

enrichment

A JOURNAL FOR PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY

The Volunteer Revolution

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Replicating Jesus' Team-Building Strategies in Your Church

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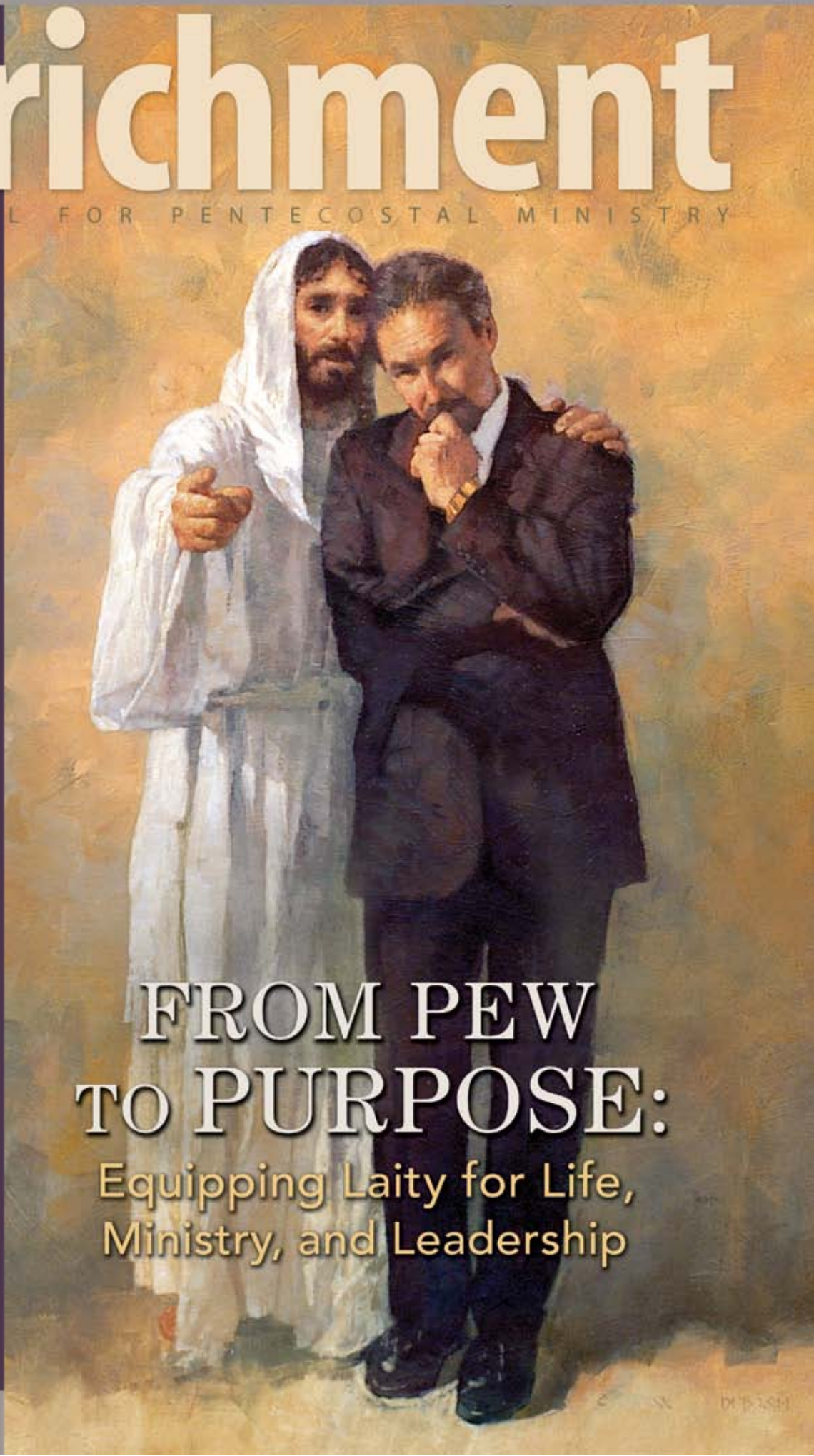
Growing Leaders for Ministry in the 21st Century

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FROM PEW TO PURPOSE:

Equipping Laity for Life,
Ministry, and Leadership





Mobilizing and Training Volunteers

BY GARY R. ALLEN

Pastors frequently request help in mobilizing and training volunteers. They lament that they cannot secure and retain committed workers in their church. It has always been a challenge to maintain the number of workers needed to operate the ministries in the church, but today it seems even more difficult. What can a pastor do?

BE A LIFELONG LEARNER AND A LIFELONG TRAINER

Pastors must continually strengthen their abilities, hone their skills, and seek to better understand the context in which they minister. There is no excuse not to improve one's ministry skills. There are many opportunities to advance one's skills including correspondence courses, extension courses, Web-based learning, and peer networks.

Training others may seem repetitive, but intentional training creates a pool of potential volunteers. It provides opportunity to pour into the lives of others.

LEARN WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO SERVE

In the past, pastors could appeal to the oughtness of service to the Lord in motivating people to volunteer. Today, people have less time they are willing to volunteer, are more cautious with their finances, and resist being shamed into ministry.

People are motivated by the purpose and mission of the ministry they support. They want to know why the ministry is important and what lasting benefit it will provide. They will work hard and even sacrifice if they believe in what they are doing.

PROVIDE A CLEAR CALL

Pastors need to clearly relate what they want people to do and why they need to be involved. If pastors are ambivalent in their call to service, volunteers will be ambivalent in their response and efforts.

Sometimes pastors know why an event, activity, or assignment is important but fail to adequately convey it. The risk is that they think it and think they said it or say it and think it is done. This failure in communication sends mixed and confusing signals to others. Volunteers become uncertain and confused, and pastors become frustrated and suspect of their behavior.

PROVIDE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

Pastors need to provide clear, concise instructions. People do not need a detailed instruction manual; short, well-worded directions in a bulleted list will usually provide adequate direction.

Some people only need to be pointed in the right direction, and others need more information. Both approaches have risks. The one who needs less instruction may go in the wrong direction, and the one needing more attention and detail may become tiresome. A good pastor learns to work with both.

AFFIRM PEOPLE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A smile and a kind word is all most people need to keep encouraged and do a good job. People occasionally need correction. But if personal interaction between the pastor and volunteers occurs only when something is wrong, discouragement will result and kill their motivation and enthusiasm.

There is no substitute for loving-kindness. Many people in our churches feel used and abused in the workplace. When they do a good job at church, they deserve appropriate verbal and emotional reward.

My wife tells the story of a little boy in Sunday School who was asked to define loving-kindness. He said, "If you give me a peanut butter sandwich, that is kindness. But if you put a little jelly on it, that is loving-kindness." We need to learn to spread a little jelly.

Aside from God's presence, people are the most valuable commodity in church. My greatest joys and greatest hurts in ministry have come from people. I assure you that the joy that comes from those with whom I have ministered far out weighs the pain I have experienced. What a privilege to partner with one another in service to our Lord.

This issue of *Enrichment* will provide you with practical helps in working with volunteers. I trust you will find what you need to become an even better pastor and what your people need to become even more effective in ministry. ■

GARY R. ALLEN, D.Min., is executive editor of *Enrichment* journal and national coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment Office, Springfield, Missouri.

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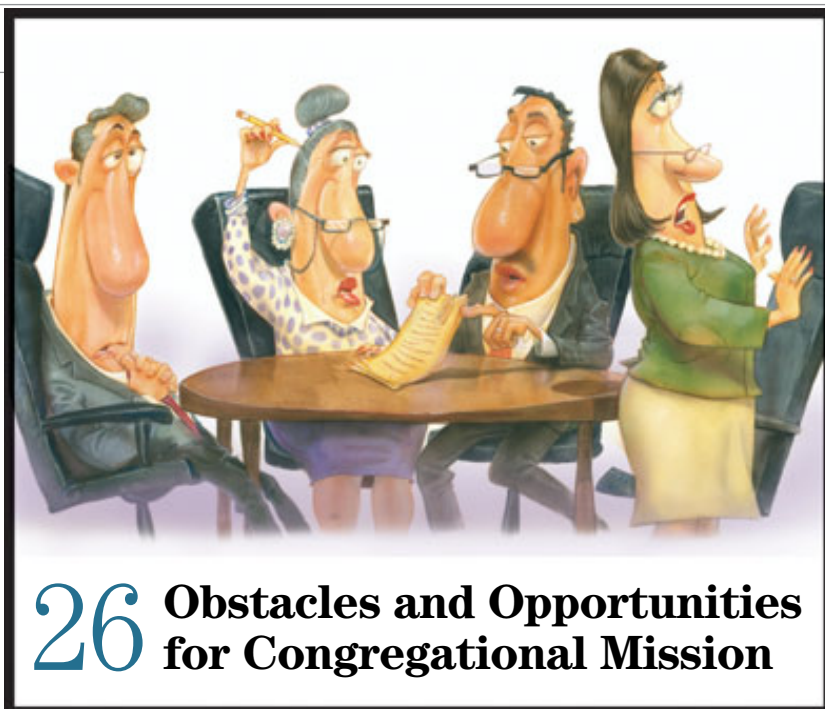
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NEXT TIME IN ENRICHMENT

The Azusa Street Revival — 100 Years of Pentecostal Power and Passion

April 2006 marks the centennial of the Azusa Street Revival of 1906–09. This issue will look back to the headwaters of this Pentecostal River. The revival at Azusa Street was the originating effluence for today's Pentecostal and charismatic movements. What flowed out of the Azusa Revival has touched the lives of almost every Pentecostal or charismatic person living today. What made Azusa such a powerful revival? What can we learn from it? How should the outflow from Azusa affect this generation at the onset of the 21st century? Read dynamic perspectives about this great revival from Edith Blumhofer, Gaston Espinosa, David Daniels III, Harold Hunter, Douglas Jacobsen, Leonard Lovett, Gary R. McGee, Cecil M. Robeck, Susie Stanley, Vinson Synan, George O. Wood, and others.

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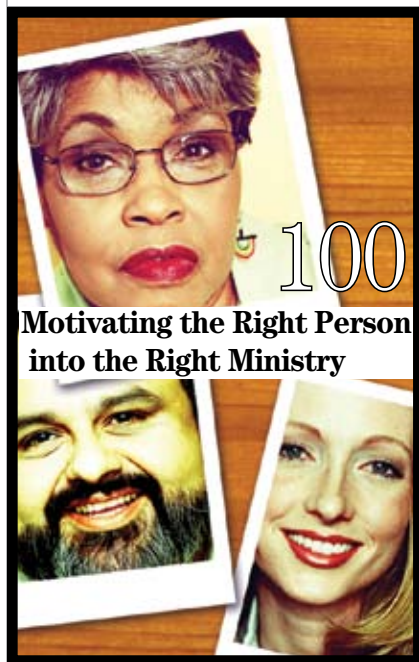
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• Use of the masculine pronoun for pastor is used throughout this issue and refers to both genders.

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Motivating the Right Person into the Right Ministry

ONGOING HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORT

Ongoing Hurricane Relief Effort

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina roared ashore and destroyed portions of Louisiana and Mississippi. On September 24, Hurricane Rita devastated portions of Texas

River of Life Assembly of God,
Pearl River, Louisiana.



and Louisiana. More than 100 AG churches were damaged — some a total loss. The effort to rebuild and repair these churches continues. Many churches from other parts of the county have already responded

with money and relief or construction teams. Below are some ways your church can help in this ongoing relief effort.

GIVE

Convoy of Hope

Many times Convoy of Hope was the first relief effort in several of the areas affected by the hurricanes. They have already delivered nearly 500 truckloads of ice, water, food, and other relief supplies. Convoy of Hope needs ongoing financial help as it continues to minister to people in these areas.

Donate: 100% goes to hurricane relief.

1. Securely Online. Donate by credit card at:

<http://www.convoyofhope.org/>

or

2. Phone Toll-Free: 1-877-840-4800

Financial Help for Pastors

Many of the pastors in these effected areas lost their income along with their churches. Many church members lost their possessions and their jobs and have moved from the area. The Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Texas Districts need funds to help pastors whose churches have been damaged. "No church, no income," says Louisiana District Superintendent Douglas Fulenwider. "We need to help pastors salary-wise until their towns are up and running."

ONGOING REBUILDING EFFORTS

The long-term commitment is to work with the affected districts to rebuild churches. Mississippi District Superintendent W.L. Davis says these efforts will be going on for some time to come.

Fulenwider states that work teams are needed for cleanup and repair in the areas affected by Hurricane Rita. Volunteers are needed for cleanup in the New Orleans area and to help out when other areas of New Orleans are opened.

Roger Bailey, South Texas district missions and men's ministries coordinator, states that the two biggest needs are for financial assistance for pastors and for volunteer work crews.

Visit these websites to find up-to-date information on how your church can help:

Assemblies of God: <http://www.ag.org>

Louisiana District: <http://www.laaog.org/>

Mississippi District: <http://www.msdistrictag.com/>

South Texas District: <http://www.stxag.org/>

PRAYER

Pray for the people in these areas who have lost everything. Pray for pastors and churches in the areas as they continue to minister Christ's love to the hurting.



UTHTRAX

THE REAL BOTTOM LINE

Let's reach kids. Let's build relationships. Does this sound like the mission statement of AG youth groups across the nation?

This religious sounding language was heard in workshops and general sessions at a recent national marketing conference called Kid Power. Company reps from media, clothing, and financial organizations attended this powerhouse conference. Companies paid \$1,000 per day to discover methods to gain a greater return on their marketing investments from today's youth.

Sessions focused on targeting children as young as two, reaching into the pocketbooks of families, and later, young adults. How? By developing brand loyalty and a cool image in children's minds from an early age.

Walt Mueller, founder of Center for Parent/Youth Understanding attended this conference and expressed his frustration with the experience. In

CROSSROADS

SPIRITUAL HUNGER FOUND IN WEIRD PLACES

USA Today reported that city officials in East Chicago, Indiana, had to turn off a streetlight because many people were coming to see a shadow they believed resembled Jesus. The city wanted to accommodate people's religious beliefs but was worried about public safety.

A Google search on "Jesus," "Virgin Mary," "Elvis," and "eBay" will provide information about the Internet casino that bought a grilled cheese sandwich with the image of the Virgin Mary on eBay for \$28,000. In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a section of a plaster wall that bore the image of the face of Jesus sold for \$2,000. The latest sighting of Elvis occurred in July 2005 when his image was seen on a piece of nonfat white bread that was for sale.

This kind of phenomena can be perceived as weird, or as an indicator of the spiritual hunger of people who are searching for spiritual reality. What should one say to a person who is waiting under a streetlight in East Chicago hoping to see Jesus? Everyone should ponder this question because there is no lack of spiritual hunger in our nation. New venues where spiritual hunger is manifested are popping up everywhere. Standard answers to questions are not adequate unless one is willing to walk with the pilgrim who is seeking God



in unusual places. My guess is that God does not see any of this as weird. God says, "I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, 'Here am I, Here am I' " (Isaiah 65:1).

BYRON D. KLAUS, D.Min., president of Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.

his blog at <http://www.cpyu.org>. Mueller reports, "They talked about reaching kids. Translation? Get them to spend money."

You might believe this UTHRAX is about dumping on companies who spend big bucks to influence our children and teens. If so, hang tight because we are taking a U-turn.

Clothing giants like Aeropostale and media moguls like MTV are clear about their motivation. They have a bottom line. Targeting teens in the corporate world is not about changing a teen's life; it's about dollars and cents, and long-term success.

What is our bottom line? Is it to reach youth who do not know Jesus? Is it to build lifelong leaders? Is it to bring hope and direction to this generation? Of course it is.

But what happens when a youth pastor ministers faithfully to a group of 30, and his hopes for 125 seem distant? What is the pressure when the number 30 does not look good on paper?

What happens when a pastor or a church invests money, time, and effort in youth, but a handful of teens continue to hang on the back row and display no return on the investment? Should one cut his losses and concentrate on those who offer an additional cha-ching in the spiritual maturity department?

Focusing on the bottom line means: each teen that crosses our path is a person with potential; a person with their own unique challenges; and a person who is loved by God. They may not always make a youth pastor or a youth ministry look successful. They might be slow to buy into the message because they hear so many messages in their world.

As we gather to brainstorm, pray, and search for great resources and cutting-edge methods, ask God to remind us of the real bottom line: to reach teens and build relationships so God can rock their world.

T. SUZANNE ELLER, Muskogee, Oklahoma

FIELD TRIP

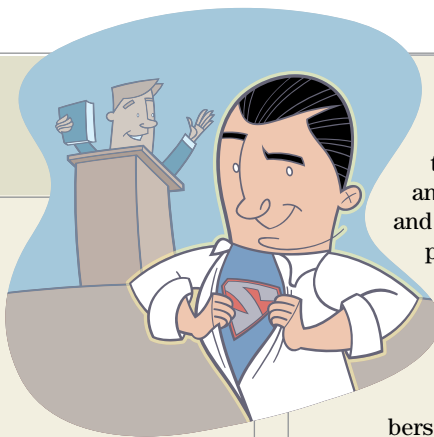
CREATING AN EMPOWERING CULTURE

Old thinking lived by the maxim “If you want something done right, do it yourself.” Empowered thinking encourages the opposite: “If you want something done right, enable others to do it.” Moving from old to new often presents a serious challenge.

Associate Pastor John Battaglia answered the challenge by addressing the power base — leadership. Having determined that a change was necessary, the pastoral staff decided to build a stronger empowerment culture within the church, and they led the way. Engaging in a 6-hour seminar designed to raise awareness of empowerment principles, the staff increased their understanding of biblical teaching and practical application of the subject. Each left the seminar with an action plan to implement a shift from traditional hierarchy to empowered leadership.

Battaglia’s seminar began with an in-depth study of Jesus’ empowering leadership from the Book of Luke. In summary, the recruiting, discipling, and releasing phases of Jesus’ leadership were examined. Further teaching focused on biblical and leadership literature studies in character, authenticity, emotional intelligence, and the model of servant leadership.

Crucial to an empowerment culture’s success is the ability to appreciate and recognize potential in others. Leaders intentionally nurture potential in others by mentoring and coaching through the orientation, change, and refining



stages of empowerment. Preparing both leaders and volunteers to understand and even anticipate the natural ebb and flow of the process prevents attrition caused by predictable seasons of disappointment.

A healthy church requires healthy, active, serving members. Each of these qualities begins and grows through leadership who value empowerment. Leaders who are afraid to release others to serve cannot create a culture in which growth thrives. Empowering leaders, though, act as enablers in the best sense of the word. For more information, contact John Battaglia at First Assembly of God, Des Moines, Iowa (515-279-9766).

LORI O’DEA, doctor of ministry coordinator, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary

WHAT IN THE WORLD

FAILURE IS STILL FAILURE NO MATTER WHAT YOU CALL IT

In summer 2005, a controversial proposal came before the Professional Association of Teachers in Buxton, Derbyshire, England. This proposal would delete the term *fail* and the concept of failing from the educational vocabulary and replace it with *delayed success*. Although the item was tabled, the fact it was presented in the first place speaks volumes.

Liz Beattie, the retired British teacher who authored the proposal, expressed concern that failing students would be labeled as *failures*, which could undermine their enthusiasm. She argues that students who repeatedly failed exams could lose interest in learning. According to her plan, students should be allowed to bank portions of exams or assignments that are completed satisfactorily and then apply that credit later when unsatisfactory work has been turned in.

Ms. Beattie told BBC Radio 4’s *Today* program: “We have made so much development in recent years in making examinations more flexible, doing them in modules so you can concentrate on different parts of them at different times.”

Beattie went on to say, “What happens when an exam is failed but, three-quarters of it is satisfactorily done? It should be possible to do the other bits as add-ons afterwards, and to defer the success of the exam.”



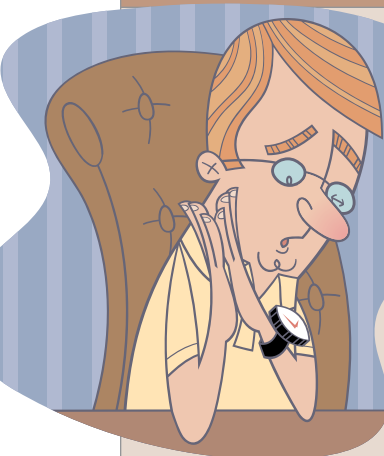
Deferred success? The idea may be new, but the attempt to deny one’s failings is as old as the Garden of Eden. Rather than admitting he had sinned, Adam attempted to blame Eve. King David attempted to cover up his adulterous affair with Bathsheba by bringing her husband home from the battlefield, trying to get him drunk, and giving him permission to be intimate with his wife when the nation was at war. Even Peter resisted admitting his vulnerability to failure. When Jesus predicted Peter would deny Him three times, Peter vehemently stood his ground and refused to accept his fragile sinful tendencies.

The Bible is clear: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Whether we prefer words such as *sinner*, *failure*, *guilty*, or would rather think of our status before God as *delayed success*, everyone needs a Savior.

GREG ASIMAKOUPoulos, senior pastor, Mercer Island Covenant Church, Mercer Island, Washington.

