarly there was an expressed desire for a senior pastor who was Spirit-led, able to lead the church in developing its understanding of the Holy Spirit and how its value of being a Spirit-led church can unfold in practice.
5. Two related qualities were identified as important secondary aspects of leadership. The senior pastor at Sunrise Community will need to have or be able to develop skills in equipping or growing ministry leaders and also being able to care for, develop and lead a ministry team including other associate pastors.
6. Several aspects of leadership were seen as being desirable but likely to be delegated to other leaders in the church. These included pastoral care, evangelism and organisation – administration.
7. Sunrise Community has maintained significant links to state and national Community bodies and it would be important for the new senior pastor to be prepared to foster and develop these connections.

Recommendation:

- 11. That the following profile be referred to the search committee for the new senior pastor.**

Leadership Profile:

1 Demonstrated Visionary Leadership

Indicators -

- a. Desire to listen to God and to God's people
- b. A clear sense of vision for the pastor's current ministry
- c. Leadership of a growing church
- d. Other leaders are empowered for service in the church

2 A commitment to and gifting in Bible Teaching

Indicators -

- a. People in the church growing in their Christian faith and obedience
- b. The church is effectively reaching out into the community

3 Demonstrated disciplines in relation to Personal Spiritual Life

Indicators -

- a. Regular times of retreat and reflection in the diary
- b. Spiritual growth in the lives of church members

4 Experience and understanding of renewal and the ministry of the Holy Spirit

Indicators -

- a. Personal experience of renewal
- b. Leadership of a church growing in its understanding and experience of the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit.

5 Commitment to equipping people for ministry - delegation, support and empowering of associate pastors and ministry leaders.

Indicators -

- a. The pastor's current church has well developed lay leadership and possibly associate pastors.
- b. Leadership of a church where people's gifts are identified, cultivated and released for effective ministry leading to a healthy sense of 'body life'.

6 Relationship to the Community Churches Denomination in present locality
Indicator -

- a. State Superintendent gives an indication of a positive relationship

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation	Page No.
1. That the Church Council releases this report in full at a congregational meeting.	4
2. That the Church Council appoints an implementation group of three, including at least one member of the PLT, to accept responsibility for implementing the recommendations that are adopted by the congregation.	4
3. That a further consultation be held two years into the pastorate of the new senior pastor to reflect on the emerging directions and growth of the church.	4
4. Prayer: That the Pastoral Leadership Team gives a priority response to the expressed desire for increased prayer in the church.	12
5. Vision, Planning and Evaluation: That the Church Council instigates an annual planning cycle that connects vision to church ministries.	12
6. That those concerned and involved in the development of Children's and Youth Ministry convene a workshop with a guest facilitator to prepare a framework for the ministry including programs, leadership development and integration into church life.	12
7. That those in the church with a heart for evangelism form a short term outreach task force to develop a cohesive approach to reaching the community through the groups, contacts, relationships and programs of the church.....	13
8. That the PLT establishes a worship team with a ministry leader that meets regularly with the team apart from practice times for encouragement, teaching and support..	13
9. That the PLT affirm the ongoing development of home groups as a means for developing community.....	13
10. That the church considers further training and equipping of the pastoral care team..	13
11. That the following profile be referred to the search committee for the new senior pastor.....	15