

VISION

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A God Who Reconciles

I was 18 years old when I gave my life to God. Then followed a slow progression of ups and downs until for a season I did not serve God at all.

I married and was living in Australia. I had five children and then my marriage failed. As a result of that I was living on my own in Sydney. I had everything a man in the world needed, I was earning about \$3500 a week in the hand, was living in a hotel and working in a city job. But I had a real emptiness inside of me. As a result, I tried to fill my life with things of the world. But nothing seemed to satisfy me. My friends couldn't understand why I was so unhappy, because I seemed, on an outward surface appearance, to have everything good that life had to offer.

So I started to think about my situation and started looking for a church. There was a church up the road from where I lived who met in a school hall. I decided to go to a service, get what I needed out of it, not to involve myself in it, and then get out of there. This went on for about six weeks. Then a woman came up to me and asked me to tell her the story of my life. I said I would rather not say. She said: "No, you can't come to a service like this and expect no one to know anything about who you



are". Again, she asked me to tell her the story of my life.

So I told her about being divorced and how devastating that was to me and my family; that things had not worked out in my family who had now moved back to NZ and I was still in Australia. She said: "That's really unusual. That sounds like my life." I asked her to tell me her story. She said: "To be quite honest, I just got bored with my husband. I left with my children, went to NZ, was there two years, got into a relationship which didn't last. The man two timed me and I was devastated. I went to a local church. I was there for three or four services. One night I had a dream. I dreamt that I was getting remarried to my ex-husband."

"That was some five years after we had separated. I woke up in a cold sweat; it was like a nightmare. The next night I had the same dream and for the next 3 nights I had the same dream. I said OK God what are you trying to tell me. Are you trying to tell me to forgive my ex-husband, lay it down, be healed and not harbour unforgiveness? That night as I went to sleep I had a dream about marrying my ex-husband. I complained to God: I can't do this Lord. It's been five years and there's no rhyme or reason why I would want to marry him".

I was standing there while she was telling me this, thinking I needed to get out of there because she is going to say she believed that this was message is for me. And sure enough she says: "I believe this is a message for you."

In my mind I said: "That's a real pity because I'm never going to come back to this church." So I went back to normal life and work.

Two years later I receive a phone call. My ex-wife, Leisa, is on the phone. She said: "How are you going?" Leisa had never said that to me before. I said: "Why, what's up." Leisa said; "Have you had any messages lately?"

"What do you mean?"

Leisa said: "I felt the need to start going to a church service in NZ. After about the fourth service I went to, I had a dream that we were getting married again, and that you were in prison with your arms cuffed behind your back. I had to give my forgiveness to release you."

I said: "Weren't you going out with another guy?"
"Yes, but that's over now. Don't worry about it. Are you happy doing what you are doing?"

"No."

Leisa said: "Do you miss the kids?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, why don't you think about making your way back to NZ and developing your relationship with the kids and seeing where we go from there?"

A profound feeling of peace came over me. I said: "That sounds like a really good idea."

So we decided: this is it, things are really going to work out. We talked to each other for a while.

I got everything in place and paid all my bills. Supernaturally, everything seemed to fall into place, getting released from my position and arranging to leave. I paid for my plane tickets, I had transportation to the airport, but I didn't have enough cash for a coffee. I was talking to Leisa on the phone. I said: "Listen, I've got all my stuff sorted out but I still don't have enough money for a coffee."

"Don't worry about it", she said. "When you arrive in NZ I'll make you a coffee."

"No, I want a coffee before I leave".

What happened next was supernatural. I went back to my work as a hairdresser. I was in the shop. A man walked in. He was a very big man, just clearing the top of the doorway. He wore a suit. I

was amazed by that suit. He looked like a body builder. The suit was a pinstripe one with all the "pins meeting the stripes". A really well tailored suit. He had long golden hair. He came into the shop, and sat in a chair. I asked him: "What would you like me to do for you?"

"Just a haircut will do"

"What's your name?"

"Edward".

So I'm cutting his hair and there was a weird feeling emanating from him, like holiness, like purity. We entered into this seamless conversation. We started talking about God, straight off the bat. For every question I had, he had an answer, but his lips were not moving. Then I formed a question in my mind and he answered it with his lips moving. I stood back and looked at him and said, in my mind, "Are you an angel?"