MINISTRY TRENDS

TIME DEVOTED KEY TO PRAYER LIFE SATISFACTION



Pentecostal pastors are more likely to spend time in personal prayer than their non-Pentecostal counterparts but no more likely to have a satisfying prayer life, according to a nationwide survey by Ellison Research.

The Phoenix, Arizona, firm found that Pentecostal and charismatic pastors spend an average of 47 minutes a day praying, more than Methodists (45 minutes), Southern Baptists

(33), Presbyterians (28) and Lutherans (27).

Only 14 percent of Pentecostals, however, reported that they had an extremely satisfying prayer life — the same as Baptists and Lutherans. One in five Methodist ministers said they have a rewarding personal prayer time, but only 5 percent of Presbyterians said so.

Among Pentecostals, 49 percent agreed they were “somewhat satisfied” with praying, again the middle of the pack. But one in 10 Pentecostals acknowledged being “extremely dissatisfied,” the highest ranking of any faith group.

Unsurprisingly, the overall rate of satisfaction rises the more minutes a day a minister is praying. Likewise, those who spend less time presenting personal requests and more time praying for the needs of others find the experience enriching.

Those content with their time with God focus beyond their own lives and churches, interceding for such concerns as overseas missions, persecuted Christians, local evangelism efforts, and government leaders.

Ministers of large churches reported having more satisfying prayer lives — as well as spending more time in prayer — than those from smaller and medium congregations. Although they spend roughly the same amount of time in prayer as others, 30 percent of pastors 60 and older say they are very satisfied with their prayer life, compared to only 13 percent ages 45–59 and just 9 percent under 45.

The typical pastor spends 32 percent of his prayer time making requests, 20 percent in quiet time or listening to God, 18 percent giving thanks, 17 percent in praise, and 14 percent in confession. The most common subject of their petitions — 98 percent in a given week — is the needs of individual members of their congregations. That is followed closely by the congregation's spiritual health, spiritual growth for their local church, and wisdom in the leading the congregation, all at 94 percent.

JOHN W. KENNEDY, *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*

LEADERLIFE

FORGIVE ME, BOB

I was in a coffeehouse for lunch with a pastor. I noticed that the owner of the establishment (I will call him Bob) was behind the counter taking orders. I had spoken with Bob several times a week when I first started frequenting the coffee house.

Then my life and my job changed (so did Bob's), and I was either at the office or on the road, or only with Christians most of the time. Somehow a couple of years passed without us talking or even seeing each other.

To my surprise, Bob brought our lunches to the table that day. I started talking with him. I inquired about the success of his new business and expressed regret for not having spoken with him for so long. ➤



A SINGLE PERSPECTIVE

WHY DO PEOPLE MARRY?

Many reasons exist why the single adults in your church want to marry. Some are healthy; some are not. Unhealthy reasons include:

To escape singleness — Some people are so unhappy being single they will do almost anything to get married.

Reality: They fail to realize singleness is a tool to help them become a whole person before marriage.

To escape loneliness — Some people mistakenly think marriage will end their loneliness. **Reality:** If a person is lonely before marriage, chances are he/she will also be lonely after marriage. Many married adults, for a variety of reasons, experience loneliness.

To legitimize sex — Some couples have had premarital sexual encounters. Once a dating couple experiences sex, one or both may want to marry to make it okay in God's eyes. **Reality:** Sex is only a part of marriage. What will the couple do the other 23 1/2 hours of the day?

To escape living with mom and/or dad — Some young adults see marriage as a panacea for problems with parents. **Reality:** Singleness has its own set of problems; marriage does too. If a person cannot handle relationships in the home, how will he/she handle relationships out of the home?

To provide a mom or dad for the children — Some single parents are so tired from the strain of raising ➤

Bob replied that he had seen me at the coffeehouse several times and had wanted to stop by, "but you seemed so busy." Those five words cut me. On reflection, I now see where I went wrong:

1. Vision Drift: My almost exclusive relationship with Christians was pulling me toward an insider vision of ministry that is comfortable, but disconnected from the church's mission. I love the Church, but vision is influenced by its context. That is why Jesus devoted himself to being a friend of sinners.

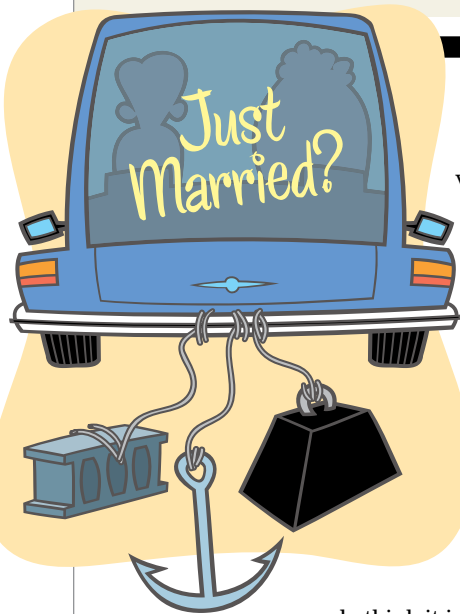
2. Ministry Drift: If Bob is right, spiritual seekers view me as unapproachably busy, making the ministry a deterrent to them, rather than an attraction to them. When this kind of drift occurs, the means have become their own end.

3. Schedule Drift: I had assumed during the earlier part of my friendship with Bob that our regular contact would continue unabated. It never occurred to me that, as mid-lifers, both of us would experience changes that I would need to adapt to.

I have profound admiration for ministers who maintain an evangelistic edge in their personal lives. God help us to receive His grace in this regard.

Forgive me, Bob.

EARL CREPS, doctor of ministry director, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary



children alone that any caring person of the opposite sex is viewed as a potential mom or dad. **Reality:** Children grow up, leave, and the parent has to face the person he/she married. What common ground is there?

To fulfill a need to be married

— Some people are in love with the idea of being married.

Reality: Marriage is not everything some people think it is.

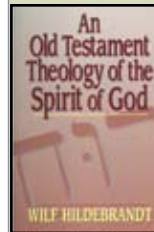
These reasons for marrying are selfish and self-fulfilling, and are not the true reasons why a Christian should marry: to give to, edify, and fulfill the other person. Be sure to dispel these false notions of marriage to the single and single-again adults in your church. To be mutually beneficial, marriage requires consistent work and effort by both spouses.

DENNIS FRANCK, director, Single Adult Ministries, Springfield, Missouri

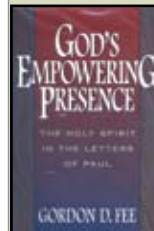
SHELF TALK

BUILDING A PENTECOSTAL LIBRARY

Holy Spirit baptism is essential for dynamic Christian living. The following books will enhance a pastor's understanding of pneumatology and will serve as effective tools for pastoral ministry.



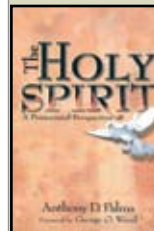
An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God by Wilf Hildebrandt (Hendrickson, 256 pp., paperback) provides sound scholarship on the major pneumatological themes of the Old Testament. Written from a Pentecostal perspective, the book is a scholarly resource for teaching and preaching on the Holy Spirit.



God's Empowering Presence by Gordon Fee (Hendrickson, 992 pp., hardcover) provides a thorough, academic examination of the Holy Spirit in Pauline theology. This book, used in many seminaries, is comprehensive, exegetical, and a significant contribution to pneumatology.



Spirit and Power by William and Robert Menzies (Zondervan, 240 pp., paperback) provides an excellent defense of Pentecostal doctrine. Using Luke's writings in particular, the authors offer a useful apologetic for initial physical evidence, healing, signs and wonders, and Holy Spirit baptism as subsequent to salvation.



The Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Perspective by Anthony Palma (Logion, 303 pp., hardcover) is a theological treatment of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Palma examines the biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit.



The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke by Roger Stronstad (Hendrickson, 104 pp., paperback) is a powerful study of the Holy Spirit in Luke's writings. Stronstad offers an intelligent examination of the phrases "baptized in" and "filled with" the Spirit. He also shows how Lukan and Pauline Theology harmonize.

Consider adding these books to your library. Also, consider giving them as gifts to your staff.

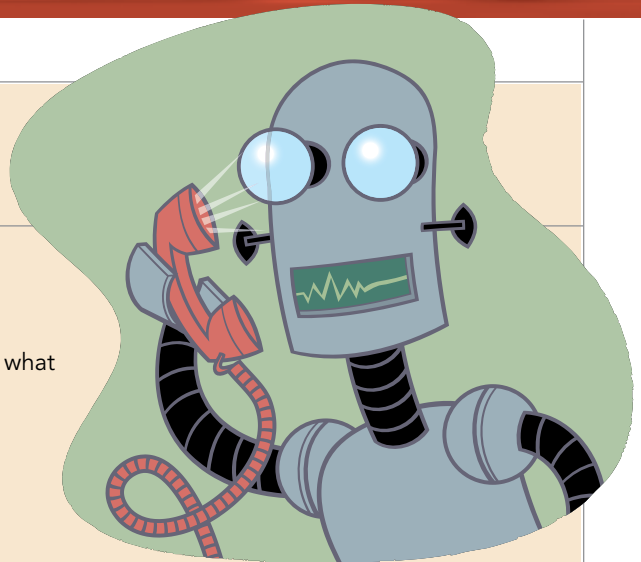
To order these books through Gospel Publishing House call 1-800-641-4310.

KEVIN WILSON, assistant editor, *Enrichment* journal

WIT & WISDOM

TOP 10 LIST FOR PASTORS

1. Don't do dumb stuff twice.
2. No one has to attend your church, except your wife — and sometimes she may not come.
3. Understand the theological meaning of *work*.
4. Don't ask God to give you additional people if you do not know what to do with the people you already have.
5. Clean the restrooms.
6. Welcome visitors.
7. Don't use weird people or methods on Sunday morning.
8. Understand what *preaching* means.
9. Mention Jesus to an unsaved person.
10. Occasionally, have a real person answer the church phone.



CHARLES E. HACKETT, former executive presbyter and executive director, Assemblies of God U.S. Missions, Springfield, Missouri.

FROM BOOMERS TO ZOOMERS

THE SOUND BITE GENERATION



Late last year, CBS News magazine show *60 Minutes* (December 26, 2004) did a segment on millennials (people born since the early 1980s), terming them “The Echo Boomers.” I acquired the transcript, and selected some key phrases used to describe this generation, the eldest of which is now college age:

“Visual Motor Ecstasy” means “any cultural accouterment that doesn’t produce instant satisfaction is boring.” — Dr. Mel Levine, University of North Carolina

“Everyone is above average in our generation.” — Nick Summers, senior, Columbia University

“One of the things with this generation is word of mouth. Buzz is more important today than it’s ever been.” — Jane Buckingham, The Intelligence Group

“Echo boomers have their own television network, the WB” — Steve Kroft, CBS News

“Everyone gets a trophy at the end of the year. It’s something you’re used to. ... And you have the rows of trophies lined up on your windowsill, or whatever.” — Andie Gissing, senior, Middelbury College

“Protected and polished, they are trophy children in every sense of the word.” — Steve Kroft, CBS News

“Parents feel as if they are holding on to a piece of Baccarat crystal or

something that could somehow shatter at any point. And parents therefore are protecting them, inflating their egos. Massaging them, fighting their battles for them.” — Dr. Mel Levine

“Helicopter parents” — College administrators’ label for over-nurturing moms and dads

“They can’t think long-range. Everything has to be immediate, like a video game. And they have a lot of trouble sort of doing things in a step-wise fashion, delaying gratification. Really reflecting as they go along. I think that’s new.” — CEO of a major corporation, when asked how to characterize his youngest employees.

“Perfect” — Scott, a millennial focus group participant, when asked, “What would you call your generation?”

While no group of people can be reduced to a sound bite, the phrases above are windows into an emerging young adult culture that is different in significant ways from its older Generation X siblings and parents. What is the value of trying to understand people in this way? Ask any missionary.

EARL CREPS, doctor of ministry director, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary

ENDNOTE

1. For more information visit <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/10/01/60minutes/main646890.shtml>

THE HIM BEHIND THE HYMN

A LOVER OF MUSIC AND GOD'S GRACE



Ira Stanphill was born February 14, 1914, in Bellview, New Mexico. His mother and father, who had moved from Arkansas to New Mexico by covered wagon, had no way of knowing that Valentine's Day was an appropriate day for their son to be born. Ira developed a love for God at age 12, and had a passion and talent for music. Ira would write more than 500 gospel songs. He wrote his first at age 17.

"The basic reason I have

written songs is that I love God and Christ has loved me," Ira said. "Most of my songs are the outgrowth of real experiences with Christ. I think they appeal to people because I have had trials, heartaches, and sorrow in my own life, and I know what I write about."

As a young man, Ira traveled with several evangelists serving as musician for the team. Having taught himself to play the piano, organ, accordion, and ukulele, he was an essential and appreciated member. Ira's love for music was overshadowed only by his love of the Lord.

Following college in Coffeyville, Kansas, the young musician sensed a call on his life to preach and entered full-time ministry. Although he served churches in Florida, Pennsylvania, and Texas, he traveled extensively ministering in more than 40 foreign countries.

Often during a service, Ira would ask members of the congregation to suggest possible song titles. Later he would look at those titles and write lyrics.

Ira Stanphill's well-loved song, "Room at the Cross," was one such song. During a service he was conducting in 1946, Ira wrote the words on a scrap of paper. When he returned home, he wrote the words and the music in a short time.

But the brevity of time it took to write "Room at the Cross" is disproportional to how long it has been used by the Lord to woo seeking hearts to himself. In addition to being the closing song to the national broadcast for many years, it has been translated in Spanish, Italian, and German. The song attests to Ira's understanding of the power of the Cross to draw a most undeserving sinner.

The cross upon which Jesus died
Is a shelter in which we can hide;
And its grace so free is sufficient
for me,

And deep is its fountain — as wide
as the sea.

GREG ASIMAKOUPoulos, senior pastor, Mercer Island Covenant Church, Mercer Island, Washington.

FAITH COMMUNITIES TODAY

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS

The following two questions come from a 2000 survey entitled "Faith Communities Today." More than 600 AG congregations responded.

1. Which of the following best describes the situation in your congregation?

- 20.1 percent We do *not* have any problem getting people to accept volunteer leadership roles.
- 56.9 percent Recruiting volunteer leaders is a continual challenge, but we eventually find enough willing people.
- 22.9 percent We cannot find enough people who are willing to serve.

2. Of your total number of regularly participating adults, what percent would you estimate are currently holding volunteer leadership roles in your congregation, for example, serving on committees, or teaching Sunday School?



NONE	HARDLY ANY (1-10 percent)	FEW (11-20 percent)	SOME (21-40 percent)	MANY (41-60 percent)	MOST (61-80 percent)	ALL OR NEARLY ALL (81-100 percent)
7	8.9	28.6	33.6	18.1	7.7	2.5

SHERRI L. DOTY, statistician, office of the General Secretary.

MINISTRY GROUP DEVELOPMENT

MINISTRY GROUPS: A TOOL FOR TRANSFORMATION

The American Baptist Churches of the West was an organization in decline with only 16 percent of their 229 congregations growing in 1997. New regional leadership cast a fresh vision built primarily on two principles. One: "The local congregation is God's basic and primary unit of mission in the world." Two: "The human key to congregational transformation usually begins with the pastor." By 2002, 72 percent of their congregations were healthy and growing.

One major tool in this amazing transformation was the development of pastoral clusters that met monthly in a peer-learning environment. The clusters provided a positive, supportive, and encouraging forum in which pastors could share and learn from one another. The full story is told in *Hit the Bull's Eye* by author Paul D. Borden, one of the regional leaders who led the transformation.

Assemblies of God districts across the nation are developing a new approach to revitalize pastors and churches called the Ministry Group, which is similar to the pastoral cluster mentioned above. Numerous districts are moving toward a Ministry Group structure in which pastors and spouses meet monthly to equip and encourage one another in peer group learning forums. Districts holding monthly meetings report more than 70 percent of their pastors are actively involved.

A SUPERINTENDENT'S VIEW



"We began monthly Ministry Group meetings for our pastors in October 2004. Seventy-three percent of our pastors are regularly attending these meetings. They are equipping, encouraging, praying for each other, and building strong relational friendships. This was our goal when we implemented the Ministry Group structure, to see pastors build strong ministerial friendships and



to care for each other.

"In April 2005, a pastor's wife called me. She was thankful for this new program in our district. Her husband was seriously injured on his secular job. He fell, broke seven ribs, had internal injuries, and had been hospitalized for more than a month. The presbyter/mentor and the pastors from his Ministry Group assisted him and his church by preaching on a rotating basis while he was recovering. They also blessed the family financially. His wife called to thank me for the new Ministry Group structure in our district. It

is great to see pastors and ministers coming together to care for one another."

Superintendent Sergio Navarrete, Southern Pacific Latin American District

A PASTOR'S VIEW



"I have benefited from our Ministry Group in many ways. The group has provided an opportunity to develop relationships with other pastors that would not have developed otherwise. I have exchanged ideas, ministry problems, concepts, structure, and theology with this group. My church, family, and personal life have also benefited. One pastor I met lives 30 miles away and his church is about the

same size as mine. We have grown together and have learned a great deal from one another. I am growing from his strengths, and he is growing from mine. It has been refreshing!"

Pastor Gary Auten, First Assembly of God, Lowell, Indiana

For more information on Ministry Groups, write: Charles E. Crank, 44 N. Girls School Road, Indianapolis, Ind. 46214, phone 317-554-2114, or e-mail CCrank@ag.org.

PROFILES

New Life Assembly of God, Janesville, Wisconsin

TRUE RICHES — WISCONSIN CHURCH IS SHARING CHRIST WITH A COMMUNITY IN NEED

"I remember asking my dad why we didn't shop at the Salvation Army thrift store," says Pastor Michael Jackson of New Life Assembly in Janesville, Wisconsin. "We have to shop out of the mission instead," Dad replied. "The Salvation Army is where the *rich* poor people go." I realized at that point that there were strata of poverty and we were at the bottom."

The Jackson family lived in Wichita, Kansas, in the 1940s and '50s. They struggled to feed themselves on the senior Jackson's meager pay as a laborer. He walked 13 miles each way to work.

"We lived next door to a church," Pastor Jackson remembers. "They did absolutely nothing to help our family."

Jackson has enjoyed God's favor both in his personal life and in his ministry. He is determined to help other families break free from poverty, whether it be material or spiritual.

To help meet material needs in their community, Jackson and the congregation of New Life joined with Convoy of Hope to hold a Day of Compassion in August 2004.

"People were lined up four abreast for two blocks to get two bags of groceries," he says. "We also had free haircuts, a medical tent, a kid zone, live music, and free food on the grounds. As a result, I became extremely burdened for the poor

and their healthcare. We had people come through our healthcare clinic who got their first toothpaste and first toothbrush."

Jackson and church members began a series of meetings with two local hospitals and with the city council. The city newspaper took notice and began printing monthly editorials on the healthcare situation in Janesville. People responded with donated supplies and time.

"We are working to establish a free healthcare clinic," Jackson says. "We're partnering with an existing clinic that currently offers 4 hours of service a week. We want to help them get to 40 hours."

Jackson describes the partnership as a "Janesville Model" that connects private enterprise, private citizens, and local hospitals in partnership.

"We believe we're going to have free healthcare for the poor here," he says, "and that other cities will look at what's been done and do the same in their communities — without government, without bureaucracy, without paperwork."

But New Life Assembly's commitment to compassion outreach is not shifting any attention away from community evangelism.

Jackson has coordinated four church plants in his 5 1/2 years at the church. Korean and Hispanic congregations meet on the main church campus. New Life has also started churches in the nearby towns of Edgerton and Elkhorn. To assist the outlying churches, New Life contributed an associate pastor to lead each work and about 180 church members to begin attending the new churches. Despite giving up dozens of families, New Life's attendance continues to grow. From the 480 who came to the church when Michael and Marilyn Jackson arrived in 1999, some 800 meet each weekend for the church's various services.

The combined focus on compassion ministry and evangelism is reaping souls. Jackson reports that more than 900 people made salvation decisions in 2004 through New Life's various outreaches. But he sees individual faces when he



contemplates those 900 people.

"A couple now attending our church were both heavy drinkers," he says. "They got saved at Day of Compassion. They don't miss a service. Their agnostic daughter came to Christ. We baptized the whole family. They have totally been delivered from alcohol."

"We had a woman saved from witchcraft at Day of Compassion. She gave me her pentagram at the altar. We baptized her. I could go on sharing story after story."

But this is just the beginning as far as Jackson is concerned. He and his congregation have a vision for the entire community of Janesville.

"About a year ago I stood before the congregation," Jackson says. "I shared how the Lord showed me that we are to make everyone in Janesville, a city of 60,000, Christ-conscious. Our people have grabbed hold of this. We have divided the city into areas of outreach and are targeting each area."



Other than the Day of Compassion and healthcare clinic aimed at poor families, New Life has sponsored a John Maxwell seminar for business leaders and a youth outreach that resulted in many salvation decisions at the local high school.

"This is vision driven and Holy Spirit anointed," Jackson says. "Everyone needs to be Christ-conscious. We can't lead everyone to Christ, but we can make them aware of Christ."

SCOTT HARRUP, associate editor, *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*, Springfield, Missouri.



