



Growing leaders: a *what* and *how*!

Key questions: who helped you step into leadership? What might have pulled you back?
 How have you been able to grow others in leadership?

Antioch's vision:

Antioch believes in small churches, real, effective communities of people who love another, who show to the world that Jesus still lives among his people. We want to build leaders who can help build those places of love and unity and we want to open them up to people who haven't found that love in the world. That is our goal.

We want these churches to be self-replicating, locally led, and to reach out effectively to those around them. In order to do that, we need to inspire generations of leaders who will take up the call to plant churches.

And yet.....

Our structure at the moment, is majority staff-led, clergy-led, and worker-led. Majority, not totally. *How does this play out at step 12?*

One is that we tend to build things that use the resources available to us. That means time, talents, and money. So if we have the time to do something, we use that time. If we have the gifts, we will, of course apply those gifts. If we can spend cash, then it is only sensible to use that money in a way that grows the church. As we do that, we develop models that have the time, talents and money wired into them. Things become shaped around what and who we have.

However, the lighter, and more lasting impact of the network's way of planting is found often precisely outside this envelope of time, money and talent. It is in finding and releasing *new gifts*. So as we build on the basis of our resources, we might block those who are coming through. To put that in Church of England terms, the structure that we create might end up doing exactly what the older structure did. The older structure relied on gifts and wealth that often took it away from the changing grassroots of English society. In some ways, we can risk doing the same.

In the church of the New Testament, this clearly didn't happen. **Elders emerged from inside the church.** The Holy Spirit breathed his gifts through the church, and in so doing released prophecy, tongues, gifts of healing, gifts of faith and so the congregation could easily replicate. Even the venues seemed to be easy to replicate.



How does this play out?

We have a certain model of preaching. It's technical, it can often be abstract, and it might rely on a lot of knowledge. An ordinary person hearing that might very quickly decide 'I couldn't do that'. We're looking to engage people and we go for a project, with grants, a food bank, or a youth club. When we withdraw the people, the projects go. Someone looking at that project will think 'I couldn't do that.' We have worship that relies on gifted musicians. Someone hears them playing and thinks 'I couldn't do that.'

How can we create a pattern of church where someone thinks: I can do that!

1. Pray

This is foundational for two reasons. One is that it is God himself who sends the workers out into the harvest. It is a mandated prayer, that God always wants to answer. So you know that you are on the money. Secondly, as you address this task of handing on to faithful people, you will need wisdom. You will need to understand what the Lord wants of you and he will want you to change your mind. Look at what happened on the day of Pentecost. Suddenly, everyone wanted to help.

2. Support leaders

In many ways the number one task of every leader is to raise up others. Always think – how am I doing this? Look for the people that you are investing into. Encourage them, if they want to spend some time with you, make that time. Think about the people you actually have with you – how are you reaching out to them, how are you talking with them about their life, growth and ministry. There is also a place here for truth telling. One of the hardest ways to support a leader is to tell them that something isn't right. One writer put it like this – a leader is faithful, available and teachable. A gentle word can be very important, but it's also a test of character.

3. Break tasks down

Managing a large group is tough. Working a room isn't easy. Particularly in the diverse side, we often find it really difficult to communicate with many different groups at the same time. For this reason we often split our sessions up into relatively short time fragments. We might pull people in and out of topics and discussions, with leaders taking on those groups. There might be a language group which meets on a different day, or that might happen within your main meeting. Those smaller leadership tasks



allow people to grow. This is where a self-taught approach has real virtue. It allows people to teach to their level.

4. Think *local* resources

Churches are built around people. If you look around your church, what do you see? Who is there that could grow, and what would it look like for them to grow? What have people actually got? What do they normally do? Try to think of what a church might look like if it were led by local people. How might it be different?

5. Check your time use

Audit your own time. Think – could someone else replicate that? Does it matter, for the moment, that they can't. If I have to plough a huge amount of time into something, is that going to help or hinder the development of local leaders and leadership.

6. Get help

Sometimes we think that a burden is heavier than it actually is. Maybe you need a sabbatical. Maybe you need someone to come in and take on a certain task. Often there are resources lying around that you can deploy into your church. They might be resources from outside, but they might be resources from inside. Give people the chance to step up, give them the chance to carry some of the load – they might enjoy it.

7. Listen to your heart

Sometimes the burden of ministry can seem overwhelming. There is too much to do, not enough time, and we carry a sense of guilt that we're not doing what we need to be doing. Now, there is a fine balance here. On the one hand, you can't lead without turning up. But on the other hand, you can begin to make life difficult for yourself by imposing burdens on others that you yourself struggle to bear. Look at what triggers genuine enthusiasm – look at what makes you think, yes, God, you can change this.

8. Check your attitudes

Is there a leader that you have missed? Is there someone who isn't the same racial group as you? Is there someone who doesn't have your education? Is there someone who doesn't express themselves well in English? Is there someone who is poorer and you have decided that they need help? There is power in this kind of leadership, but sometimes we can be blinded to it by our heritage.



9. Get organised

If you let tasks slide, the whole burden is more likely to fall on you. If you're clearer about what other people might contribute, they're more likely to contribute. This is an area where I can often fall down.

Character, Gifting, and Release of Leadership

Knowing how to grow people isn't a science. Leadership, to a great extent, grows out of desire, and that desire can be thought of as calling. When someone wants to do something, they may be called. But then a second factor also applies. That is character – what is their character like? Are they mature? Will they serve others? This is a test in **1 Timothy 3:**

“Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full[a] respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.

Finally, there is gifting. Growing someone within their gifting helps them. But God is a giver of gifts, He can impart gifts, and we can over-stress this aspect of someone's leadership call.

Conclusion

If the church is to grow, we need to become craftsmen of leadership growth. It needs to be our priority, our primary focus. We need to ask the Lord to change us, to help us release others into ministry.