He turned around and he nodded, I freaked. Because not only was he an angel, but I had just cut his hair, and now he has to go back to heaven looking like that. To the people who were around me I said: "Did anyone see that?" No one had seen anything.

He had paid me for the haircut and left. And no one had really seen it. I thought: there is no way someone that big could walk through the door. I went out to the back of the shop to count my coins to see how much I had for a coffee. There's only one thing worse than a hairdresser with OCD and that's a customer with OCD. Anyway I went back to check my coins and there was \$250 in my wallet that wasn't there before. God really wanted that to happen.

I got back to NZ. Everything worked out.

leisa and I reconciled and it was amazing. We decided to go to a marriage enrichment class at a church in Hamilton. We got to know a couple who were Zimbabwean missionaries. The man was a NZ'er and his wife was Zimbabwean. They explained how God provided for their needs, money from the church would come. Some weeks' money from the church wouldn't be there, so they had to rely on faith that God would supply their needs while doing their mission work. Money would appear from unexpected sources sufficient to meet their needs.

Many churches in Zimbabwe don't have buildings, just open air meetings around a fire. On one occasion the people were talking with the pastor around an open fire when a man ran from the back,

leapt over the crowd and the fire and ran into the bush. The missionary's wife said to the pastor: "Did you see that man? The pastor said: "What man?" She said: "The man who leapt over the flames." He said: "Oh Edu, the angel of provision. That means that you are going to be blessed for the rest of your mission. Don't worry, God's going to provide for your needs."

He then said that Edu means Edward in English. I knew that was the same angel. In Jeremiah 29 verse 11 the LORD promises: "For I know the plans I have for you,". They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

And that's my story.

Greg Stapleton, Te Awamutu Chapter

South Island Camp – En Hakkore

Friends of mine kept telling me that this camp is the highlight of the year. They told me that many, many men have been forever changed for the better as God made his presence known powerfully and personally throughout the weekend.



On the Friday, while driving up to En Hakkore. I conversed with the Lord. I asked Jesus to open my eyes, heart and mind to receive and accept messages he wanted to give me. Yes, I was like most of the men going to camp, needing to have my spiritual battery re-charged and some tweaking of my thoughts and prayers.

I arrived before dinner in time to meet up with friends I had made last year. By the way the food we had was fantastic. I did not realize that the Holy Spirit would come down and move among the catering staff, giving them the energy and inspiration to produce such amazing food. Some men commented that they have never had such nice meals! (The gifts and blessing the catering staff received at the end of camp was well deserved)

After tea on Friday we all met in the laundry building for our first prayer, singing and testimony. I overheard a gentleman say, "It is appropriate that we were going to the laundry to

cleanse ourselves and come out as new, motivated Christians". By the end of the weekend I totally agreed with his statement.

When the band started to play and we sang, it became obvious that the Holy Spirit was coming down onto the band and flowing out to us through the music. Our hearts became filled with the Holy Spirit, and found myself singing, not to myself, but out loud. Those who know me would say this is amazing.

I always believed that God knows us intimately and before we are born God knows the path he wants us to live, providing everything we need to fulfil our life's purpose (Psalm 139 .16). This was demonstrated, firstly by bringing us Jim Stinton, our guest speaker who challenged and inspired me. Jim is from England and served in the British army in the SAS fighting in a number of wars. He was a host on Radio Rhema for a number years and had a near lethal battle with cancer. He is now self-employed as an insurance broker. Jim is a straight shooter who teaches and preaches the Word of God in love. His testimonies related to many parts of my life. It



was encouraging to hear that many men have had experiences that are similar to mine and that I am not alone.



The second example of God's plans for me was that I had been suffering from depression and anxiety. I have had counselling and was on medication. By the time I came to camp I was a lot better. At one stage some friends gathered around me and laid hands on me and prayed for me. I felt the Holy Spirit come down and lifted a large weight from around my neck. I started to stand straight and hold my head up high. What a joy to feel free from the heaviness in my spirit, and instead sense a lightness, freedom and peace. How amazing!

At the end of the camp on Sunday morning all of us gathered around and shared with each other what benefits we had gained out of the weekend. As I listened to the different men talking, I could see

how the Holy Spirit had come among us and helped lift off us burdens of sickness, bad habits, heaviness of heart and lack of love. One testimony that sticks in my mind is that of a farmer, who had shingles for the previous 18 months. A group prayed over him on Friday night and the pain slowly disappeared. All signs of shingles were gone by the time he got back to his room that night.