Ask the Superintendent —

THE BIBLICAL MANDATE: EPHESIANS 4:11-13

MOBILIZING AND TRAINING VOLUNTEERS IS ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES PASTORS FACE. WHY HAS THIS BECOME A DIFFICULT TASK?

TRASK: Many people believe churches hire pastors to do the work of ministry. But the biblical role of the pastor is explained in Ephesians 4:11–13 — to mobilize and train laity to do the work of the ministry. A pastor is not to do the entire ministry himself but to reproduce himself in people who in turn have a desire for ministry.

HOW CAN PASTORS BETTER MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER?

TRASK: The proper motivation for service is the prompting of the Spirit in each person's heart. When Christians experience the joy of ministry that comes when they help shape people's lives and watch them develop in Christ, they find fulfillment in ministry. People are not always motivated by a sense of duty to the church. The best motivation is a personal desire to minister.

THE SUCCESS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH DEPENDS ON A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE PULPIT AND THE PEW. DESCRIBE HOW THIS PARTNERSHIP CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED.

TRASK: Leadership should give special attention to four factors that are important to strong ties between pew and pulpit. First, God has placed people in the body of Christ. Second, they have gifts and skills they can utilize in the church.

In today's culture, more laypeople want to be involved in ministry. Many people have tremendous teaching, training, and administrative gifts. There are those who excel in hospital or prison ministry. Some have hospitality gifts — they care for people and welcome newcomers.

Third, leadership needs to train laypeople and encourage them to utilize their gifts to bless the church and advance the cause of Christ. Fourth, volunteer ministers reduce the load carried by the paid staff of the church.

In the Old Testament, Jethro told Moses to assign responsibilities to others to avoid burnout. That is a key to effective and long-term ministry today. God never intended pastors to carry the entire load. The body of Christ is to share the burden. When people pray, work, and support the pastor's vision, volunteer ministries are successful. Everybody shares in what God is doing.

In God's Word, Christians are commissioned to service. God gives gifts to His children to accomplish His divine purpose through the local church. Some might have one talent and some might have five talents, but every member is an important part of the body of Christ (Romans 12:3–8). As each member works, together they accomplish God's purpose for the Body.

An every-member ministry is the biblical mandate prescribed in Ephesians 4. Nevertheless, the theological banner of the priesthood of all believers is waved in churches more often as theory than as something espoused to in practice. Pastors are being held captive to a pseudo-model of ministry that reinforces the notion they are the only ones who can deliver real ministry. Thus the clergy-laity division continues.

To lay this notion to rest and to buttress the every-member ministry model of Ephesians 4, General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask visited with *Enrichment* journal Executive Editor Gary Allen.

Early Church leaders focused on the ministry of the Word and prayer. Pastors also need to oversee church administration. The body of Christ, however, can do many tasks. This frees leadership to prepare spiritually to feed people from the Word of God. When the church is properly nurtured, people will gravitate to the church because they are cared for.

WHY DO SOME MINISTERS SEEM INTIMIDATED BY PEOPLE IN THE PEW?

TRASK: When pastors invest in volunteers, train them, and allow them to experience the joy of ministry, they should not be viewed as a threat to the pastor's ministry; they compliment and strengthen his ministry.

When I was pastoring I hired staff that excelled in areas where I was not as gifted. This provided well-rounded care for the Body. The different gifts laypeople contribute to the ministry only bless the senior pastor's leadership. Pastors should not be jealous or misuse their authority to control volunteers. When a pastor understands that God has placed volunteers in the church, he can be secure.

WHAT SKILLS DO MINISTERS NEED TO HAVE AN EFFECTIVE EQUIPPING MINISTRY?

TRASK: A pastor must have patience and an appreciation and love for people. My first youth pastor made many blunders. He was not raised in a pastor's home, as I was. When he graduated from Bible college, he was inexperienced. Today he is a successful pastor. He once said to me, "Brother Trask, I do not know why you kept me."

I said, "There were many times I did not want to keep you, but the Lord would not let me release you. God showed me I was to train you, develop you, and bring you into maturity." Ministers need to have patience with those who are learning and growing. Pastors need to mentor people for ministry.

At times, leadership has to make tough decisions. This is their role. Pastors do not enjoy making tough decisions, especially when those decisions affect people. How decisions are made and in what spirit they are made often determine whether pastors are successful.

A pastor should consider how Jesus dealt with people. The church is not a business; it is a ministry. The attitude and manner in which we deal with people are important. A pastor should always err on the side of grace, generosity, and kindness. Avoid hardness, meanness, and unkindness.

It is incumbent on the pastor to ask God for wisdom to do Kingdom work — to minister to the people God has brought into his life and into the life of the church.

Solomon explains in Proverbs the importance of wisdom. Every pastor should pray: "Lord, give me wisdom." Wisdom gives a pastor understanding of what he can and cannot do.

HOW HAS THE PURPOSE-DRIVEN MODEL HELPED PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN THE CHURCH?

TRASK: The purpose-driven model has helped the church focus on God's purpose for Christians. Is salvation only a means to get to heaven? No, it is more than that. What mission or purpose does the Lord have? He has a purpose for everyone's life. Again, Paul reminds us that everyone has an important role in the body of Christ. The purpose-driven model has been healthy for the church.

Because we are Spirit-filled, we are people of vision. We have compassion, and we reach out in Jesus' name to touch others. If any group of people ought to excel, it ought to be the Spirit-filled church under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

WHAT CAN MINISTERS DO TO AVOID FALLING INTO THE TRAP WHERE THEY ARE EXPECTED TO DO THE ENTIRE MINISTRY, TO BE IN CONTROL OF EVERYTHING?

TRASK: Scripture says no man is "to think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (Romans 12:3, KJV). Inappropriate self-expectations come when pastors have an inaccurate view of themselves, the ministry, and the church. The pastor is not the head of the church. It is not the pastor's church; it is God's church. Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Pastors have tremendous responsibility, but the church does not rise and fall on them.

This does not give ministers an excuse to neglect their responsibilities, to be lazy, or indifferent. God gives pastors gifts and abilities. They are managers and stewards of what He has given them.

Pastors are to empower others to use their gifts. This is biblical. When pastors have talented, gifted people in the church, it is their job to see that these gifts are utilized.

DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON EQUIPPING MINISTRY?

TRASK: I believe Assemblies of God churches have the finest laypeople in the world. They are committed, dedicated, and talented. God has given our churches great resources. A wise pastor will look for men and women who want to be utilized in ministry, who want to be trained, and who are submitted to leadership. He will recruit and get them involved. Do not let the people in your church sit, sour, and sulk. Busy people are less inclined to be divided and critical. When they are given opportunity to serve, they are less likely to complain because they are too busy enjoying Kingdom work.

Christians should not take in God's Word without becoming an outlet of blessing to others. Christians need an outlet. How much blessing can one enjoy if he does not bless others? The way to make room for more blessing is to be a blessing. A great way to bless others is through volunteer ministries. ■

The **Volunteer**



Revolution

WHAT? ME, A PRIEST?

Just to yank my chain, a businessman friend of mine introduces me to his golfing buddies as “my priest.” His words elicit a shocked response for two reasons. First, I don’t dress like their image of a priest. And second, my friend isn’t close enough to any church to have a priest — or anything even vaguely resembling one.

In fact, my friend knows I’m not his priest, or anyone else’s either. At least not according to his limited, stereotypical view of what a priest is. On the other hand, I most certainly am a priest. And chances are, so are you. For some of you reading this article, being a priest may be the furthest thing from your mind, but it’s not far from God’s mind.

THE JOB OF A PRIEST

Before the coming of Christ, the Holy Spirit operated through a select group of people called priests. Aaron, Moses' brother, served as the first priest and his sons carried on the priesthood.

Old Testament priests mediated affairs between God and the people. To do anything religiously — pray, give a worship offering, confess his sins — the average person couldn't go directly to God; he had to go through a priest.

But Jesus' life and death turned the Old Testament religious system inside out. On what we now call the Day of Pentecost, when the first Christ-followers gathered in the Upper Room, they heard the sound of a sudden, rushing wind. Then tongues of fire landed on everyone's head. I have no clue what those tongues of fire looked like, but they represented the coming of the Holy Spirit in full measure to the Church. And the tongues sat not on the heads of a select few, but on *everybody's* head.

From that moment on, instead of a few, select priests filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit to act as go-betweens with God, suddenly everyone of Jesus' followers became a priest.

This means that today we have direct access to God. We don't have to call a priest or a pastor every time we want to worship, pray, or confess our sins to God.

It also means that we become priests to one another. And what does a faithful priest do for his people? Prays for them. Encourages them. Watches over them. Confronts them. Grieves with those who grieve. Rejoices with those who rejoice. As a result, the people feel loved, nurtured, secure, and blessed.

Imagine a community in which every member takes his priesthood as seriously as did the priests of the Old Testament. A community like that would turn the world upside down.

According to Ephesians 4:11,12, God has uniquely equipped some of these priestly servants to train others how to serve: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (emphasis added).

Instead of the Old Testament temple system, we have congregations full of priests, with a few teachers, leaders, and pastors among the priesthood who are called to equip those priests for ministry. In most modern churches, the equipping servants would be paid pastors and staff members. Those equipped to carry out the works of ministry would be the volunteers.

Throughout church history, whenever this plan has been implemented, the church has born great fruit. In such a situation, everybody wins.

- The equippers win each time they see God greatly use the volunteers they have recruited, loved, trained, and empowered.
- The volunteers win because they get the thrill of moving from the spectator's seat to the playing field. They become

instruments of healing, hope, and transformation in the hands of God.

- The surrounding community wins as it receives the service of a loving, unified, multigifted force for good.
- And of course, the Architect of the whole plan wins because God has the pleasure of seeing His children carry forward His grand purpose of fixing this broken world.

THE TRAIN JUMPS THE TRACKS

I'm not enough of a historian to define exactly how or when the church train jumped the tracks, but jump it did. Although the Early Church started out with this beautiful concept of the priesthood of all believers — with every member an active minister and good works carried forth in all directions — during the last couple of centuries, most churches have retreated to the Old Testament model. Here's how it often plays out:

A group of a hundred people get together, decide to form a congregation, and hire a minister. That's the terminology they use: *hire a minister*. Then they say to their new minister, "Okay, this is what we want you to do: Preach. Teach. Marry. Bury. Make hospital calls. Visit members. Counsel the confused. Evangelize the community. Raise money. Print the bulletins. Do announcements. Pray for the sick. Then, come year end, we'll get out our report cards and determine whether you have met our expectations. If you have, we'll sign you up for another year. If not, we'll hire someone else."

If the hired minister energetically throws himself into his multitude of tasks and the church starts to grow, the congregation might hire an associate pastor, an administrative pastor, or a youth pastor to take care of the programs and people beyond the senior minister's reach. But again, the congregation pays the clergy to do ministry.

So the church ends up with a few overworked professionals, paid by the tithes and offerings of the congregation to fulfill the whole gamut of priestly functions, while everybody else remains passive observers, their gifts and talents atrophying from disuse.

This is the most widely practiced ministry paradigm in existence today — and it doesn't have a shred of biblical support. Tragically, this approach has left many contemporary churches in shambles: weak, unorganized, and powerless. And unfortunately, it's a tough mindset to change.

Howard Snyder says in *Liberating the Church* that most church members "expect doctors to treat us, not to train us to treat others. We expect lawyers to give us expert advice, not to admit us to the secret fraternity of those who understand how the legal system works. Likewise, we want pastors to serve us, not to build and train us" to serve others.¹

I think one of the reasons God made me somewhat thick-skinned is because for so many years I have had to absorb

disapproval from people who want me to be like their doctor and lawyer. They want me to perform my priestly function for them, never realizing that God is calling them to put on their own mantle of priestly responsibility.

"You're the priest," they protest, "not us."

But the Bible replies, "Not true. If you're a Christ-follower, you're a priest."

It must break God's heart when people come to church with a consumer mindset, content to eat and run. "Serve me," they say. "Teach me. Pray for me. Fix my kids. Counsel my spouse. And if you don't do all of this up to my standards, I'll go down the street and see if another church will pay better attention to me." I've learned that you can't possibly build a God-honoring

church with a congregation full of consumers.

Neither can you build a God-honoring church without teachers, leaders, and pastors committed to equipping. When those called to equip think of themselves as the only worthy doers of ministry, when they peer down from their perch in the pulpit at their congregation, convinced that the Holy Spirit could not possibly work through the people seated in front of them, they are disobeying their calling and mandate from God.

I honestly don't know why some church leaders do this. I doubt it's due to scriptural ignorance. Perhaps they've never learned the skill of delegating responsibility. Or they don't know how to build a team. Maybe they feel insecure, afraid that if they share responsibility, another person's stature

FIRST SERVE: A PARADIGM SHIFT

Imagine having to sign a 3-month lease on a car you are considering buying, versus having the freedom to take it on a 45-minute test drive. So throughout all the ministries of the church we introduced the concept of the *First Serve*, one-time serving opportunities offered at a variety of times and tapping into a wide range of skills and areas of interest. Here's the *First Serve* concept: *Come once and check it out. No strings attached.*

Some *First Serve* opportunities require registration ahead of time, but many allow potential volunteers to just show up. They are told where to meet and assured that staff or experienced volunteers will greet them, help them get involved, and serve with them.

FOUR IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

After each serving opportunity, we encourage volunteers to engage in a process of self-assessment by asking themselves a series of questions.

First, *did the work feel meaningful?* The answer to this question is purely subjective, but vitally important. For one person, it will feel deeply meaningful to stuff envelopes for a mailing about a leadership conference for pastors; they resonate completely with the goal (the conference) and with the people group involved (pastors), and they enjoy doing behind-the-scenes tasks. Another person may resonate with the conference idea, but if she hates doing repetitive tasks, she's not going to experience the work as meaningful. She may tell herself she should find it meaningful because of the worthiness of the goal, but she probably won't be motivated to show up again.

Here's another important question: *Was my emotional energy higher or lower after I served? Did I feel energized or drained?* Serving can be exhausting physically but still deeply satisfying. If it proves emotionally draining, however, you're probably heading in the wrong direction. Introverted people often find people-intensive jobs, such as ushering, to be extremely draining, while extroverts thrive in the same setting. A volunteer role that feels draining will not be sustainable.

Another important question (that many people feel guilty

about asking) relates to the people with whom one is serving. *Do I enjoy serving with them? Is there a comfortable relational dynamic on the serving team?* Most people who timidly step off the spectator stand and onto the playing field feel motivated by the call to servanthood and to use their gifts for the good of others. But usually there's another dimension to their motivation, one they may not be conscious of. They want to get to know people. They want to discover like-minded brothers and sisters. They want their hearts touched by the power of community. If they don't sense the potential for that in a given serving opportunity, there's nothing wrong with continuing to experiment.

The fourth issue for self-assessment is to look honestly at your schedule and the time frame for the serving opportunity. No matter how much you might enjoy a given opportunity, if it doesn't fit realistically into your schedule, you'll never be able to engage in it consistently.

Some people experiment with a *First Serve* and conclude immediately that they've discovered the perfect ministry fit; after serving street people in Chicago only one time, they are ready to make a once-a-month commitment. Others, however, discover that one dimension of a serving opportunity feels great while another part doesn't. So they use what they learned — both negative and positive — to inform their next experiment.

If people experiment with 10 *First Serve* opportunities before they discover a fit that motivates them to make a longer commitment, we think that's great; we cheer their tenacity. How much better that they experiment and learn rather than get stuck in a frustrating, unfulfilling, or draining situation that eventually sends them back to the bench.

Whether your first step puts you on the fast track to an ideal serving destination or begins a slow process of self-discovery, you will have embarked on the journey you were made for.

Abridged from The Volunteer Revolution: Unleashing the Power of Everybody by Bill Hybels (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 71–77. Used by permission.

"If you're a Christ-follower, you're a priest."

might eclipse their own in the congregation. Whatever the reason, they live as lonely, overworked clergymen, wearing themselves out doing the work of ministry, while bored potential volunteer ministers dutifully take their seats in the viewing stand week after week after week — and miss out on all the action.

I've heard pastors say, "My people just won't get out of the spectator stands and serve."

And I ask, "Are you inspiring them to get out of the stands? Are you teaching regularly on the priesthood of believers? Have you reminded your people recently that they have the Holy Spirit in them? Have you made it clear that they don't have to go to seminary to make a huge difference in your church? Are they aware that they don't have to have theological credentials scribbled on a sheepskin in order to lead a small group, to serve Communion, to teach, to make hospital calls, or even to start a new ministry in the church? Are you calling them to be part of the redemptive mission of God? Or are you presenting volunteerism as a duty, a drudgery they have to endure, like a parent asking a kid to take out the garbage?"

I remember an era at Willow when we had far too few volunteers. My staff colleagues would come to me and say, "Hey, Bill, you've got to do something. We're trying to pull volunteers into our ministries, but it's not working. You've got to teach this stuff."

So they got me all worked up, and I finally stood up at our midweek service and said, "Okay, here's the deal. I'm going to teach about the priesthood of all believers. I'm not going to let up on it until we all get on board with it and we become a serving church. And I can outlast you."

That was the beginning of a 13-week series. From the priesthood of believers, I moved to the concept of the body of Christ

in 1 Corinthians 12. According to that passage, the body of Christ needs all its members — eyes, ears, nose, hands, feet — functioning properly to be fully alive. "Now you are the body of Christ," Paul tells us, "and each one of you is a part of it" (verse 27). Week after week I hammered home the truth that the body of Christ, the church, cannot do what it's called to do unless it becomes a community of interdependent, serving brothers and sisters. That's what it means to be priests and priestesses.

God used that series to add hundreds of new volunteers to our ministries. One church member told me recently, "It was almost 20 years ago, during week 12 of your marathon serving series, when I realized that God hadn't awakened me spiritually so I could just sit back and take in. He had called me to be a volunteer priest in this church. Thanks for not giving up on this message. Thanks for calling me into the game."

LIFT THE VISION

If we are going to be biblically functioning communities and maximize the potential of our churches, we need to lift the vision of volunteerism. Let me say it again. When those who are called to equip really do equip, and when volunteers show up to be equipped, trained, empowered, and entrusted with ministry, everybody wins — the equippers, those being equipped, the church, and the community. And God gets the glory because it was His incredible idea.

If you're reading this article and you're sitting in a church and not serving, step up. God has honored you by calling you to be a priest or priestess.

Accept the honor.

If you're reading this article and you're a church leader who is not equipping your people to serve, you are failing them. You can do better. You can decide to do better right now.

Rise to the challenge.

Imagine what could happen in your church and your community if every potential minister — priest, priestess, equipper, equipped — actually lived according to the biblical mandate. What an extraordinary power for good would be unleashed. ■

Abridged from *The Volunteer Revolution: Unleashing the Power of Everybody* by Bill Hybels (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 59–66. Used by permission.

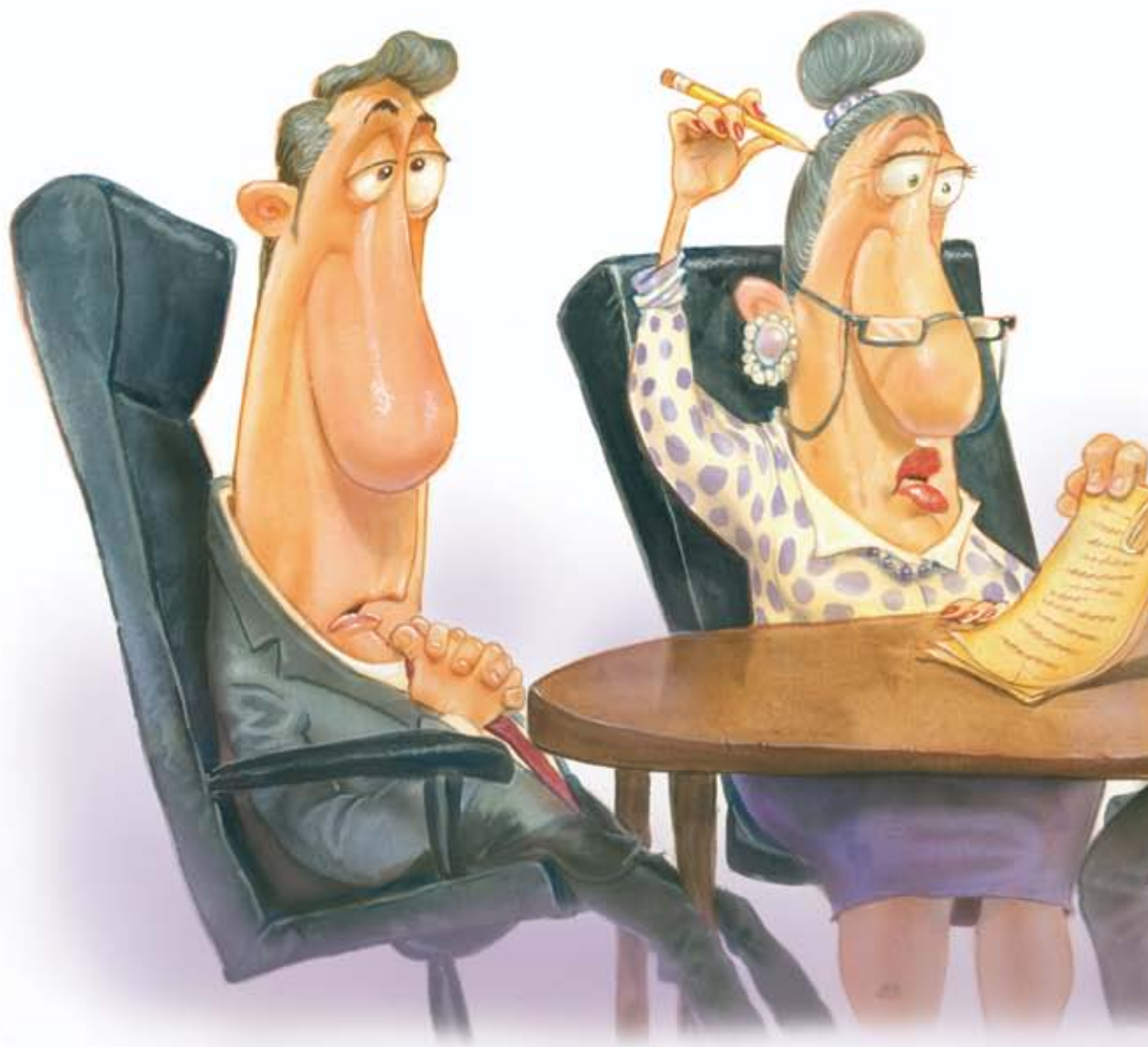


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ENDNOTE

1. Howard Snyder, *Liberating the Church* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1983), 169.





OBSTACLES *and* OPPORTUNITIES *for* CONGREGATIONAL MISSION

BY THOMAS G. BANDY



ILLUSTRATION BY: GARY LOCKE

Church-growth leaders are a different breed. They have been described as entrepreneurs in a bureaucratic church; motivators in a complacent denomination; systems analysts in a debate among single-minded agendas; and visionaries for non-ideological and nondogmatic religion. They are the voice of the 21st century. Their numbers among clergy and laity are growing. And they are frustrated with the traditional denomination.

One church-growth leader shared a cartoon with me. Picture a church committee of four people sitting around a table. The minister sits with his hands folded and a look of sadness and bewilderment on his face. With him are two women and a man peering over half glasses. The caption above the cartoon reads: "Pastor Bob submits his 'Vision for Our 21st-Century Church' to his 20th-century church board." Here are their reactions.

One woman scratches her head with a pencil (graphite technology) and exclaims accusingly: "This proposal is printed on *beige* paper."

Surely there is some hidden motive about the color choice.

The man peers condescendingly over his glasses: "Wouldn't a staple be better than a paper clip?"

Somehow, the group process or the educational technique isn't right.

The other woman turns her back on the whole group and passionately addresses the empty room: "Why on earth is it double spaced?"

The wasted paper has escalated office expenses, which is no doubt symptomatic of the assault on the rain forests by the military-industrial complex.

They have missed the point. During the next week they will complain to the personnel committee that Pastor Bob should be spending 20 hours a week visiting nursing homes, 20 hours a week marching on picket lines, and 20 hours a week taking advanced courses on group process. They will also complain that Pastor Bob is never in the office when they drop by unannounced to explain their grievances. They will further complain that Pastor Bob is a poor role model for his alcoholic teenage daughter. And on Sunday morning they will wonder why their church is declining.

Many people in the power networks of traditional denominations are troubled when they discuss church growth and decline. They think church growth is only about membership and property development. They think it is merely about statistics and bricks. They think it is shallow.

Church growth is not, and never was, simply a matter of statistics and bricks. Church growth means that a congregation becomes so alive to Christ's presence in their

or focuses on the realities of God and the world. A *paradigm shift* happens when the filter or lens is changed and the realities of God and the world are seen differently. For example, a person wearing glasses trips, stumbles, and repeatedly falls down. He might blame the world for going crazy, blame his own slovenly habits, or blame his poor vision on old age and prepare to die. Then someone gives him a new pair of glasses. Suddenly he realizes it was not the world but his perception of the world that was at fault. It was not the gospel but his understanding of the gospel; it was not the church but his perspective of the church; and it was not Pastor Bob but his expectations of Pastor Bob. Remove the glasses that worked great for 30 years, put on new glasses, and suddenly, instead of preparing to die, he is dancing down the street.

PARADIGM SHIFT IN THEOLOGY

Both sides of the theological polarization that has dominated the denominational agenda for two decades share the same theological paradigm. The liberal and conservative camps are not strangers from different worlds but siblings from the same family. Their quarrel drains the energy from the church and leaves many multicultural and seeker congregations marginalized.

The old paradigm looks like this:

Society is seen as a godless morass, and the average citizen as selfish and morally corrupt because he does not believe the right dogma or follow the right socio-political agenda. Either way, people cannot do anything about their lives. Only God can. Self-affirmation is prideful and deviant. Self-sacrifice and the penitent response of absolute obedience to divine will is their only hope.

Definitions of obedience may follow either conservative or liberal doctrine and ideology. Either way, self-fulfillment is sinful and middle class, and self-sacrifice is holy and politically

The 21st-century church will wither away unless it makes three paradigm shifts to abandon the past and embrace the future.

midst that they increase community participation in their congregational life, deepen their spirituality, expand their programs, and extend their outreach. To do this they may need to buy and sell property or construct and tear down buildings, but they will do that with enthusiasm that is a joy to behold, and perhaps a near heart attack to the capital holding companies of the denomination.

The 21st-century church will wither away unless it makes three paradigm shifts to abandon the past and embrace the future. If the church is to succeed, paradigm shifts in theology, leadership, and church life must be made.

A *paradigm* is the filter or lens through which one sorts out

correct. On both sides of the polarity the fundamental spiritual attitude of the believer is one of apology; the spiritual response is obedience to a specific agenda; the context of meaning is an abstraction of doctrine and denominational policy; the whole mission of the church is to attack society with the prophetic call to repent; and the model of discipleship is self-denial.

In the old paradigm, the church that is ideologically *right* fashions a fortress around confessional dogma while the church that is ideologically *left* fashions a minority consciousness around socio-political policy. Either way, the church is the adversary of a so-called godless society. The



church's role is to criticize, not to appreciate; to teach, not to learn; to struggle, not to enjoy; to lament, not to celebrate. As a result, both churches become increasingly impotent for cultural change and irrelevant in the greater quest for reunion with the divine, which is the primary goal of the public.

The paradigm of enabling what motivates Pastor Bob to visit, visit, and visit until he drops.

The church becomes an opinionated club rather than a humble community. People under 35 will not tolerate this kind of church anymore.

If the church is to thrive in this century, it must surrender the old paradigm. The paradigm of the 21st century looks like this: Society is not a godless, materialistic morass but is desperately searching for meaning. People passionately desire reunion with God. Reunion with God is possible, legitimate, and is the foundation of all moral action. Self-affirmation and self-fulfillment are no longer ignoble goals but are central to personal satisfaction and responsible community.

In the 21st-century paradigm, the fundamental spiritual attitude is no longer apology, but yearning. The spiritual response is no longer obedience to dogmatic or ideological agendas, but searching and self-discovery. The context of meaning is no longer a mix of dogma and denominational policy, but the world permeated by God. The mission of the church is no longer to issue calls for institutional obedience but to proclaim visions of unity and meaning. Christ is bigger than any single definition, any specific ideology, any one institution, or any particular pastor.

In the paradigm of the 21st century, personal transformation will not be separated from social change. Evangelism and justice will go hand in hand. People will no longer pursue righteousness because it is the right thing to do but because they have been changed through a connection with Jesus Christ they can articulate and share. They will not desire a corporate journey led by committees of denominational experts looking for Utopia. They will, however, give everything they have to be on a personally shared journey motivated by visionaries equipped by the Living Word, looking for the Promised Land.

The paradigm of *the prophet* needs to give way to the paradigm of *the sentinel*. The paradigm of struggle through the gray wilderness of barren secularism needs to give way

to visions declared from urban watchtowers that await their time. Habakkuk points the way into the future.

Remember Pastor Bob and his church board? To thrive in the 21st century, they need to make a theological paradigm shift. The church of the old paradigm tended to be conscientious, inevitably bureaucratic, perpetually guilt ridden, often intolerant, often worried, and never ecstatically happy. The church of the new *sentinel* paradigm will be caring, minimally managed, perpetually accepting, often humorous, often curious, and not dull. Pastor Bob's church board used to see

the world as black and white. Suddenly they will see the world in living color. At first it will come as a shock, but soon they will be filled with joy.

PARADIGM SHIFT IN LEADERSHIP

In the old paradigm, society was a godless morass and the average citizen was selfish and unethical. The role of pastor, therefore, was either to take care of people or set them straight. The former has been called *pastoral care ministry*, and the latter has been called *prophetic ministry*. Together they form the leadership paradigm of the enabler. The enabler works one-on-one with laity to comfort, counsel, nurture, and heal; or to challenge, offer criticism, provide accountability, and give moral guidance. Each person is enabled to be healthier and happier or to behave better and wiser.

The paradigm of enabling is what motivates Pastor Bob to visit, visit, and visit until he drops. It also motivates him to join the Kiwanis and Rotary, sit on the boards of the community counseling center and 12 other social agencies, attend every committee of the church in the evenings, picket environmentally suspect industries on Mondays, counsel every couple wanting to be married, and build homes for Habitat for Humanity in his spare time. He was called to make people healthier and happier, behave better and wiser. And with God's help, he will do it.

Unfortunately, what worked in the past will not work in the future. First, the church cannot afford it. One enabler can only effectively work with 100 people. But with rising personnel costs and declining discretionary income, 100 people can no longer support the salary of one full-time enabler.

Second, the covenant relationship begins to deteriorate into codependency. The enablers are motivated by a need to be needed and the people are motivated by a need for someone to hold their hand and tell them what to do.

Third, the enabling leadership that started out humble and caring ends up presumptuous and arrogant. The cry, "Take care of us," soon connects with the claim, "I know what you

need.” The cry, “Give us moral guidance,” connects with the demand, “Do what I tell you.”

Finally, enabling leadership in its old age becomes bureaucratic leadership. Unable to bring health, happiness, and ethical behavior to individuals, enablers try doing it with governance. Standing committees, ad hoc groups, and levels of government multiply, and the enabler goes off to attend group-process seminars.

In the old paradigm, an estimated 27 to 33 percent of clergy or their families become victims of substance abuse; the cycle of complaint, guilt, and anger leads to rampant clergy burn-out; pastoral covenants are in perpetual crisis; litigation and malpractice insurance become key issues for a denomination; recruits for ministry drop off; and church growth rarely exceeds 250 members, even though the community around the church has more than tripled. Congregations become chaplaincies and agencies rather than real churches.

The paradigm for leadership in the 21st century will not be the *enabler*, but *visionary motivator*. Visionary, motivating leadership will not try to take care of everybody or set them straight but will proclaim persuasively and dramatically from the watchtower the vision that awaits its time, and motivate people so they embrace the vision in spite of their hectic schedules. Visionary, motivating leadership will not try to take care of people but equip people to take care of themselves. Leadership will not try to set people straight but let God set people straight and accept the resulting diversity.

Leadership in the 21st century will not try to persuade people to do anything, but to be something. Instead of aiming to change behavior it will aim to change the heart. More time will be spent making worship a transformational event rather than an informational event. More time will be spent equipping laity to do ministry rather than doing ministry alone. The primary role of leadership will be to point out the star, and see people off. They may go east, west, north, or south; they may vote for any political party; they may pursue this cause or that cause. They may encourage environmental protection or job creation, and they may be conservative or liberal when it comes to public policy. None of these are the clergy's primary concern. Their concern is to help people give birth to the potential for good that God has given them, and to equip Christians to follow the calling that Christ has offered them. Pastor Bob (or Pastor Roberta) is a midwife.

Remember Pastor Bob and the church board? Pastor Bob in the 21st century will spend most of his time proclaiming the vision, sharing the vision, and building ownership for the vision. The pastoral care will get done, but equipped laity will do it. The prophetic witness will get done, but equipped laity will do

it. The visiting will be done and the community social agencies will be addressed, but not by Pastor Bob. He is not an enabler anymore; he is a visionary. He is not spending his time with the church implementing the vision; he is spending his time among the unchurched, seeking new futures for the vision.

PARADIGM SHIFT FOR CHURCH LIFE

Nevertheless, there is a rumbling of concern around Pastor Bob's kitchen table. The board is getting restless. Listen to their questions:

“Where will we find enough laypeople to do all the ministries Pastor Bob used to do?”

“Who will hold Pastor Bob accountable for his potentially crazy ideas?”

“If different people start coming to church, who will organize them, control them, assimilate them, maintain the heritage of our glorious past, and, in general, keep the lid on?”

“What will it cost, and who will pay for it?”

The paradigm shift in theology and leadership needs to be accompanied by a paradigm shift in church life.

In the old paradigm church life revolves around consensus and structure. Decisions must be supported by the broadest possible agreement that can only be achieved through layered

Visionary, motivating leadership will not try to take care of people but equip people to take care of themselves.

meetings. Every task must have a committee, every cluster of committees must have an oversight committee, every cluster of oversight committees must have a management board, and so on, until the annual congregational business meeting takes place. Government for a church of 300 requires at least 100 laypeople to attend committee meetings concerning one matter or another. It will take at least three evening meetings and approximately 150 hours of lay energy to change the sign at the front of Pastor Bob's church building.

The *corporate* paradigm is not about creativity, but control. Spontaneity is often suspect because individuality is less important than being a member. Continuity with the glorious past is valued. Vision is expected to be generated by groups, which means no vision emerges. Significant minorities often have the power to paralyze action. Personal trust is secondary to parliamentary procedure. The most common response to a new idea is, “No. It will never work”; “We've never done it that way before”; and “Let's assign an ad hoc committee to look into it and bring a recommendation to the annual meeting.”

In the corporate paradigm, perpetuating the Body is more

important than growing the Body. Agendas must be carefully protected, group process must be painstakingly planned, nominations must be carefully controlled, and crazy ideas must be studiously sidetracked (especially if they occur in an annual meeting). The goals of the paradigm are to maintain the in-group ethos, achieve debt freedom, and save for a rainy day.

The paradigm for church life in the 21st century will not be the corporate paradigm but the *mission-team* paradigm. Governance will be reduced from nine standing committees to three; management will be reduced to an optimum seven-to nine-person administrative board; and small groups will multiply as people are given permission to follow the star in whatever manner they choose. Laypeople will not waste their time sitting in meetings but busy themselves doing ministry. Of the 100 lay leaders required to staff the committees of Pastor Bob's 300-member church under the old paradigm, only 25 are needed now. The rest joyfully do the pastoral ministry tasks Pastor Bob had been trying to do.

The mission-team paradigm prioritizes creativity, not control. There is more trust and less parliamentary procedure. Worship attendance is more important than voting membership because regular worship is what unites people around the transformative experience of God and motivates their commitment to the vision. The key statistics that measure church life are not the number of baby dedications and the strength of the children's Sunday School but the number of adult baptisms and the strength of adult faith formation groups.

A NEW BEGINNING

Pastor Bob's 20th-century church board is now panicked because they are unprepared for the 21st century. The old paradigm was fueled by consensus while the new paradigm is fueled by the vision of individuals. The old paradigm relied on the church office while the new paradigm relies on interpersonal relationships. The old paradigm had 100 people on committees and 20 people doing ministry while the new paradigm has 20 people on committees and 100 people doing ministry. If ministry requires money, then money will be spent. If ministry requires a wall be torn down, then a wall will come down. If ministry requires a new building, then a new building will be built. The gospel is the primary focus — everything else is strategy.

Most important, the goals of Pastor Bob's church are changing. Instead of maintaining the in-group ethos, they will foster a growing outreach. Instead of debt freedom, they will concentrate on sound debt management because nothing kills a church faster than no debt and money in the bank. So, instead of saving for a rainy day, they will wisely risk because it is already raining.

These paradigm shifts for Pastor Bob's church will not happen easily. The commitment of the church to the old way of doing things is enormous. Pastor Bob will also be challenged

by many voices in the church where church growth is unwelcome. Many people on the conservative right and the liberal left are so caught up in being the righteous remnant, the minority consciousness, or the lone prophetic voice crying in the secular wilderness that they are predisposed to encourage church decline. The smaller the church becomes the more it seems to verify their self-image and confirm their theology.

The amazing thing is, despite the shock of Rev. Bob's 20th-century church board, and despite the negativity from the church, Pastor Bob remains the most optimistic minister in the denomination. He has good reason to be.

Pastor Bob knows the public is receptive to religion. The motivation for materialism has given way to a new quest for meaning. New immigration has opened a new dialogue about God, culture, and the purpose of life. People are ready to talk about faith. Spiritual hunger is profound. Christ is relevant.

Pastor Bob knows the resources are there. Gifted people, young and old, need to be turned loose. Money is available in abundance if artificial ecclesiastical boundaries can be overcome. Much can be done by investing it in the mission of the church instead of the mission of the banks. Ordinary Christians have spiritual gifts they have never used, and God is ready to give more spiritual gifts than they ever imagined.

Pastor Bob knows many things have changed in contemporary culture, but one thing has remained the same. Human beings are still helpless to save themselves, and God is still committed to save them. Pastor Bob has surrendered his own pride to the mission of Christ. He is not out to build a megachurch. He is not out to preserve a church heritage. He is not even out to represent the church. He is trying to be in companionship with Jesus while he embraces His mission.

Pastor Bob is the most optimistic minister in the Fellowship because he believes God wants the church to grow. God wants ministry to grow. God wants empowered laity to grow. God wants congregations to grow. Why? Because they are among the chief vehicles through which God spreads grace to the world. Growth means greater community participation in Christian ministries, the deepening of spirituality, the increase of mission, and the global outreach of even the smallest church. Oft-quoted words from the turn of one century are still valuable for the turn of another century. Pastor Bob says: "If you think little, believe little, and pray little, you will come out little. But if you think big, believe big, and pray big, you will come out big." ■



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BREAKING FREE:

From Caregiver to Equipper

BY GREG OGDEN

The Protestant Reformation promised a revolution and the Augustinian monk Martin Luther was its first revolutionary. Luther issued the following broadside against the hierarchal, clerically bound Roman Catholic Church of the 1500s: “Through baptism all of us are consecrated to the priesthood. For whoever comes out of the water of baptism can boast that he is already a consecrated priest, bishop and pope.”¹ Gone would be the division between clergy and laity. The old caste system and class distinction between the ordained and nonordained would be obsolete. Why? The New Testament envisions a universal priesthood inclusive of all who are baptized into the name of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10).

How have we done in fulfilling the promise that all are priests before God and priests to one another? David Watson prophetically wrote, “Most Protestant denominations have been as priest-ridden as the Roman Catholics. It is the minister, vicar, or pastor who has dominated the whole proceedings. In other words, the clergy-laity divisions have continued in much the same way as in pre-Reformation times, and the doctrine of spiritual gifts and body ministry have been largely ignored.”²

What is the evidence for this? The Church has been compared to a football game with 50,000 people in the stands who are in desperate need of exercise who watch 22 players on the field who are in desperate need of rest. This spectator mentality manifests itself in the way people approach worship. Many worshipers believe those on stage are to provide an engaging, meaningful, and entertaining show, while the worshiper’s job is to critique the worship service as he passes through the receiving line following worship. On many Sundays, after the pastor has concluded his morning message, he may have expected the choir to raise cards rating his message — 9.9, 9.4, etc.

How did the church get here? What are the reasons for the

gap between the biblical and historical promise of universal priesthood and the spectator reality of everyday church life? We might wave the theological banner of the priesthood of all believers, but my conviction is we have inadvertently adopted a dependency model of pastoral ministry that has

What are the reasons for the gap between the biblical and historical promise of universal priesthood and the spectator reality of everyday church life?

created passivity among God’s people. We need to shift from a *dependency* model to an *equipping* model of pastoral ministry to see the promise of an every-member ministry become reality.

DEPENDENCY MODEL DEFINED

What is the dependency model? Pastors do the ministry and God’s people receive their pastoral care. The church has inadvertently adopted a professional caretaker model of ministry that has resulted in passivity among the people of God. Most pastors know a major portion of their job is

to respond to the needs of their members and constituents. If someone is hospitalized, grieving the death of a loved one, experiencing a life-altering setback, facing marital difficulties, or struggling with a rebellious child, the pastor is expected to assist him. The emotional contract between pastor and people in most churches is: If a parishioner is having difficulty, the pastor is expected to be there to help. If the pastor does not come to provide care, he is failing to do the job pastors are supposed to do and has failed as a pastor.

Pastors have been turned into responders. I led a two-day

PEOPLE'S PASTORAL EXPECTATIONS THAT REINFORCE THE DEPENDENCY MODEL

The dependency model of pastoral ministry is particularly difficult to break out of because God's people have expectations for their pastors. There are as many job descriptions for a pastor as there are people in a congregation. These voices swirl in our heads:

OUR PASTOR CAN DO IT ALL

Churches want to be proud of their pastors. Multitalented pastors who are CEOs, strategic planners, visionaries, orators, shepherds, and caregivers are few and far between. They are the ones who set the standard by which pastors are measured. Every church wants to count itself fortunate. How do these expectations play in your head?