The catch phrase which became the centre of my prayers was and still is "I am the face of Jesus" and I keep asking in prayer that the Lord will give me the strength to do this.

I would like a special blessing to go to the organisers of this year's camp for creating an environment in which we males felt comfortable, relaxed and able to bring our troubles and prayers and present them to the Lord, opening the way for the Holy Spirit to flow liberally amongst us.

Graeme Watson, Taieri Chapter



10 Best Practices Of Super Healthy Leaders

By Carey Nieuwhof

I came across this article recently, and although it was written for church leaders many of the principles apply to those who are leaders in all areas of life.

What do you need to become a super healthy leader over the long haul?

Too many leaders get discouraged, drained and defeated over the long haul in leadership. None of them set out to end up that way, but without careful attention to important disciplines, it happens.

That question can seem difficult to answer until you realise that leaders who do well in the long run, all seem to adopt common habits and practices that help them thrive, not just survive, in leadership.

After two decades in church leadership, here are ten things that leaders who are thriving these days

almost always have in common and almost always have in abundance.

And, conversely, leaders who are missing most of these generally don't survive in our changing culture.

Now...here are ten best practices I see super healthy leaders embrace.

1. Cultivate A Few Great Friends With Whom You Can Be 100% Honest

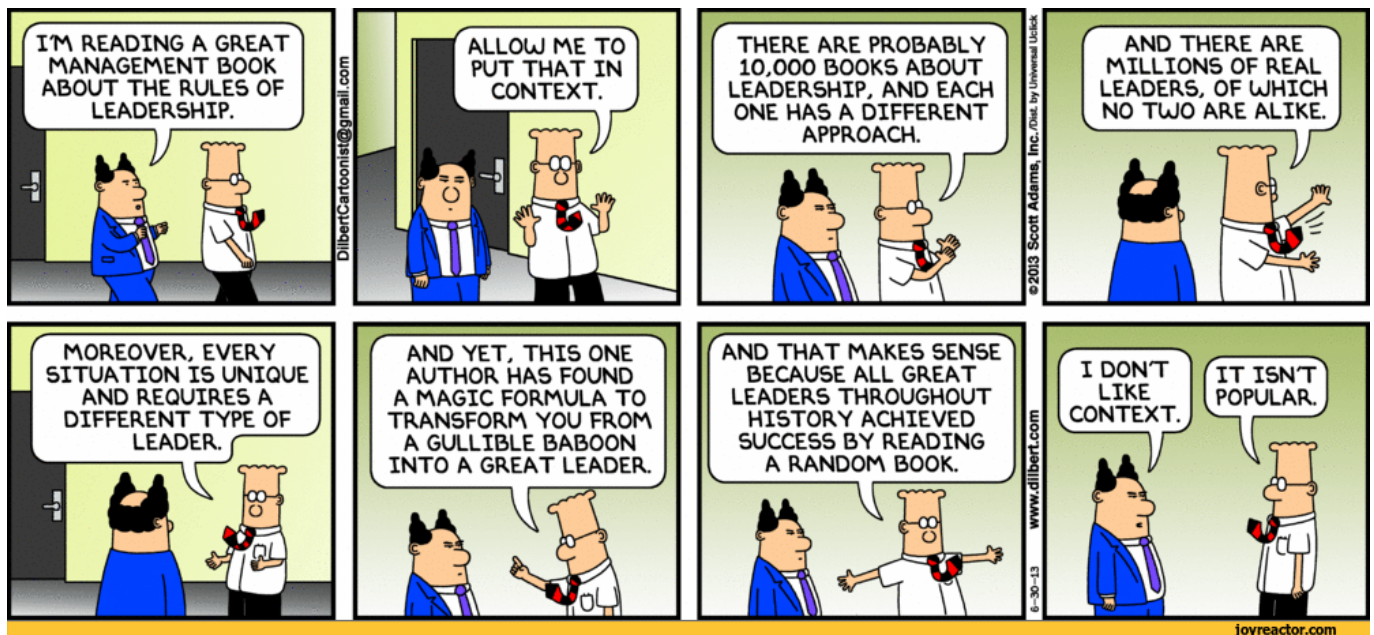
Leadership is hard. Isolation makes it much harder.

It's important you have a trustworthy few with whom you can be 100% honest.

You can't publicly or even privately complain about the situation you're facing with the people you're leading. It's bad leadership.