ONLY THE PASTOR CAN DELIVER REAL MINISTRY

There is a tendency to create a third gender when it comes to the pastorate: men, women, and pastors. A pastor is associated with an aura of holiness. A pastor's caregiving touch means more than the average layperson's. A pastor is stopped and asked to pray for a particular need because people assume he has a direct line to God. When a pastor sits down for a meal at a church gathering, those already seated say, "We are blessed to have the pastor at our table." What does this set-apart status do to our understanding of ministry?

I GO TO PASTOR SO-AND-SO'S CHURCH

A church is often identified by the name of the senior pastor. Pastors can reinforce this by saying "my" church. What does it say about our understanding of the church if we use possessive terms when referencing the church and its human leadership?



GREG OGDEN, Oak Brook, Illinois

seminar for Methodist pastors and noticed that the attendees came tethered to their beepers and cell phones. When beepers vibrated and cell phones sounded, pastors excused themselves from the meeting. Later, after having attended to the need they were beckoned to meet, they returned.

AN UNHEALTHY FAMILY SYSTEM

The caretaker/dependency model of ministry can be compared to an unhealthy family system. Parents who keep their children perpetually under their thumb and never allow them to develop into caring, responsible, and independent adults are not well thought of. This kind of family is dysfunctional. Yet this has become an unexamined and accepted model of ministry. We pay pastors to be spiritual guardians of dependent children who need constant care. As a result, the children remain dependent. Pastors are trapped by an interlocking set of expectations between themselves and their people that has been equally unhealthy for both. Both pastor and people have equally entered into this conspiracy of dependency.

Only the pastor can deliver real ministry

One manifestation of this unhealthy family system is the belief that only pastors can deliver *real* ministry. There is a commonly held myth that pastors bear the presence of Christ more than the average layperson.

Jerry Cook, a pastor in British Columbia, tells the following story. He heard that a woman in his congregation was upset with him. She had been in the hospital 7 days and he had not visited her. After she returned home from the hospital, he decided to call her. Before he called he did some investigation and discovered that during her 7 days in the hospital she had been visited by an average of 4 people a day from the church. Here is their conversation:

"Well, Mrs. White, how are you feeling?"

Mrs. White replied curtly, "Well, I'm fine *now*."

Ignoring the sharp tone, Pastor Cook replied, "I understand you were in the hospital."

"Well, it's a little late."

Pastor Cook responded, "A little late for what?"

"I was there 7 days, and *nobody came*."

Pastor Cook mentioned her many visitors during that time. Then she revealed her true convictions: "Yes, people from the church came, but *you* did not come."³

What is the tragedy of this story? Did the pastor fail to do his job? Hardly. He and others had created a mobilized ministry, and Mrs. White was well cared for. The tragedy is she missed the presence of Christ in her visitors because she believed only the pastor could deliver real ministry. The authentic ministry of God's people was discounted because she believed the pastor occupied an elevated position.

The need to be needed

The flip side to the belief that only the pastor can deliver real ministry is pastors who believe they are indispensable. One of the psychological profiles for many pastors is a need to help people. There is nothing wrong with that, unless it becomes an inordinate need to please people.

I received the following note after visiting a 75-year-old man who was in the hospital recovering from surgery. With tears, Joe spoke movingly of an emotional and spiritual encounter with the Lord as he prepared for his surgery. The family was willing to give me considerable credit for this epiphany.

Dear Greg,

Busy as you were, you came to visit Joe. We consider this a great blessing. Yes, many saints visited too, but still your visit meant the most.

Prayers were answered through the nurses, doctors, and you. Joe is doing well.

Enjoy your well-earned vacation.

With our love,

Joe and Evelyn (not their real names)

Wow, what an emotional hook. "Busy as *you* were." I brought a blessing. *I* am more important than the rest of the saints. Emphatically, God answered *my* prayers. Now *I* can go on *my* well-earned vacation. Unknown to them, these sincere and wonderful people were reinforcing my megalomania.

The dependency model of ministry subverts the biblical teaching that the church is the body of Christ and every member has a valuable part to play. We can affirm the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers while denying it by how we do ministry in the local church. To the extent we endorse pastors as authorized caregivers, believe only they can deliver real ministry, and make heroes of them when they are there in our time of need, is the extent by which we create a system where pastors are domineering parents and the people of God are perpetual children.

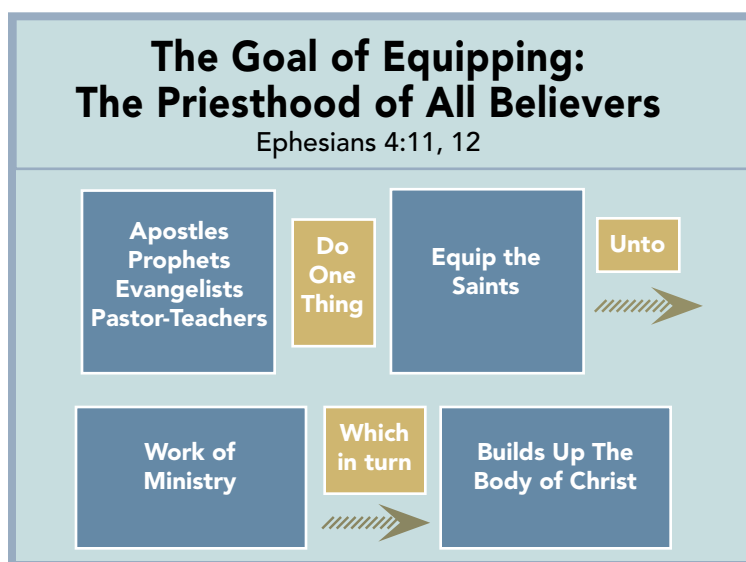
Even if pastors want to break out of this unhealthy system, many pastors revert to the dependency model because there is such a great a price to pay to become an equipping pastor. Pastors feel trapped by the people's expectations. The last thing they want is to fail to live up to in-place expectations. The path of least resistance is to succumb to the pressures of congregational wants rather than go through the painful process of re-education.

A healthier model views the pastor not as a caretaker for those who cannot fend for themselves, but as an equipper who encourages and provides a context to train God's people for ministry.

AN EQUIPPING MODEL OF MINISTRY

A biblical job description for the pastor is found in Ephesians 4:11,12: "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ" (New Revised Standard Version).⁴

The following diagram⁵ by Ray Stedman serves as a visual exposition of this text (page 132, *Unfinished Business*).



Paul defined *equipping* in terms of results. Equipping occurs when saints (common, ordinary believers) do the work of ministry and the body of Christ is built up. It is here that Satan diverts pastors from their call to adopt the high-sounding role of caregiver. Satan pulls off a masterful ploy. He gets pastors and teachers distracted from equipping saints for ministry.

A generation ago the lay Quaker theologian Elton Trueblood wrote *The Incendiary Fellowship*. In this work, he proposed that *equipping* was the primary calling of those in pastoral ministry. The following statement is the best summary of the New Testament view of ministry I have read: "The ministry is for all who share in Christ's life, the pastorate is for those who possess the peculiar gift of being able to help men and women to practice any ministry to which they are called."⁶

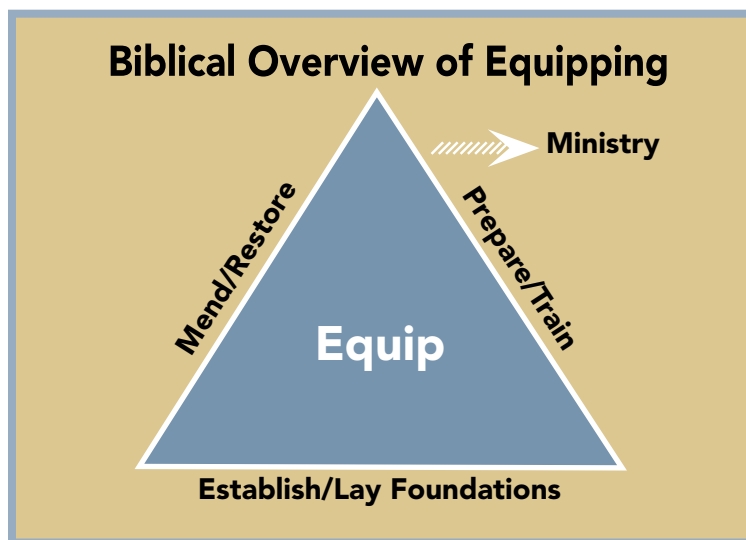
The Greek word for *equip* (*katartismos*) is instructive. One definition comes from the medical term used to describe setting a broken limb or bringing a joint back into proper alignment. Equipping conveys the sense of mending a part of the body so it can function again according to its proper design. In Mark 1:19, James and John are mending their nets. A fishing net is useful only if it does what it is designed to do. The word *equip* is also used for an artisan who works with his hands to make something useful or beautiful. Equipping implies the saints have a particular function or ministry for which they are suited.

The diagram to the right illustrates the various dimensions of equipping ministry, which can be explored more fully in my book, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God*⁷ (page 136).

Ministry is not what pastors do, but what the people of God do. A pastor's part is to assist members of the Body by helping them find and develop their abilities so they can contribute to building up the body of Christ.

An image that defines the equipping relationship between pastor and people would be useful in describing the function of an equipping pastor to the contemporary congregation. Trueblood proposes and rejects some alternatives. If we call a pastor *the minister*, it seems to disclude ordinary people of God who are also ministers. The Scriptures equate pastor with *elder*, but *elder* does not describe function. *Overseer*, *shepherd*, or *pastor* conveys spiritual oversight and protection of the flock, but not empowerment. For these reasons, Trueblood ventures beyond biblical language and uses fresh imagery to define the function of an equipper. He proposes the image of *coach* as the best modern equivalent. But realizing that the word *coach* can sound as if pastors only shout instructions from the sidelines, he adds a qualifier — *player-coach*. In other words, equipping pastors partner with parishioner players in the game of ministry.

One consequence of urging pastors to shift from a dependency/caregiver model to an equipping model is it creates an identity crisis. If the pastor is not the one upon whom people have learned to rely, then who is he? Trueblood addresses this, "The idea of the pastor as the equipper is one which is full of



promise, bringing back self-respect to people in ministry who are sorely discouraged by the conventional pattern. To watch for underdeveloped powers, to draw them out, to bring potency to actuality in human lives — this is a self validating task."⁸

I remember the impact the term *coach* had the first time I used it to describe my role. I was an associate pastor. My title was Pastor for Leadership Development and Discipleship. Since equipping people for ministry in the areas of small groups, spiritual gifts, and discipling was integral to my job description, I was trying to define my equipping identity. After finishing my first newsletter article, I signed "Your Coach, Greg."

I was caught off guard by the reaction caused by the term *coach*. First, people had fun with it. I received slaps on the back accompanied by comments like, "How's the coach?"

Coach was obviously an image people could relate to. It also broke down clerical barriers. Yet one particular interchange reinforced how much the image of coach captured the relationship between pastor and people.

With great enthusiasm, Shirley approached me and said, "Let me see if I have this right. If you are our coach, then we must be on the same team. Right?"

I assured her there were not two teams — a clergy team and a laity team.

She went on, "If you are our coach, then it must be your responsibility to help me discover my role on the team and assist my development on it. Right?"

I said, "You got it."

The image of coach brings to reality the idea that the church as the body of Christ is a team on which all the players are valued and can make a contribution. For this reason, a church I served in Northern California adopted the phrase *On This Team Everyone Plays* as its motto.

What are the implications of an equipping model for the way ministry is carried out? How does the equipping model bring the priesthood of all believers to full flower? To bring an



equipping ministry to reality it must impact pastoral priorities, leadership manner, and the structure of church life.

Priorities

In the dependency model, the pastor is primarily a responder to the pastoral needs of a congregation. I often ask pastors how people get on their schedule. Do they proactively seek out people in whom they make a planned investment or do people place themselves on the schedule because they have a concern they need addressed? How should player-coaches spend their time? They should spend their time developing people who want to be engaged in ministry. Here is my rule of thumb: 80 percent of a pastor's time beyond preparation to preach or teach should be spent with the 20 percent of the congregation who have the greatest ministry potential. It is an inviolable truth that our ministries will only succeed through the efforts of self-initiating, Christ-honoring disciples.

Jesus modeled and understood this better than anyone else. Why did Jesus invest in the Twelve? Why was His prayer in John 17:1–19, at the end of His earthly ministry, focused on the Twelve? He trained them to carry on His ministry after He returned to the Father. How strategic are we in investing our lives in others?

Leadership manner

There is a leadership manner that is consistent with empowering others for ministry. An equipping leader is first a genuine person. Equipping pastors come off the pedestal, come alongside God's people, and share the journey. Anyone around me for any length of time knows I have at times

been crippled with undefined fear and anxiety. My condition became so bad I sought assistance from those in the body of Christ who exercised the spiritual gift of healing. Does this diminish my authority? Not at all. First, it tells people I am willing to do what it takes to become Christ's person and second, people think, *He deals with the same difficulties I do. If he can face them, so can I.*

Beside being a genuine person with others, an equipping pastor delights in highlighting and shining the spotlight of ministry on others. An equipping leader takes pleasure in believing in and seeing the ministry of others come to fruition.

I coteach a class with Chuck, a layperson in our congregation. Every week people say, "Chuck is such a good teacher. Where did you find him?" I could interpret their affirmation of Chuck as an implicit criticism of me, or their statements could feed a desire to covet all the attention. Instead, I choose to be thrilled that Chuck is ministering in a context where his gifts shine.

Decentralized structure

An equipping ministry is a decentralized ministry.

Small groups. In Exodus 18, Jethro instructed Moses to manage the nation of Israel by placing able, trustworthy leaders over groups of 1,000s, 100s, 50s, and 10s. It is hard to imagine an equipping ministry without a small-group structure where equipped laypeople are given the tools and responsibility to care for a group of 10. The most important leader in our church is not the senior pastor or any of the paid staff, but the leader of a ministry team or neighborhood group of 10.

Gifts discovery. It must also be emphasized in an every-member ministry that all of God's people have been

PASTORAL SELF-EXPECTATIONS THAT REINFORCE THE DEPENDENCY MODEL

The dependency model fosters expectations that pastors have of themselves. Pastors are reinforcing the dependency model if they have the following self-expectations.

OMNICOMPETENCE

This word indicates that pastors must be good at everything if they are to be effective. This means that a good pastor must be an excellent communicator, cracker-jack administrator, tender-hearted counselor, larger-than-life showpiece at social occasions, church-growth strategist, etc. A pastor's attendance at the latest seminar to overcome a perceived deficiency only shows the pressure he places on himself to be able to do it all.

CONTROL

Robert Munger, the late Presbyterian pastor, wrote, "The single greatest bottleneck to the renewal and outreach of the church is the division of roles between clergy and laity that results in a hesitancy of the clergy to trust the laity with significant responsibility, and in turn a reluctance on the part of

the laity to trust themselves as authentic ministers of Christ, either in the church or outside the church."

PRIESTLY AURA

Pastors put pressure on themselves to maintain an appearance of holiness. Some pastors have been trained to keep a professional distance from their parishioners. Pastors sometimes assume that if their parishioners see their warts, they will lose their position of authority.

UNHEALTHY NEED TO BE NEEDED

Especially in the area of caregiving, pastors can foster a dependency by running themselves ragged addressing all the perceived care needs. Pastors long for people to say, "I couldn't have gotten through that crisis without you." Before you know it, a pastor's identity has been built around hero worship, as if he is the model of Jesus himself.



GREG OGDEN, Oak Brook, Illinois

gifted and called to ministry. Whether you have a formal process of classes and coaches to help people clarify what they contribute or whether it is built into the psyche of your church, there must be a permission-giving atmosphere showing that everyone is valued here.

At a retreat one of our lay leaders used a phrase that summarized how the body of Christ is to function. He said, "We don't have it all together, but together we have it all." That says all are needed. God has gifted everybody through His Spirit. Each person has something to offer.

Discipling. Growing people to maturity through discipling must be intentional. The most important time of my week is spent with three other men from 7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday. Our purpose is to mature in Christ and to equip ourselves through multiplication to disciple others.

The closing chapter in Howard Snyder's book *Liberating the Laity* is entitled "Pastors: Free To Disciple." Snyder states that discipling is the primary focus of a pastor's ministry: "Essentially, the pastor's first priority is to so invest himself or herself in a few other persons that they have also become disciplers and ministers of Jesus Christ. It is to so give oneself to others and to the work of discipling that the New Testament norm of plural leadership or eldership becomes a reality in the local congregation. In others words, it is to bring the ministry of all God's people to functioning practical reality."⁹

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude my attempt to contrast the dependency model with the equipping model by sharing the testimony of one pastor's journey from being a do-it-all caregiver to becoming an equipping leader. (I received the following letter

while I was director of a doctor of ministry program. This pastor makes reference to my book *Unfinished Business*, from which the thoughts of this article are derived.)

"In 1998, I submitted my proposal (for the final project) and it was approved. You pointed out that I needed to add your book to my bibliography. In my excitement I purchased your book the same day. After I understood where you were coming from, however, my excitement turned to disappointment. I wanted to write my thesis on the omniscient pastor. Your book with its radical ideas stood in the way.

"At that time I was working 80 hours a week doing absolutely everything within my abilities to be a successful pastor. Yet my church wasn't growing. In fact, it was losing membership and finances.

"In December 1999, I was on my knees asking the Lord to transfer me to another church, but He did not. After my prayer that night, I went to my basement to light the furnace. There on the top of the furnace was your book. That night I read the whole book while anger burned within me because you were tearing down everything I believed was biblical about pastoral ministry. During the next 6 days I read your book four times, and each time I felt better about your message.

"For a year and a half I have been applying your book to my ministry. People in the church are more relaxed. At this time, we have 26 church members directly doing ministry that a year ago would have been strictly my domain. Our attendance has gone from 70 to 180. This year alone, during the first 6 months, we have had 21 baptisms. It took me a long time to internalize your message, but it has definitely been life changing."¹⁰ ■



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ENDNOTE

1. Martin Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," *Works of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1943), 282, 283.
2. David Watson, *I Believe in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 253.
3. Jerry Cook, *Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness* (Glendale, Calif.: Regal, 1979), 102.
4. Scripture quotation is from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright, 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
5. Ray Stedman, *Body Life* (Glendale, Calif.: Regal Books, 1972), 81.
6. Elton Trueblood, *The Incendiary Fellowship* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 41. Italics added.
7. Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).
8. Elton Trueblood, *The Incendiary Fellowship* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 41. Italics added.
9. Howard Snyder, *Liberating the Church* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 243. For a more complete exploration of reproducing disciples see Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (InterVarsity Press, 2003), and Greg Ogden's curriculum for discipling entitled *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide To Building Your Life in Christ* (InterVarsity Press, 1998).
10. Used by permission of the author.



REPLICATING JESUS' **TEAM-BUILDING** STRATEGIES IN YOUR CHURCH

The way Jesus led amazed the world. No one before Him ever attracted prospective lay leaders with revolutionary, demanding ideas like submission, sacrifice, and service. But He did. He astonished everyone even more when He used grace and love to sculpt disciples into sturdy Christians who became key members of the start-up team of the Early Church.

BY NEIL B. WISEMAN

ILLUSTRATION BY: MICHAEL DUDASH



His leadership strategies astounded the Romans who ruled the world with military might. His ways confused the Greeks who valued culture as the cornerstone of civilization. And He amazed the Jews who lived by strict observance of the Law. They also could not believe their Messiah would die on a cross.

Our Lord's strategy also stands in sharp contrast to what is sometimes found in churches today. Some congregations have become enamored by leadership concepts borrowed from the corporate sector. Admittedly, we have discovered some leadership strengths in this process. However, some unwanted by-products — image, slick, manipulation, and hunger for power — have also turned up. Other churches, at the opposite extreme, have chosen control, status quo, and seniority as the stifling qualities they most desire in lay leaders.

Jesus provided a miraculous remedy for both of these extremes that are sometimes found in today's churches. Whenever the Twelve asked questions concerning position, power, or privilege, the Master quietly changed the discussion to service, sacrifice, and self-forgetfulness. He taught them, and us, that lasting satisfaction is found in giving ourselves away in spendthrift service.

Our Lord appealed to the disciples' inner longing, a longing that is shared by every human being — the desire to make life count. As they responded to His call, He shaped each disciple's talents, backgrounds, and experiences into a force for the gospel. He showed them who they were and gave them a vision

Jesus not only showed them how to do ministry; He also took time to explain why.

of what they could become. Jesus not only showed them how to "do" ministry; He also took time to explain the "why" of ministry. He even gave them the mind-boggling promise that they would do even greater things than He had done.

That promise turned into historical fact as we can see from even a quick reading of the record of the Early Church. As Christianity marched across the pages of the Book of Acts, the Church adjusted its organizational patterns as it grew from 12 to 120, then to thousands of new believers. But even though organizational patterns changed for increased efficiency, they did not lower the spiritual qualifications for potential lay leaders. Nowhere are the qualifications stated more concisely and clearly than in Acts 6, a passage that describes the selection of the first group of lay leaders.

The list of required qualifications included common sense, faith, a good reputation, and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Notice that the first group of seven were chosen to serve, not to decide. Their first assignment was to wait tables and the

second was to help settle grievances among church widows.