You do need a few people who understand your situation and who can empathize, pray with you and correct you (you're not always right and your attitude needs adjusting from time to time).

In this respect, I usually find I connect best with peers who hold a similar position and responsibility in another city. They get what I'm struggling with, and I can play the same role for them.



2. Relationships With Leaders Who Are One Or Two Steps Ahead

Having a few friends with whom you can be 100% honest is different than finding a few leaders who are one or two steps ahead of you.

The first group functions as friends and colleagues, the second as mentors.

You don't have to piggy back your leadership on someone famous. Guess what? That will probably never happen.

But nothing is stopping you from finding a leader who is just one or two steps ahead of you. Ask to go for lunch and come with great questions and an open notebook.

Mentors are closer than you think and more accessible than you think.

3. Spend Meaningful Time With People Who Give You Energy

This group isn't necessarily people with whom you can be 100% honest. They're not even mentors. It's different.

This group is about people you personally find *energizing*.

I frequently ask leaders, "When was the last time you went out for dinner with a couple who left you feeling completely energized and replenished?"

The blank looks and the looks of shock and disappointment on leaders' faces tells the story. We don't do this nearly enough.

Your leadership is like a bank account. You can only give so much without becoming overdrawn. Be overdrawn long enough and you go bankrupt.

Go find some friends who *energize* you. Then, hang out!

4. A Bullet-Proof Devotional Routine

The best way I know how to keep your passion for Christ fresh and alive is to develop a bullet-proof devotional routine.

By bullet-proof, I mean it needs to work at home and when you're on the road, when you're busy and when you're on vacation, when you're at your most stressed and when you're at your most relaxed.

5. Exceptional Clarity Around How And When To Say No

The enemy of great leadership is not lack of opportunity; it's the overabundance of opportunity.

The more successful you become, the more opportunity you will have. At first, your temptation is to say yes to everything. After all, you've waited your whole life for a crack at some things.

But saying yes to something good means you've likely said no to something potentially great.

Doing a few things extremely well always trumps doing many things adequately.

6. Regularly Scheduled Work-On-It Time

The problem with most of our jobs is that they are largely reactive unless you decide they won't be.

You can spend an entire day answering emails, responding to messages and attending meetings you didn't call only to hit 6:00 p.m. and realise you didn't move the mission forward one iota. Long terms, this will kill your ministry.

The most effective leaders always budget significant blocks of time to work *on* their ministry, not just in it.

DILBERT



7. A Diversified Learning Menu

The challenge for many of us in leadership is that we listen to the same voices over and over again.

I find I often learn the most from people who are least like me.

Sometimes the answers to your problem lie outside your discipline, not within it.

8. A Great Marriage Or Healthy Personal Life

It's hard to lead well at work *and* at home. Usually one suffers at the expense of the other.

You either use your best energy at work and have none left for home.

Or you use all your energy on your personal life and have little left for work.

As a result, married leaders who excel at work often end up with a less than ideal family life, and single people who pour their heart into their ministry end up with a much reduced personal life.

Neither is a great scenario.

If you pour the level of intentionality into your life that you pour into your leadership, you will have a better life.

9. A Hobby That Takes Your Mind Off Things

One of the challenges of leadership in ministry is that it requires both your mind and your heart. And the great leaders always throw their heart and mind fully into it.

Which means it can be hard to turn things off when it's time to go home.

I talk to too many leaders who just can't seem to turn it off.

Which is why having a hobby or something else

BY SCOTT ADAMS

that takes your mind off of work is one of the best things you can do.

What works? Anything that will take your mind off of your day job. That can be cycling, cooking, wood working, hiking, art, or watching a movie. Anything that gives your mind a break.

10. Enough Financial Margin

If there's one thing the future will require, it's more sacrifice.

This seems a bit tough in an era in which many church staff are underpaid and many are bi-vocational.

But developing financial margin is critical. Having no margin severely limits how you can respond to the opportunities in front of you.

The bottom line is this: the more margin you have, the more opportunities you can seize.

The less margin you have (as a person or as a church), the more those opportunities will pass you by.

FGBMFI Tax Receipt Policy

The National Board last year set a policy for the issue of tax receipts for donations received for the work of the fellowship.