Surprisingly, two of the seven chosen to serve tables and settle misunderstandings soon found themselves in the thick of battle. Stephen became the first martyr. His witness he gave at his execution has influenced the world for generations through the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Philip opened the Samaritan and Ethiopian worlds to the gospel. The victories continue page after page in the Book of Acts as the first-century Christians do God's work from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, just as Jesus commanded.

For our churches and ministries, we must ask several pressing questions: How does the dynamic way Jesus trained and gathered His disciples speak to the work of the church today? How did He do it? And how can we learn from Him? To make the application more specific, how can pastors develop lay leaders today?

USE TRUTH AND GRACE TO DRAW PEOPLE TO CHRIST

Jesus drew people with truth, grace, sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, and service. His self-giving love attracted people; His warmth drew them like a magnet. Like every generation for 2,000 years, getting close to Jesus produces a spiritual contagion called *servanthood*.

Today, every pastor has dual responsibility as shepherd of people and as head of his church. And there need not be competition between the two. Obviously, a pastor cannot allow

his responsibility for people to be undermined by a church's institutional demands. But neither can the pastor allow the institutional church to be ignored or destroyed.

The choice is not between individual or institution, but how to make both strong and healthy so they are mutually beneficial to each other. The need is to weave love, grace, trust, sacrifice, and service into the fiber of all the church does, especially into the details of the work of the decisionmaking group.

MAXIMIZE IMPACT OF INTANGIBLE RESOURCES

The church has tangible resources that need to be managed well — money, property, and personnel are examples. The grass has to be cut, pews cleaned, newcomers welcomed, and bills paid.

But unlike most secular organizations, the church has intangibles that make it unique, significant, and different from every other organization on earth. Though the intangibles never appear in budget reports, checkbooks, PDAs, or calendars, they are among the most real realities in the work of God. These realities need to be described, defined, cherished, and applied to the entire ministry of the church, especially to the development of lay leaders.

CHERISH THE UNIQUENESS OF PEOPLE

Jesus chose disciples who had incredible differences in their personalities, perspectives, and backgrounds.

Check the diversity in Scripture: Peter was a hot reactor, a talk-before-you-think character. John had a burn-up-the-village mentality, but was later called the beloved. Matthew was a loathed tax collector. Thomas was called the doubter. Andrew showed the traits of a live-out-of-the-limelight personal evangelist.

Every disciple had a separate, important function. Together the disciples made up a team with complementary abilities that impacted their world for the gospel. That amazingly diverse group is a clear demonstration that Jesus highly values individuals.

The apostle Paul, who had experience with hard-to-lead people, explained how uniqueness and unity combine to strengthen the work of a church: “The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don’t, the parts we see and the

Regrettably, too many church decisionmaking groups today view their role as that of a corporate board of directors rather than as a team of spiritual pilgrims.

parts we don’t. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance. You are Christ’s body — that’s who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your ‘part’ mean anything” (1 Corinthians 12:25–27, *The Message*).¹

Perhaps these differences are part of our Lord’s strategy to help us realize complementary giftedness makes the church strong, healthy, and effective. Management leader and author Peter Drucker unpacks the idea even more when he says, “A common mistake is to believe that because individuals are all on the same team, they all think alike. Not so. The purpose of a team is to make the strengths of each person effective, and his or her weakness irrelevant.”²

For the maximum use of complementary gifts and skills, a pastor might consider this advice from professional baseball manager Joe Torre: “You have to take the pulse of your players, so you know who needs in-depth personal attention and who doesn’t, who needs coaching and who doesn’t, who needs a private dialogue with you and who doesn’t, who you can count on in tough spots and who you can’t.”³

The dynamic of what made it work near the dawn of Christian history was centered on Jesus who talked the talk and walked the walk. But there was more — to borrow a phrase from Coach

Vince Lombardi, Jesus understood and used the fact that “a leader’s walk talks.” Like our Lord, the pastor has to talk the talk, walk the walk, and always remember that his walk talks.

Every eye in the congregation is on the pastor. Almost everything a pastor says or does sends a strong message about what he believes and what is important to him.

MAKE USE OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Check the biblical record again to see how Jesus related to His disciples. He saw them through eyes of potential, and developing their potential was high on His list of priorities. As a result Jesus was always teaching His disciples how to live, how to relate to each other, and how to win the world.

Jesus used active ministry to develop His disciples. He gave them intense on-the-job training. He talked with them, prayed with them, affirmed them, warned them, and challenged them. He cared for them and trusted them. He shaped their perspective and strengthened their souls. They saw how He loved people. They learned much from receiving His ministry

— a personal impact they could not get in a classroom.

Jesus’ teaching and their learning often took place on hillsides, roadways, and seashores. As they traveled together, Jesus drilled them

on the fundamentals of love, forgiveness, transformation, dependence on God, and holy living. He stretched their spiritual stamina almost to the breaking point when He took them to Gethsemane, Golgotha, and the empty tomb.

BETTER PEOPLE EQUAL STRONGER CHURCHES

Jesus developed spiritually sturdy people and then used them as key personnel for the work of the gospel. Regrettably, too many church decisionmaking groups today view their role as that of a corporate board of directors rather than as a team of spiritual pilgrims. As a result, some churches are run as a commercial venture — the church then becomes a human organization rather than a holy organism. In those settings a person is often chosen to lead for what he knows, whom he knows, or what he owns rather than for who he is or what he can become. Sometimes lay leaders mistakenly view themselves as holding an office rather than being servants of the Lord and His church.

The results can be frightening when a church becomes a well-oiled machine that does good works rather than becoming a redemptive force that offers miraculous transformation. Or, in other settings, the church may become like a mom-and-pop convenience store where everybody knows everybody rather

than being a rescue station for persons drowning in despair and brokenness.

But the situation need not be so glum. Often when lay leaders are shown the possibilities and taught the obligations of the servant side of leading, they sense a need in themselves to establish a closer personal connection with Jesus. Wonderful new adventures take place in their inner life as they draw nearer

ever won the entire world.”

Although there were only 11 disciples after the defection of Judas, their Master gave them the Great Commission. With that assignment He promised to empower them and to be with them even to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:18–20). Eleven plus One made them so invincible in spreading the gospel that the world has not been the same since.

When lay leaders are shown the possibilities and taught the obligations of the servant side of leading, they sense a need in themselves to establish a closer personal connection with Jesus.

to Him. As a result, they often experience an all-out-for-others perspective, a fulfilling feeling of belonging, an imaginative creativity, a holy energy, a sense of partnership with God, and a confidence that hindrances can be overcome.

Their new relationship with other believers and their closer connection with Jesus make the lay leader a better person and a stronger Christian — a noble serendipity that is often overlooked. The exercise and discipline strengthens their spiritual stamina. They help create positive peer pressure that encourages others to keep at the task. Morale snowballs. They grow in Christlikeness. And outsiders are attracted to the church. Serving on a church decisionmaking group can radically transform individuals from spectators to team players and from critics to advocates.

INSPIRE WITH PURPOSE

In western society — after having food, shelter, and clothing needs met — people want to know if their lives have meaning, if they count for something, if living is worthwhile. Researchers Richard Leider and David Shapiro conclude, “Having lived a meaningless life is one deadly fear of most people.”⁴

Jesus answered the meaning question with a concise 14-word summary: “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). As He developed His disciples into authentic, wholesome Christians, He was preparing them to establish the Early Church. He showed them *agape* love. He gave them opportunities to grow, to test their talents, to succeed, to make mistakes, and even to embarrass themselves. He seemed willing to do almost anything to help them succeed.

GIVE THEM A GOD-SIZED MISSION

This concept was radical and visionary in Jesus’ time. Think of it — an itinerant teacher challenging a small group of ordinary followers to win the world. Occasionally Jesus’ followers must have turned to each other and said, “Does He know who we are? He must be exaggerating. No one has

That is our Lord’s pattern for then and now. He gives His church a task so great it requires their best all-out effort plus wholehearted dependence on God. The personal serendipity is that the disciples then and lay leaders now develop spiritually as His divine empowerment works through them.

EXPECT CONFLICTS

The gospel by its nature creates conflicts. It is always calling people to change, and change often causes resistance, and resistance produces conflict. So the gospel replaces old with new, sin for salvation, status quo for transformation, darkness for light, brokenness for wholeness — and the list could continue indefinitely. Such drastic changes will disturb somebody — count on it. Pastoral leaders must make sure conflict is rooted in the gospel instead of their opinion or strong need to control.

Conflict caused by the demands of the gospel should be welcomed and resolved. The objective is to manage conflict so it is creative and useful — not destructive. People should be free to stand up for what they believe provided they do so in humility and with respect for others.

Leaders often worry needlessly about possible conflict. Many issues that might be expected to harm a church seldom happen. Calvin Coolidge’s advice needs to be considered: “Never go out to meet trouble. If you will just sit still, in nine out of 10 cases someone will intercept it before it reaches you.”⁵

MAKE THE DECISIONMAKING GROUP A LOVING FELLOWSHIP

In the local church, and especially among decisionmakers, most issues revolve around human relationships. Part of the process Jesus used to get His disciples ready for His departure was to show them how to love each other and to love Him better. He taught them that love is the main ingredient of everything the church does. Love connects people to the Lord. Love is the motivating force in every effective church. Love overlooks faults and failures. Love treats others the way we want to be treated. Love attracts people to the Lord. Love

is the basic distinctive of the New Testament church.

When asked to quote the greatest commandment, Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:37–40).

My friend summarized it well: “Calvary love melts harshness, fosters forgiveness, heals relationships, creates fellowship, and sparks witness.”⁶

In a time when relational needs and ideas are prevalent, the church needs to be the church. The cry for community has reached a fever pitch in American society, especially

among those who are Generation Xers or younger. Words like *relationships*, *family*, *belonging*, *home*, *fellowship*, *community*, *teamwork*, *communion*, *acceptance*, and *togetherness* must be the everyday language of an effective church. The church must love what the Lord loves — everybody without exception. It must accept the love of the Father as a guide for living. It must love the Lord, and His people, and His world.

Scripture is clear, warm, affirming, and reassuring, too, when Jesus reminds us how important love is in the church: “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:23).

STEPS TO REPLICATING JESUS’ TEAM-BUILDING STRATEGY

Annual leadership development retreat

Build an annual lay-leadership development event into the church calendar. Encourage everyone to attend.

Put lay-leadership development on the agenda

Invest one-half hour of each monthly business meeting in lay development. This will pay rich dividends for years to come.

Preach lay-leadership development

Scripture offers many examples including Jesus, Moses, Joshua, Joseph, John, Peter, and Paul.

Share personal testimony

Speak often in the pulpit about how God is shaping you as a Christian leader. Personal testimonies are even more effective when shared in small groups.

Give books away

Some will read books and profit from the experience. Others will not get around to reading the books you give them. Still a book in their home, office, or business serves as a reminder that leadership development is expected and appreciated.

Tear sheets or quotes

Tear or photocopy sheets out of magazines and newspapers. Mail them to people and watch them respond positively. Send quotes by e-mail.

Spend time with the inner circle

Regularly schedule meetings with key players. When you are with them, share ideas, programs, and dreams. One hour at lunch can often revolutionize persons and cause them to support a project.

Check your strategies

In this article reread the section “Cherish the Uniqueness of People” which deals with walking the walk, talking the

talk, and the walking the talk. A leader leads, especially in character and faith.

See potential

See and express your ideas about the potential of persons in your decision group and throughout your church.

Train, mentor, coach, and ask for support

Occasionally have personal conversations with every member of the decision group. Explain the need and plan for lay development.

Promote service as an opportunity to grow

The many personal benefits of Christian service are seldom discussed. Many servants of the church have never been reminded of the benefits and satisfactions.

Practice Jesus’ development model

Jesus used every conversation and ministry event to develop the disciples. He practiced the idea that every situation has potential for learning something new about ministry.

Grow your soul as you develop others

Teaching, leading, and preaching provide incredible learning opportunities for yourself. Use them and let your people know.

Emphasize synergism and ownership

Synergism means two can do more than twice what one can. Ownership means persons work on an idea until they feel they have a vested interest in a plan or project.



NEIL B. WISEMAN, Overland Park, Kansas

THE OVERWHELMING NEED FOR PASTORS TO DEVELOP LAY LEADERS

As we have seen, Jesus' way of building His church was to build stalwart disciples and then build the Church through them. To implement this idea in a local congregation will require much more than offering a few administrative training sessions. It will require the pastor to do everything possible to help members of the decisionmaking group become authentic models of the Church within the church.

For that to happen, a confusing dilemma must be recognized and solved. Often, people are selected to serve on key boards and committees who have no idea of what the church is to be. They try to lead something they do not understand.

There are several possible causes. Many serve in churches that are committed to many good things while neglecting their *raison d'être*. Other congregations place new converts in key assignments too soon — usually because the veterans are tired, bored, or apathetic. Some churches are led by pastors who do not see the need for developing leaders. Any good ole Joe, Harry, or Jane who are willing to attend a few meetings are good enough. Some churches provide formalized training opportunities without dealing with personal piety and purity, so they have efficiency without spiritual authenticity. Still others believe lay leaders would be offended if they were expected to commit to development and growth as a condition of their leadership. As a result, confusion reigns in too many places.

One good way to work through this muddle is to review what the church is supposed to be. Among the strongest metaphors in Scripture is Paul's descriptive phrase "the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:12). Note: not just body, but body of Christ.

Paul rejoices in the complementary ministry of all members of the body of Christ when he writes, "Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and *full of love*" (Ephesians 4:16, NLT,⁷ italics added).

New Testament scholar William Barclay sharpens our understanding with these inspiring sentences: "The church is the instrument, the agent, the weapon, the organism through which the purposes and the plans of Jesus Christ must be carried out. It is through the church that Jesus Christ seeks to bring life and light and salvation to men and women. Herein is the glory of the church, that the church is the necessary instrument in the hands of Christ"⁸ The body of Christ — or some might call it the *agape* family of Jesus — becomes His hands, His feet, His voice, and His love at work in the world. And note the results from Scripture — the Body will be healthy, growing, and full of love.

In His choosing to work through the church, God has taken pastors and lay leaders as His partners in the work of the gospel. Jesus, the Master Teacher, taught His disciples — and teaches all who come after them — that knowing why we serve in His church and knowing whom we serve in His church are equally important with knowing how to serve. The whom we serve is Jesus. The why we serve is to offer new life to everyone.

In Jesus' development process, three issues are clear: (1) development of lay leaders is needed; (2) development of lay leaders must be continuous; (3) development of lay leaders impacts the person being trained, the church, and the spiritual life of the pastor/trainer.

Pastor friend, go for it. ■



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ENDNOTES

1. Scripture taken from THE MESSAGE. Copyright ©1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Company.
2. Quoted by H.B. London and Neil B. Wiseman, *Becoming Your Favorite Church* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 2002), 40.
3. Joe Torre and Henry Dreher, *Joe Torre's Ground Rules for Winners: 12 Keys To Managing Team Players, Tough Bosses, Setbacks, and Success* (New York: Hyperion, 1999), 11, 12.
4. As quoted in Laurie Beth Jones, *The Path* (New York: Hyperion Books, 1996), x.
5. Footnote Calvin Coolidge, quoted in Louis E. Boone, *Quotable Business* (New York: Random House, 1992), 85.
6. Paul S. Rees, "Lift Up Your Eyes — From Reporting to Interpreting," *World Vision Magazine*, November 1973, 23.
7. Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from The Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.
8. William Barclay, *The Mind of Paul* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1958), 248.



BY AUBREY MALPHURS

Growing Leaders *for*

I want to help pastors develop their emerging and current leaders for high-impact ministry in their churches. While this certainly includes staff, Ephesians 4:7–16 makes it clear that developing laity is key. Consequently, the following general process is designed to help pastors craft a unique leadership-training approach for their ministry in general (a more specific, detailed process is in my book *Building Leaders*, Baker Book House, 2004), and their lay leaders in particular. As you read this article, ask how you might apply this material to your people in your unique situation.

THE DEFINITION OF A LEADER

What is your definition of a leader? Many write and talk about leadership today, but few clearly state what they mean when they use the terms *leader* and *leadership*. When people speak about leaders and growing leaders for the 21st century, what are they talking about? How can a pastor know when he has developed a leader if he does not have a definition? Thus, it is not practical to discuss leadership development without defining what or who it is pastors are attempting to develop. Here are some characteristics of godly leaders.

First, Christian leaders are servants. Jesus specifically addresses servant leadership in Matthew 20:25,26 and John 13:1–17, where He defines a servant leader as one who humbly serves others based on his love for them.

Second, Christian leaders are godly servants. This is in

reference to their character. What most often distinguishes Christian from non-Christian leaders is character. Though many in the business world acknowledge the importance of character, godly character is the essential ingredient that qualifies Christians to lead others.

Third, believing leaders know where they are going. This involves the leader's direction. Leaders need both a ministry mission and a ministry vision. The ministry mission is the church's mission, which is the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19,20). The ministry vision is the church's vision, which is a clear, compelling picture of what the church will look like as it accomplishes the Great Commission. All church leaders (board, staff, and lay leaders) must be moving in the same biblical direction or there will be chaos.

Finally, Christian leaders have followers. Leadership implies followers. If a person has no followers, he is not a leader.

DEVELOPING LAY LEADERS

To explore a process for developing lay leaders, pastors need to address at least three areas. The first area defines leadership development. The second examines the biblical guidelines for leadership training. The final area addresses the four core competencies of leadership training.

What is leadership training?

Leadership development is the process of helping leaders at every level of leadership assess and develop their Christian



Ministry *in the* 21st Century

character and acquire, reinforce, and refine their ministry knowledge and skills.

As a process, leadership development is never ending. This is because leaders are learners. When a leader stops learning, he stops leading.

Leadership development focuses on leaders at every level in ministry (whether one leads a team that voluntarily cleans the

Biblical guidelines for training

Scripture provides principles to guide leadership training in all areas of ministry. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul instructs leaders, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” Scripture also provides numerous examples of trainers and those in training such as Jethro, Moses, Jesus, Paul, Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla, and Apollos.

What most often distinguishes Christian from non-Christian leaders is character.

church every week or one sits on a church governing board) because all leaders in ministry need ongoing training.

Leadership development involves character assessment. Character assessment helps leaders know where they are in their personal character development and where they need to grow.

Leadership development includes acquiring new leadership knowledge and skills. Leaders need to continually assess and keep current with the leadership knowledge and skills required for their areas of ministry. This involves reinforcing present, valid leadership knowledge and skills.

Finally, leadership development includes refining existing leadership knowledge and skills. Leaders need to discard anything that is unbiblical or culturally irrelevant for ministry in the 21st century. This is easier said than done — especially with older leaders who have embraced the tried and true.

The Bible, however, does not prescribe how leaders are to be developed. This means the Holy Spirit has left the process and structure up to each church as long as leadership development does not violate Scripture. Each ministry has the freedom to design a leadership-training process that is tailor-made for its leaders. A characteristic of churches that train leaders is the implementation of a development process. The structures may be different, but training takes place. In training, churches have a distinct advantage over seminaries — immediate application. The problem is, few churches are intentionally training leaders.

Four core leadership competencies

The four leadership competencies are character, knowledge, skills, and emotions. While good leaders are strong in these four areas, all leaders need to grow and develop these

leadership competencies. Since no one will ever arrive at perfection in these areas, everyone must constantly strive to grow and develop in each as a leader. That is the mark of good, maturing leaders. They are consistently learning and growing spiritually, intellectually, experientially, and emotionally.

More than 25 years ago, one of the first Army leadership-training manuals coined the expression that best summarizes the first three: “Be, know, do.” I would add a fourth — feel. Feel involves the emotions. All four areas deeply impact the kind of learning that must take place for leaders to be competent.

The leader’s character (being)

Character reflects the heart and soul of the leader. Soul work develops the leader’s Christlikeness from core to crust. Psalm 78:72 says David shepherded (led) his people with “integrity of heart.” That is, character.

America in general and the church in particular are currently facing a leadership crisis. Howard Hendricks says that the great crisis in America today is a leadership crisis and the great crisis in leadership is a crisis of character. Leaders must be people of good character. Even the corporate world has begun to emphasize the importance of good character and servant leadership, especially since the fall of Enron and the Arthur Andersen Company. The problem in theological education is that character development is often assumed. Educators stress the importance of character development but only assume students are working in this area. This poor assumption has proved fatal for some of our top Christian leaders.

However, it is the character component — being — that

lasts and demands a leader’s attention and development. The importance of character raises several key questions: Who must leaders be to lead effectively at each level of ministry? What are the character requirements for the various levels of leadership in the church (deacons, Sunday School teachers, ushers, greeters)? Who do people expect the leader to be? Scripture provides general character qualities.

First Timothy 3:1–7, Titus 1:6–9, and 1 Peter 5:2 provide the church with the characteristics of elders, who were equivalent to today’s pastors. First Timothy 3:8–13 provides the character qualities for deacons. In 2 Peter 1:3–9, Peter lists qualities for all Christians. Acts 6:3–5 provides some qualities for Early Church leaders, and Galatians 5:22,23 presents the fruit of the Spirit that should characterize all leaders regardless of their level of responsibility. Other necessary character qualities are found in 2 Timothy 2:2 such as competence, trustworthiness, and teachability.

Teachability is vital. A lack of teachability is the potential leader’s cardinal sin. It quickly disqualifies one from leadership in any area because leaders must be learners. When they stop learning, they stop leading. If one is unteachable at the beginning, he is not leadership material. Some seminarians feel they can only learn from certain faculty — most often those who are recognized scholars in their fields. They turn a cold shoulder to the faculty who teach in the more practical areas. This attitude sends a clear message that this aspiring leader is not teachable, has a pride problem, and will likely crash and burn later in ministry.

Leader-trainers are encouraged to develop character audits to use with their trainees. I have developed two character audits for use in training leaders at the seminary and church level. (See sidebar *Men’s Character Audit for Leadership*.) It is based on the character qualities in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. The female leadership audit is based on 1 Timothy 2:9,10; 3:11; Titus 2:3–5; and 1 Peter 3:1–4. It is in Appendix J of my book, *Being Leaders*. Leader-trainers may find these audits helpful in assessing the character of those whom they train.

The leader’s knowledge (knowing)

The leader’s intellect is his capacity for knowledge. The cognitive aspect of learning is the process of acquiring and processing content or information. The information may be old or new. Regardless, leaders need to be knowledgeable of their ministry areas. A seminary colleague once said his biggest struggle as a pastor-leader was knowing what to do.

In preparing Moses for leadership, God specifically taught Moses what to do (Exodus 4:15). Competency is based to a great degree on knowing what to do. Leadership training is where seminarians often come up short. They are trained well in crucial areas such as biblical languages, theology, church



MEN'S CHARACTER AUDIT FOR LEADERSHIP

Leaders have discovered that godly character is critical to effective ministry. However, no one is perfect. Along with their strengths people have weaknesses and flaws. This character assessment will help men determine their character strengths and weaknesses so they know where they are strong and where they need to develop. The characteristics are found in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9.

Directions: Circle the number that best represents how you rate yourself in each area.

1. I am **“above reproach.”** I have a good reputation among people in general. I have done nothing that someone could use as an accusation against me.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

2. I am the **“husband of one wife.”** If married, I not only have one wife, but I am also not physically or mentally promiscuous because I am focused only on her.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

3. I am **“temperate.”** I am well-balanced. I do not abuse my freedom in Christ. I am not excessive or given to extremes.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

4. I am **“sensible.”** I show good judgment in life and have a proper perspective regarding my abilities and who I am (humble).

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

5. I am **“respectable.”** I conduct my life in an honorable way, and people have and show respect for me.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

6. I am **“hospitable.”** I use my residence as a place to serve and minister to Christians and non-Christians alike.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

7. I am **“able to teach.”** When I teach the Bible, I show an aptitude for handling the Scriptures with reasonable skill.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

8. I am **“not given to drunkenness.”** I conduct every area of my life in moderation.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

9. I am **“not violent.”** I am under control. I do not lose control to the point that I strike other people or cause damage to their property.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

10. I am **“gentle.”** I am a kind, meek (not weak), forbearing person who does not insist on my rights or resort to violence.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

11. I am **“not quarrelsome.”** I am an uncontentious peacemaker who avoids hostile situations with people.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

12. I am **“not a lover of money.”** I am not in ministry for financial gain, but I seek first His righteousness, knowing that God will supply my needs.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

13. I **“manage my family well.”** If I am married and have a family, my children are believers who obey me with respect. People do not think of or accuse them of being wild or disobedient.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

14. I am **“not a recent convert.”** I am not a new Christian who is struggling with pride and conceit.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

15. I have **“a good reputation with outsiders.”** Though unsaved people may not agree with my religious convictions, they still respect me as a person.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

16. I am **“not overbearing.”** I am not self-willed, stubborn, or arrogant.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

17. I am **“not quick-tempered.”** I am not an angry person, and I do not lose my temper quickly and easily.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

18. I am **“not pursuing dishonest gain.”** I am not fond of or involved in any wrongful practices that result in fraudulent gain.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

19. I **“love what is good.”** I love what honors God.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

20. I am **“upright.”** I live in accordance with the laws of God and man.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

21. I am **“holy.”** I am a devout person, whose life is generally pleasing to God.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

22. I **“hold firmly to the faith.”** I understand, hold to, and attempt to conserve God's truth. I also encourage others while refuting those who oppose the truth.

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Strong

After completing this character assessment, note the characteristics with the lowest rating (a 4 or below). These are the character goals you need to work on most.



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history, and homiletics, but receive little training — if any — in leadership.

The key questions regarding the leader's knowledge are: What must one know to lead at his level of ministry? What are the basic knowledge requirements at each leadership level? Those responsible for developing leaders at any level must answer these crucial questions.

To identify the knowledge components for leaders at each level is beyond the scope of this article. Regardless, pastors will benefit from some help in this area. The following list will get you started. Leaders:

- must know God (Romans 6–8).
- need to know themselves (their divine designs, and strengths and weaknesses).
- need to know and understand people (this involves the use of tools such as the Personal Profile and the Kiersey Temperament Sorter for training purposes).
- need to know how to study the Bible and have a general knowledge of the Bible and theology.
- need to know how to pray.

- need to know and agree with the organization's statements (core values, beliefs, and doctrine) and direction (mission, vision, and strategy).
- need to know how to think and plan strategically.
- at higher levels need to know how to preach, raise money, develop staff, and perform weddings, funerals, and baptisms.

The leader's skills (doing)

The leader's skills affect his actions or behavior. Psalm 78:72 states that David led his people with "skillful hands" as well as "integrity of heart." Leaders must be able to put into practice what they learn. They may have leadership knowledge, but can they lead? Can they turn theory into practice? When they are up to their elbows in alligators, can they lead their team out of the swamp? The key skills questions are: What must one be able to do to lead a ministry? What skills must one have to function well at each level of leadership? For example, what leadership skills does one need to serve as an elder or deacon? What habits are necessary for effective

TASK SKILLS INVENTORY

The following are some critical task skill sets for leaders in general and pastors in particular. Rate your abilities with each by placing a check in the appropriate box.



Skills	Strong	Above Average	Below Average	Weak	Do Not Know
Preaching					
Teaching					
Researching					
Values discovery					
Communicating					
Mission development					
Mission casting					
Vision development					
Vision casting					
Strategizing					
Reflecting					
Time management					
Stress management					
Use of technology					
Prioritizing					
Writing					
General planning					
Strategic planning					
Making presentations					
Monitoring					
Praying					
Creating/creativity					
Implementing					
Organizing					
Budgeting					
Advertising					

leadership and ministry? Leaders at each level must answer these questions for the people they train.

Following are some general leadership skills of which trainers need to be aware. The first are task skills such as how to cast vision, pray, discover and develop core ministry values, how to develop a ministry mission statement and strategy, the ability to teach and preach the Bible or a Sunday School lesson. These are listed in the Task Skills Inventory trainers can use to develop leaders. (*See sidebar Task Skills Inventory.*)

Second are the relational skills such as how to listen, encourage, mentor or coach, resolve conflicts, network, counsel, motivate, take risks, solve problems, build trust, and other vital ministry skills. (*See sidebar Relational Skills Inventory.*)

The leader's emotions (heart work)

A person's emotions are his feelings. Leaders' emotions are their heart work that reflects what they feel. Scripture has much to say about emotions, beginning in Genesis when

Adam and Eve experienced shame due to their sin (compare Genesis 3:11,12 with Genesis 2:24). In Genesis 3:10, Adam experienced an unhealthy fear that caused him to hide from God. Cain expressed extreme anger toward God in Genesis 4:5,6. On many occasions, Jesus expressed His emotions. For example, He was deeply moved and wept at Lazarus' grave (John 11:33–36); He became angry with His disciples (Mark 10:14); and He had compassion for certain people such as lepers and the blind (Mark 1:41; Matthew 20:34). The expression of emotions is found throughout the New Testament and concludes in Revelation where John, describing the New Jerusalem, writes, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

A leader's emotions affect his mood. Research as well as ministry experience shows a leader's mood is contagious, spreading quickly throughout a ministry. A good mood

RELATIONAL SKILLS INVENTORY

The following are some critical people skill sets for leaders in general and pastors in particular. Rate your abilities with each by placing a check in the appropriate box.



Skills	Strong	Above Average	Below Average	Weak	Do Not Know
Listening					
Networking					
Conflict resolution					
Decisionmaking					
Risk taking					
Problem solving					
Confronting					
Encouraging					
Trust building					
Inspiring/motivating					
Team building					
Consensus building					
Recruiting					
Hiring and firing					
Conducting meetings					
Recognizing and rewarding					
Questioning					
Disagreeing					
Confronting					
Counseling					
Mentoring					
Community building					
Challenging					
Trusting					
Empowering					
Evaluating					
Managing/administering					
Leading					
Delegating					
Disciplining					
Evangelizing					
Correcting					

characterized by optimism and inspiration affects people positively. However, a bad mood characterized by negativity and pessimism will cripple a ministry and damage people.

A senior pastor's mood has the potential to set the mood for the entire church. Many people have experienced or know of senior pastors who have attempted to lead using fear. In these situations, people do not follow because they want to but because they fear the wrath of the pastor.

The key emotions questions for leaders are: What emotions are liabilities for your ministry? What emotions must you deal with to create a better climate for ministry? It is beyond the scope of this article to go into detail regarding the leader's emotions. The following overview, however, should help catalyze your thinking in this area.

To develop emotional well-being and establish a spiritually healthy climate for ministry, leaders must cultivate two primary areas: their emotions and the emotions of the people they minister with and to. The first area relates to the leaders' emotions and is twofold.

Area 1: Leaders must understand and manage their own emotions. Understanding their emotions involves taking four steps:

- Step 1: Leaders must learn to recognize their emotions when they occur.
- Step 2: Leaders should identify their emotions. Look for: anger, anxiety, sadness, fear, shame, discouragement, surprise, joy, and love.
- Step 3: Leaders must deal biblically with the destructive emotions. For example, Ephesians 4:26 addresses sinful anger, and Philippians 4:6,7 addresses worry and anxiety.
- Step 4: Leaders may want to explore why they are experiencing certain emotions.

Once leaders begin to understand their emotions, next they must manage their emotions. To accomplish this, they need to remember two things.

- They cannot control being swept by their emotions because the emotional mind often overrides the rational mind such as when a person loses his temper.
- They can, however, control how they respond to or handle their emotions. They can recognize them and deal biblically with them in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Area 2: Leaders must not only be aware of and work on their own emotions, but also recognize others' emotions and help them manage them as well.

This is commonly referred to as empathy. Most people have been in situations where an emotionally unhealthy person, whether in a leadership position or not, negatively affects a ministry. It is imperative that leaders deal with these people for the sake of the ministry and to help the individual. How do leaders accomplish this? Much the same way they handle

their own emotions, only they apply the four steps above to the individual who needs help.

After leaders recognize that others need help with their emotions, they need to assist them. Leaders can help others manage their emotions by example and by working one-on-one with them.

This solution assumes the people in or under our ministries want help. The problem is that the person needing help is often emotionally and spiritually dysfunctional and not willing to work on the issues. The leader should attempt to work with these people but be ready to get them help should they need professional care.

LEADER'S DEVELOPED CAPABILITIES	
Character (Being)	Soul work
Knowledge (Knowing)	Head work
Skills (Doing)	Hand work
Emotions (feeling)	Heart work

Here is a warning label concerning these four core competencies. Learning can be distorted if any one of the elements is overemphasized. Character is a must, but without knowledge and skills, one's ministry is severely limited. The leader may be nice, but he may not know what he is doing.

Knowledge without skills is dry intellectualism. This is a major problem in seminaries because faculty and students can become disconnected from the real world of the church and because much of their learning is theoretical. A skill without knowledge is mindless activity or mere busywork, and skills without character can lead to mere task-oriented ministry.

Finally, emotions without knowledge lead to more frustration. The leader knows something is wrong but does not know what it is or how to get relief. Good leader-teachers train their emerging leaders to integrate and balance as much as possible the four elements at their respective leadership levels.¹ ■



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ENDNOTE

1. These elements are close to the three major classical learning theory systems: The affective (emotions), cognitive (knowledge), and behavioral (experience) domains. Character would fall into the affective domain with emotions. See William R. Yount, *Called To Teach* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1999), 28. I would place emotions and values under character, as I believe Scripture emphasizes the latter.



How Breakout Churches Unleash the Laity

The church I served as pastor several years ago was experiencing excellent growth. We received a few rewards for our pace of growth and, from my perspective, most everything was fine. However, my smug satisfaction would soon come to an end.

BY THOM S. RAINER

At the end of my third year in the church, I looked at the number of persons who had joined the church. Some were Christians; others had been reached from the world of the lost and unchurched.

I added the 3-year total of additions. I followed that brief exercise by looking at the increase in attendance over the same period. Suddenly the picture was not nearly as pretty as I had first painted. Our attendance had increased by only one-third the number of new members added over the past 3 years. Somehow nearly two of the three new members were absent every worship service. What was wrong?

This wake-up call led me to review the name of every new member for 3 years. It did not take me long to solve the enigma. Those new members who had become involved in ministry were still active 3 years later. Those who attended the services with little other involvement were quickly falling into the cracks of apathy and attrition.

In just a few moments the cognitive acceptance to unleash the laity became an emotional reality. I had preached, taught, and, at times, pleaded with members to get involved in the ministries of the church. But those times of exhortation were sporadic, with little planning or foresight. Now that I had a crisis on my hands, I became much more intentional about leading my church to unleash the laity.

FROM BELIEF TO ACTION IN UNLEASHING THE LAITY

Most Christians will quickly affirm the biblical mandate to unleash the laity to do the work of ministry. And most pastors have preached with passion Paul's mandate to "prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12). But sometimes we can accept something cognitively, but fail to take concrete action upon that which we say we believe.

In my church we began to be highly intentional about unleashing the laity. We started new members' classes to get people involved early. We began to have ministry banquets to celebrate and express gratitude to those who were involved in God's church. We were more intentional about getting people involved in Sunday School and small groups where even more ministry takes place.

As I fast forward several years today, I realize that the situation in my local church was not unique. Indeed as a researcher of churches in North America, I discovered that my church of a previous decade had much in common with churches today.

BREAKOUT CHURCHES PROVIDE HOPE BY UNLEASHING THE LAITY

A few years ago my research team began a quest to find breakout churches in the United States. These churches had to meet several statistical criteria, but basically, we were looking for

churches that had gone from decline and stagnation to growth.

Of the research projects I have led, this one was the most frustrating and, paradoxically, the most rewarding. Finding churches that had moved from mediocrity to breakout growth was frustrating. Frankly, not many of those churches exist. But the reward was hearing the incredible stories of churches that had experienced breakout growth.

The project's purpose was to discern the issues present in breakout churches. My book *Breakout Churches* (Zondervan) discusses these factors in their entirety. This article identifies the issues related to unleashing the laity. Unleashing the laity is the mobilization of laypersons in the church to do the work of ministry.

For the first time since we commissioned the breakout church project, I reviewed the research to identify specific issues related to the work of laity in ministry. Frankly, I was surprised at how many breakout factors were closely related to this issue. Four key factors stood out prominently.

THE LAITY AND BREAKOUT CHURCHES Facing painful realities

Our research included breakout churches and churches that did not break out of their stagnation. The comparison helped us understand the unique features of breakout churches.

One comparison (nonbreakout) church was located in the Western United States. I will call it Mountain Community Church. The church was started in 1990 with great hope and a positive beginning. By 1993, average worship attendance was 550. This is remarkable growth in a short time. The last data we received showed worship attendance had dropped to 410 in 2003. The church's attendance had gradually declined every year since the peak of 550 in 1993. Additionally, our study of the church during the 10-year period from 1993 to 2003 indicates that four key community ministries have been discontinued. Conversions, measured by baptisms, declined from 88 in 1993 to 21 in 2003.

We interviewed seven laypersons at Mountain Community Church. Without informing them of the issues noted above, we asked: How do you think the church is doing today? Here are their responses:

- "We are on an incredible ride. Our impact in the community is great, and the members in the church are truly growing as disciples."
- "I would have to say that our strength is really in evangelism. That is the focus of the church, and we are really doing a good job there."
- "The growth of our church is incredible. We were just started in 1990, and look where we are today."
- "We are a real friendly church. That is why we continue to see people come to our church, join the church, and invite other people to our church. You can see the growth of our church as people join each week."

Though many characteristics could describe breakout churches, the unleashing of the laity was pivotal.



- “Mountain Community Church is a miraculous story. You won’t find many churches that have seen the growth we have.”
- “I couldn’t imagine being at any other church. I am really close to the people in my small group.”
- “The church is doing great because we are being fed the Word of God each week. That’s the real strength of our church.”

I do not doubt the respondents’ integrity or the perceived truthfulness of their answers. But in reality, the church had declined more than 20 percent in 10 years, and the major ministries to the community had been discontinued. The number of people reached for Christ each year had also declined precipitously.

Laypeople in breakout churches do not hesitate to look at the statistics of their churches, even if what they learn is painful. They insist on having a clear awareness of the state of the church. They do not want any punches pulled. They insist that ministries to the community be evaluated regularly. They attempt to discern the spiritual growth of their members and the evangelistic successes and failures toward the lost and the unchurched. They evaluate their teaching ministries and the doctrinal awareness of their congregants.

Such awareness can be uncomfortable when the picture

painted by the facts is not pretty. That is why most laypeople are unwilling to take the first step to break out — facing painful reality. Most members prefer to stay in the pseudo-comfort of denial. But breakout churches have lay leaders who are willing to face the facts, no matter how painful they may be.

When in doubt, wait

Breakout churches often learn the hard way. Their past experiences were filled with the horror caused when a church fills vacant positions too quickly. Not only did they fail to discern if the position was beneficial for the church, but they also failed to patiently determine the person best suited to fill the position. They learned an important lesson: it is better to have an unfilled position than to fill it with the wrong person.

Our research has uncovered dozens of stories of churches that quickly filled a position only to have a horrible ministry mismatch. Rather than tell you one of their stories, I will tell my own. Confession, I hope, will be good for my soul.

Before I became dean of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, I served as senior pastor of four churches in four different states. In one church I led the congregation to understand the critical importance of unleashing the laity. I pushed hard to help members grasp the need to put people in places of ministry according to their spiritual gifts, desires, and passions. Most everybody seemed to be following my exhortations ... except me.

The hardest-to-fill ministry position was the fifth grade boys Sunday School class. Four teachers had resigned from the class in 3 months. It seems the young rascals were too demanding for most people to handle. The ministry team nicknamed the class *legion*, but we were kidding, of course.

One day a lady who was in her sixties came to my office under Spirit conviction to get to work in the church. She had, she told us, been sitting on the sidelines far too long.

The reasonable response would have been to look at her ministry profile, which was readily available. Had I done so, I would have quickly discovered her gifts definitely did not include teaching, and she strongly preferred working with adults, not children or youth. Had I looked deeper, I would have seen that the gift of mercy was her lowest score.

To ask the lady to teach the fifth grade boys Sunday School class would be a disaster waiting to happen. Exercising my own spiritual gift of idiocy, I pleaded with her to take the class, suggesting that her love of God would be measured by her response.



She accepted the assignment with figurative kicking and screaming. Disaster soon followed.

Three families who had sons in the class left the church within the first two weeks. I spent the next two months in conflict and crisis management. The teacher quit the class in anger.

What ecclesiological crime did I commit? I attempted to put a square peg in a round hole. I was so eager to fill the position that I acted in haste.

Simply put, I should have waited for the right person. Instead, I created a major crisis in the church. Breakout churches unleash the laity to do the work of ministry, but they make certain the right person is in the right place. An unfilled position is better than a position filled with the wrong person.

Act quickly and compassionately

Most ministry positions do not demand drastic action, even if the person in the position is not doing the job well. Frankly, if all issues of inadequacy were addressed, most church leaders would have little time to do anything else.

Gifted, competent, and consistent people must fill key positions of leadership. But many church leaders are unwilling to address situations where the wrong person is in a position of key importance.

In breakout churches, the leadership did not deal with every situation in which a layperson was in a mismatched ministry situation. They did, however, deal with situations in which the layperson was in a key or influential position. The cost was often high, but the cost of doing nothing was greater.

After hearing from various leaders in the breakout churches, our research team noticed a similar pattern in dealing with people who were in mismatched positions. We called the approach the three Cs: *closure*, *compassion*, and *communication*.

First, breakout churches refused to let troublesome-people issues continue. Despite the difficulties in making such decisions, they did so and brought *closure*. They dealt with the individuals involved with *compassion*. Unlike some of the corporate world decisionmakers (and those in many churches for that matter), leaders in breakout churches attempted to discern how Christ would handle the situation.

Perhaps the most unique characteristic displayed by breakout church leaders was their insistence that any major decision affecting people in key positions would entail clear *communication*. The rumor mill could not start if the reasons behind the change were stated clearly and quickly. Of course, confidential matters were not revealed, but the congregation had sufficient information to understand why a decision was made.

Compatibility is as important as competency

Breakout churches do not just look for the most qualified

people to form the ministry team. They seek laypeople who fit with the personalities and philosophies of the ministry. The team concept is vital in these churches.