1. A Tax Receipt will be issued for all donations to the National Account for amounts of \$300 or more per annum.
2. A Tax Receipt will be issued for donations to the National Account for amounts less than \$300 per annum upon request.
3. A Tax Receipt will be issued for all donations for Special Purposes. For example, moving the National Office.
4. A Tax Receipt will be issued to members who make donations to their Local Chapter or Regional Account, through the National Account. The amount needs to be a minimum of \$25 per month or \$300 per annum for a Tax Receipt to be issued.
5. Tax receipts will be issued in April/May each year.

For those wishing to make a donation to their chapter or region:

- Either; make a bank transfer into the National Account 03 0285 0107492 00 stating as a reference, 1. your name, 2. Your chapter or region, 3. 'Tax receipt'.
- Or; send a cheque to the National Office, PO Box 2, Mosgiel 9053 with a covering note.
- Payment will be made monthly by the National Office into the appropriate Chapter or Regional Account for donations received over the previous month.

Donations made by you directly to your chapter or regional bank account cannot be issued a tax receipt. We can only issue a tax receipt for money paid directly into the National Account.

Articles, testimonies and reports on chapter or regional events are most welcome along with accompanying photos.

Golf During Church

The Pastor woke up Sunday morning and realising it was an exceptionally beautiful and sunny early spring day, decided he just had to play golf. So.... he told the associate that he was feeling sick and convinced him to preach for him that day.

The Pastor headed out of town to a golf course about forty kilometres away. This way he knew he wouldn't accidentally meet anyone he knew from his church.

Setting up on the first tee, he was alone. After all, it was Sunday morning and everyone else was in church!

At about this time, Saint Peter leaned over to the Lord while looking down from heaven and exclaimed, "You're not going to let him get away with this, are you?"

The Lord sighed, and said, "No, I guess not." Just then he hit the ball and it shot straight towards the pin, dropping just short of it, rolled up and fell into the hole. IT WAS A 395 METRE HOLE IN ONE!

Saint Peter was astonished. He looked at the Lord and asked, "Why did you let him do that?" The Lord smiled and replied, "Who's he going to tell?"

George Perry Tour

As this goes to print, George Perry, National Chairman of FGB Australia is touring through the country, speaking at a total of fifteen chapter meetings.

The place Clubs Hastings, 6.30pm on a Tuesday night, three course plated meal in the newly built restaurant.

The speaker, George Perry, a Veterinarian from Australia, shared with us some of his life experiences. He explaining how God had prepared him and called him early in life, even when George did not know God on a personal level. Born deaf, he conveyed to us the difficulties he had to overcome in every facet of life.

George explained how in many instances he was selected for important projects, such as the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in the UK in the 1990's, in which he was in sole charge of identifying, isolating and in some cases destroying infected stock. In each of these circumstances, George could show God's hand at work, guiding and strengthening him for the task at hand.

There was a story of a Bull terrier belonging to the mail man, which had died whilst anaesthetised, and through praise and prayer was raised to life after



being clinically dead for 20 minutes. Rather a panic ensued as George had to sew the dog back together again, as he was part way through an autopsy.

God has taken George from a young boy with little hope, "BUT GOD" had other ideas taking him to the pinnacle of his industry.

George's message was summed up with a message from Exodus on the might of our God, and a call for men to stand up for God in our great and blessed country, where the National anthem calls down God's blessing and protection, to which we add our Amen and Amen.

George was followed by a brief message from one of our members on Frogs, Dogs and God. The key theme being, Satan calls us by our sins, God calls us by our name. This was followed by an altar call.

Thirty-seven people attended our meeting with many new faces. A great evening, great food, some prophetic words were spoken with a few responses and prayer with one salvation. A new brother into the kingdom, all praise to our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus.

Nothing could be better to top off a great evening.

Steve Jeffers, Hastings Chapter

If you didn't manage to get to Convention you can still watch or listen to the sessions.

Video DVD's or sound CD's can be ordered at: <http://www.faithnet.co.nz/media/fgb17.html>

DVD's are \$20 each and CD's \$9 each

Gone to Glory

Jack Sheppard (Franklin)

Jack was a faithful attendee at FGBMFI in Franklin for many years and was a valuable, pleasant man who loved to chat. He was a Civil Engineer and was involved with many projects here in NZ and globally.

David Beckett (Hastings)

David became involved in FGBMFI in the early 2000's, joining the Hastings Chapter. He went with a Church Group to take Bibles into China shortly after joining FGBMFI. David attended both the Hastings and Napier chapter meetings. He was a gentle giant in the Lord, a faithful supporter to the end.