In the athletic world, a team of extraordinary athletes may perform poorly in competition because they do not work well together. This principle is true in the church. Breakout churches know it is critical to have highly competent people on their ministry teams who work well together. Lay leaders in these churches used the word *chemistry* more than a dozen times to describe the teamwork of their ministries. Here are their comments:

- "We have an incredible chemistry. It's as if we can almost anticipate what each other's next move will be."
- "No one tries to take credit for the way God blesses our church. It's all a team effort."
- "The chemistry of our people is remarkable. Most of us have been together for years. Serving at this church is both joy and fun."
- "I don't think any one of us is a superstar. We're all just a bunch of unknowns that work together in an incredible way."
- "I can't find any place where everyone works together like they do at this church. I just don't think there's a better place on earth for me."

BREAKING OUT WITH THE LAITY

Our research team began with 52,333 churches in our database. When it was all said and done, the number of breakout churches was only a baker's dozen. Though many characteristics could describe breakout churches, the unleashing of the laity was pivotal. Of the many characteristics shared by those who unleashed laity, I have described four of the key factors in this vital process.

Can you imagine going through life without making a difference? Can you imagine attending a church that did not make a difference? Our study uncovered churches and laypersons that were moved to greatness. But above all, it declared the greatness of God. He is our strength. He is our source of power and hope. He can move you and your church from being good to being great.

It is a sin to be good when God has called us to be great.

In Christ's strength, may the rest of your days in life and ministry be great for His glory alone. ■



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EQUIPPING

for Life, Ministry, *and* Leadership

A Complete Strategy for Preparing
God's People for Works of Service

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

PREAMBLE: SECOND FIDDLE

He was a 53-year-old, balding, and thoroughly unimpressive career military officer. He lacked the imperial stature of MacArthur, the bearing of Omar Bradley, and the flair of Patton.

He graduated 61st in a class of 164 from the U.S. Military Academy. It took him 25 years to move through the ranks from second lieutenant to lieutenant general. During those long years he held many posts. He served as an assistant executive in the office of the Assistant Secretary of War and on the staff of several other more prominent officers. It seemed he would always be somebody's assistant, always helping make others more successful. But during those years he faithfully carried out his duties, took advantage of every opportunity, and learned from every man he worked for.

He was about to make history. One day he opened a car

door, got in, and faced the president of the United States who was seated in the back. "Well, Ike," Roosevelt said, "you are going to command Overlord." With that statement, Dwight David Eisenhower went from second fiddle to first chair. He would plan and direct Operation Overlord, the Allied plan to invade Nazi-dominated Europe on the beaches of Normandy, drive across France, and defeat Germany.

Eisenhower would later become president of Columbia University, the first Supreme Commander of NATO, and president of the United States from 1952–60.

Eisenhower ultimately eclipsed the men he had served. He commanded Omar Bradley who had graduated ahead of him at West Point. Eisenhower, not Douglas MacArthur or George Marshall, was elected president though he had assisted both.

Some say leaders are born. Others believe that leaders are made. In Eisenhower's case, both are right and both are wrong. Eisenhower's innate gifts and abilities were sharpened through many years of training and dedicated service. But the training and experiences would have been wasted on a man with lesser gifts.

A similar question has perplexed the church. Is gifted ministry a product of nature or nurture? Are believers born to it? Or, does gifted ministry grow in the soil of careful training, service, and preparation? Both are right, and both are wrong.

BY ROB BURKHART

A DIAGNOSIS

Every Sunday church pews are filled with ordinary people much like Jesus' disciples Peter and John. That is not a surprise. Most people are ordinary and rarely stand out in this world. What is surprising is that God's plan to carry out history's greatest mission, the redemption of humanity, is entrusted to ordinary people. The church is God's plan — His only plan. Yet far too many do not fulfill their God-given destiny to rise above the mundane concerns of life and find their purpose in exercising their gifts.

Every church needs people who are involved in and committed to ministry. Without dedicated people, the church cannot achieve its God-given purposes. It cannot reach its community, care for its members, encourage their spiritual development, or provide dynamic corporate worship. Without them the church is handicapped, crippled, and unable to carry out its mission in the world.

Few churches have the workers they need, and often the workers they have are not adequately trained. The missing key to building a great church is mobilizing and equipping its laity.

Every believer is gifted by the Holy Spirit and called to ministry. Each one has been placed in the Body to use his gifts in concert with others. Gifts vary, but all are essential. People serve in different ways, but all are needed.

Believers want to invest their lives in meaningful and fulfilling ministries. They want their lives to matter. But few believers

many churches limp along without the help they need? Why do so many church leaders invest so little in training workers?

There are many reasons. (*See sidebar Why We Fail, page 66.*) But failing to effectively recruit and train workers has inevitable and predictable results. Believers will not fully develop spiritually nor will their ministry potential. Churches stop growing and do not impact their world as God intended. Churches get stuck in a revolving door. Failing to involve believers in ministry prevents them from developing friendships, developing a sense of ownership and responsibility, and seeing themselves as valued members of the church. This is not good. It is not God's plan. It is a cycle of failure.

PRESCRIPTION

If what I have described above is the disease, what is the cure? Church leaders must make preparing God's people for works of service their first priority and the cornerstone of ministry by developing and implementing an effective recruiting, training, and placement strategy. It sounds easier than it is.

PREREQUISITES FOR SUCCESS

Establish limited ministry contracts

Ministry in a local congregation should be limited in two ways: *duration* and *scope*. Each person should commit to a ministry for no less than 1 year. Those who successfully serve should have three options at the end of their commitment. First, they may opt to continue their current service. Second, they can transfer to another ministry. Finally, they can end their service. Gracefully releasing people from ministry, when appropriate, paves the way for their return, avoids the problems

burned-out and frustrated workers create, and opens the door of ministry to others.

Ministry should also be limited in *scope*. Believers should focus on one ministry, not three or four. One way to do this is to limit a believer's involvement to one major and one *minor* ministry. While one ministry is not more important than another, some require a major time commitment and others do not. A major ministry is one that requires involvement other than scheduled service or event times (for example, a Sunday School teacher). A minor ministry is one that only requires involvement during a service or event (for example, ushers and greeters).

These limitations prevent burnout, open the door of ministry to others in the congregation, and help improve quality as believers concentrate on a ministry. It also makes recruiting easier.

Most churches do a good job of counting nickels and noses — tithes and attendance — but few churches count service hours and tenure of service.

find such places of ministry in their local congregation. Thus, their gifts and ministries often find expression in parachurch organizations or community agencies.

God has gifted and called church leaders "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12,13).

Helping believers discover, develop, and deploy their spiritual gifts to further the cause of Christ is not an option; it is a divine mandate.

If every-member ministry is God's will, if every church needs involved and committed people, if every believer is gifted and called to ministry, and if God has called church leaders to equip their people for ministry, why do so few believers find places of ministry in the church? Why do so

Clearly stated expectations and standards

It is much easier to recruit when people know what they are getting into. Performance improves when people know what is expected. Workers are less frustrated and are more likely to stay when they have been given the truth. Do not minimize. Do not sugar coat. Challenge them with the great opportunities of ministry.

WHY WE FAIL

MISUNDERSTOOD ROLES

Pastors and people often misunderstand the nature of the ministry and their responsibilities to each other. Pastors often feel they are called to *do* ministry, not prepare others to do their job. Believers often think they hire the pastor to do ministry. It is not something God has called them to do.

FALSE ASSUMPTIONS

Pastors assume their people do not want to be involved. They are wrong. People want to serve Christ and find meaningful ways to express their gifts and callings. But they do not want to feel forced, be overburdened with church work, taken advantage of, or asked to do something they are not gifted or trained to do.

THE TYRANNY OF THE URGENT

Overburdened by day-to-day responsibilities, pastors often put off training because it does not create an immediate crisis. Sadly, this short-term gain quickly becomes a long-term pain and creates a cycle of failure. Failing to recruit and train workers means no one is available, qualified, or prepared to help them. The pastor's workload continues to increase. To compensate, he continues to put off recruiting and training. It is an ugly, self-perpetuating cycle.

FEAR

Some believers fear they will be asked to do something that is not meaningful or does not fit their gifts and callings. They fear being overwhelmed, overburdened, or asked to carry an ever-increasing load. They fear burnout and becoming stuck in a difficult or unrewarding ministry with no way out. They also fear failure.

Many church leaders are afraid to release important ministry to people who may fail or create problems instead of solving them. They fear disloyalty and the devastating consequences of entrusting ministry to those who cannot be trusted. Some are afraid another's success may somehow diminish them.

IGNORANCE

Many church leaders do not know how to train. They are not to be blamed because no one ever taught them. Instead, they invest their time, effort, and energy in other areas of ministry. It is easier to do the work than to train someone else.



ROB BURKHART, Livonia, Michigan

Recruit for training, not positions

It is a mistake to recruit for a ministry position without first determining the person's gifts, providing training, or evaluating his qualifications. Each step can be accomplished in an effective training process. People are also more likely to sign up for training than to take on a specific ministry, and those who refuse a specific ministry may willingly take on another if they are given adequate training.

Develop a church-wide recruiting system

A bane of church life is competition between ministries. They end up cross recruiting. People involved in one ministry are asked to join another ministry as well.

Church ministries and leadership should be involved in a recruiting/training process that ends cross recruiting. Participation should be a concerted effort to help believers discover, develop, and deploy their gifts in ways that benefit the church and fulfill them in ministry. (*See sidebar Creating a Coordinated Recruiting Training Strategy, page 68.*)

Adopt a big-circle approach

In an effort to protect the church, leaders sometimes create barriers to recruitment. They require newcomers to be a part of the Body for a specific period of time, complete a lengthy training process, or become members of the congregation. These and other safeguards may be appropriate for placement in ministry but they ought not be barriers to training. Any believer should be eligible for training that leads to ministry. In the process, he can also receive assistance to help him satisfy the church's other requirements for ministry.

Consistent recruiting and training

Recruiting and training for ministry should be consistent in the life of the church. Crisis recruiting communicates failure and disorganization, not success and effective ministry. Depending on the size of the congregation, a recruiting/training cycle may be implemented quarterly, two or three times a year, or annually.

A consistent strategy recruits and trains people before they are needed, making it possible for the church to add ministries and new units in an orderly and predictable way. Thoroughly trained new workers are more effective than people who are rushed into service without adequate training.

Every-member ministry goal

The Bible is clear. Every believer is gifted, called to ministry, and is accountable for the stewardship of his ministry gifts. Church leaders are responsible to help believers prepare for ministry. Their goal should be nothing less than recruiting, training, and placing every qualified believer in a ministry consistent with his gifts and callings and the needs of the church.

High expectations

Service to God and His church is the highest calling. It is important that believers find their place in ministry. Establishing

hinder, recruiting. Expecting excellence and holding workers accountable clearly communicate the importance of ministry, build a culture of success, and boost worker morale.

Some, however, will not serve successfully. Others will experience moral or spiritual failure or will fail to work successfully with leadership. In these cases, leaders should lovingly confront these workers, carefully explain their concerns, develop a strategy for success,

and give them opportunity to grow into the ministry. Removal from ministry may be the only option for those who fail to resolve leadership concerns.

It is more important for workers to find their right place in ministry than to fill a hole in the church's organizational flowchart.

and maintaining high standards and striving for excellence are critical to long-term success. High standards help, not

CREATING A COORDINATED RECRUITING TRAINING STRATEGY

There is no doubt that it can be done. That does not mean it will not take some doing.

ADOPT AND SUPPORT A WHOLE-CHURCH RECRUITING TRAINING STRATEGY

Without that commitment the processes cannot work.

CREATE A TASK FORCE

Create a task force made up of leaders representing the ministries of the church to ensure cooperation and coordination. It is critical that those who have a stake in the strategy's success have a place at the table and a voice in the decisionmaking process.

ESTABLISH LEADERSHIP

For the reasons stated above, it makes sense to ask the Sunday School superintendent or his designee to head up the strategy. That may not be the best approach in some situations. But clearly identifying leadership and responsibility is the only approach that will work.

PLAN THE WORK AND WORK THE PLAN

The keys to success are pray, plan, promote, and produce.

EQUALLY BENEFIT ALL MINISTRIES

If one ministry seems to benefit more than others, then people will lose confidence in the strategy. The criteria for recruitment and placement cannot be what seems best for one ministry. It must always reflect the gifts and callings of the people and the needs of the church.

PASTORAL SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT

Pastoral support and involvement in every step of the process are essential.

ROB BURKHART, Livonia, Michigan

AN EFFECTIVE RECRUITING STRATEGY

Church leaders need to create and implement an effective recruiting strategy. The first five of the following elements *precede* participation in preministry training. The second five are incorporated into the training.

Prayer

Jesus taught us "the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." We must "ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37,38). Recruiting for ministry is ultimately a spiritual battle that can only be won with prayer.

Consistent ministry promotion

The vision and purpose of church ministries should be clearly stated and their successes celebrated. Too often the only reference to church ministries members hear comes from overwhelmed and frustrated lay leaders or pastors. Negative comments do not promote ministry.

Written job descriptions

Job descriptions should include a clear statement outlining the responsibilities, qualifications, and other expectations of the job. These include spiritual and doctrinal agreement, clearly articulated lifestyle expectations consistent with the church's standards of holiness, and a detailed explanation of what is expected of those who serve in ministry.

People search

Leadership should identify all eligible participants. Any individual who is a believer, is not currently involved in ministry, who identifies with the church, and meets the other qualifications is a candidate for preministry training.

Prospect approval

The list of potential workers should be reviewed and approved

by the pastor. This step prevents those not qualified from serving and avoids the hurt feelings and disappointment of those who believe a ministry is open to them when it is not.

Present ministry clearly

Prospects need an opportunity to examine the ministries of the church and understand the responsibilities, opportunities, and purposes of each.

Observation

Prospects should experience the ministry firsthand before being asked to commit. The opportunity to ride a Sunday School bus, visit a class, join a visitation team, or experience the other ministries of the church is critical to helping prospective workers find a ministry and making a long-term commitment to it.

Allow time for prayer and thought

People are often rushed into ministry. Encouraging prospects to pray and seriously consider their commitment is in their interest and the church's. Workers who join a ministry after serious thought and prayer see their ministry as a response to God's call on their lives and are more likely to serve long and well.

Call for a decision

Leaders then call for a decision and ask for a commitment. Formalizing the decision with a ministry covenant and/or a commissioning service solidifies their commitment.

Provide preservice and in-service training

Because effective training helps people succeed, it is critical to successful recruiting. Practical, hands-on, skill-oriented training helps workers be more effective. Success and satisfaction are inextricably linked. Workers who feel they are making a significant contribution are more likely to perform well and serve consistently.

AN EFFECTIVE PREMINISTRY TRAINING AND PLACEMENT STRATEGY

An effective preministry training and placement strategy is the next step and should incorporate the following three phases: (See sidebar *Leveraging the Sunday School*.)

Phase I: Introduction to ministry

Prospects should spend significant time being introduced to ministry in the local church. Addressing the following issues is at the foundation for future effectiveness.

Every-member ministry. The biblical and theological foundations of every-member ministry are presented and discussed.

Spiritual gifts. An overview of spiritual gifts is combined with an evaluation tool to help prospective workers identify their gifts.

The church and your ministry. The proper relationship of the gifted member and church leadership is presented and discussed.

Outreach and evangelism. Reaching unbelievers is the objective of ministry. New workers are shown how each ministry fits into the big picture of outreach, evangelism, assimilation, and discipleship.

Qualifications and responsibilities. The theological,

LEVERAGING THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School is the ideal vehicle to coordinate and provide an effective recruiting/training strategy for church ministries. Here is how:

THE IDEAL PLACE AND TIME

Offering preministry training during Sunday School accomplishes many important things. It is a time when most people are available. Since the church nursery is open and classes are offered for children, there is no need to arrange for baby-sitting. Members do not spend another night away from their family.

A RICH RECRUITING POOL

Adults and older teenagers that regularly participate in Sunday School are likely candidates for other ministry. They have already demonstrated the faithfulness and teachable spirit essential for successful ministry.

MENTORS

Many highly skilled teachers, support staff, and administrators who could serve as mentors are already at work in the Sunday School.

TRAINING EXPERTISE

Teaching and training is Sunday School's purpose and ministry. Sunday School can support in-service training.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The Sunday School and its leaders are in an ideal position to serve the church and its other ministries. It keeps the most complete records and is in touch with many prospects and potential trainers.

VISION

The Sunday School makes sense because a vision for ministry is at its heart.

ROB BURKHART, Livonia, Michigan

lifestyle, and ministry standards are presented. A survey tool is used to help prospective workers determine whether or not they currently meet those standards.

Ministry organization and structure. The organizational structure of the church and its ministry are presented.

Our church in ministry: an overview. Leaders briefly present their ministry and answer questions. Workers are encouraged to sign up to visit and observe as many ministries as they wish.

Our church in ministry: observation. The class does not meet. Prospective workers observe various ministries and utilize an observation worksheet to enhance their experience.

Committing to ministry. Prospective workers are given opportunity to commit to more training and placement, or withdraw from the process. Those who do not meet ministry qualifications, are unwilling to commit to ministry expectations, or feel they are not ready for ministry should be allowed to gracefully withdraw. But do not give up on them. Ask permission to contact them later, and encourage them to continue their training in the future.

Those who successfully complete the training and are qualified for ministry have opportunity to choose an area of ministry consistent with their gifts, calling, and the needs of the church. The next step, however, is not placement but training designed to equip them for service in their chosen ministry. That training has both in-class and on-the-job components.

Phase 2: Ministry preparation

Once a prospective member, in concert with church leaders, has determined an area of ministry for which he is qualified, gifted, and called, the church needs to give specific, practical training. Training will vary in content and format depending on the ministry, its needs, and requirements.

Phase 3: Internship

An essential and overlooked aspect of much church training is on-the-job training. Doing ministry is the best way to learn.

On-the-job training should provide three distinct experiences.

Observation. For a time (two sessions), the trainee should observe his mentor doing the ministry. Following this observation the mentor should explain the process, answer questions, and discuss concerns.

Partial participation. Next, trainees should carry out certain parts of the ministry while the mentor coaches and observes. This participation should escalate over a specific period of time (four sessions) until the trainee takes over. Again, ample time for reflection and interaction with the mentor is critical.

Full participation. The trainee then switches roles with his mentor and does the ministry while the mentor observes (two sessions). Feedback, constructive criticism, and encouragement from the mentor should follow each experience.

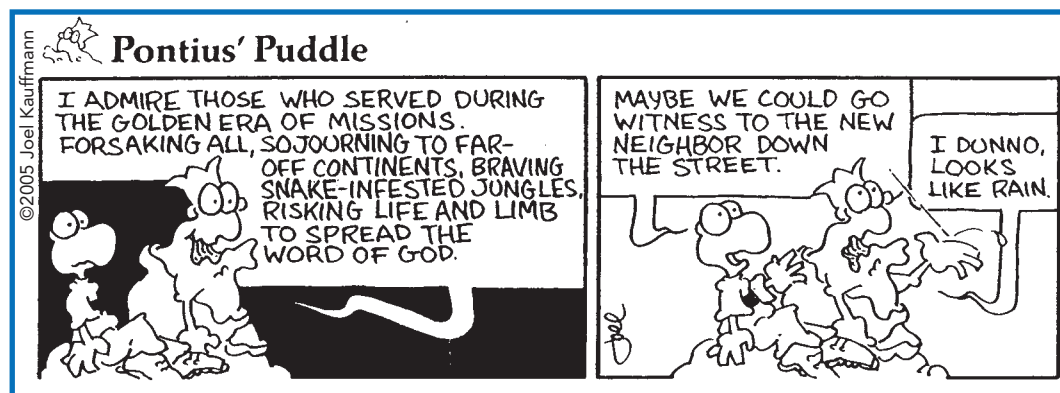
Two other components are essential for a successful internship. First is the selection and preparation of the mentor. He should be the best at what he does and be able to effectively instruct others. Second, on-the-job training takes time. A minimum of 8 weeks or eight experiences is needed. Pressing prospective workers into service before they are ready is risky.

Effective placement. Everything else rises and falls on this final step of the recruiting/training process. The following criteria should be met before anyone is placed in a specific ministry:

- The prospect's gifts and calling match the ministry's needs and requirements.
- The prospect has met the spiritual, lifestyle, and ministry requirements.
- The prospect has completed the required training.
- The prospect has committed to the ministry and to fulfilling its requirements.
- The prospect has demonstrated his loyalty, consistency, and servant heart.

Sometimes, even when all has been done, people discover they are not well suited for a specific ministry *only after* they have been placed. These workers should not be forced or even

encouraged to stay no matter how much they are needed. To do so would only lead to frustration and failure. They should be given another opportunity. If that does not work, then there should be another placement and another until the worker finds his



niche. It is more important for workers to find their right place in ministry than to fill a hole in the church's organizational flowchart.

Timing is everything. If training takes too long, prospective workers grow discouraged. If the training is too brief, they will not be adequately prepared and may fail. As described, this strategy takes 6 months from recruitment to placement. That is long enough to provide adequate training and gauge faithfulness, qualifications, and abilities of prospective workers and to pray for God's leading. But it is not so long that people get discouraged with the process.

Can a new worker be taught everything he will need in 6 months? Obviously not. The key is to provide quality preministry training so he can start well, and then provide ongoing training of equally high quality so he can further develop his gifts and skills.

IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE RECRUITING/TRAINING STRATEGY

This approach allows the church to create an ongoing

recruiting/training strategy that produces trained and qualified workers every 3 months.

Begin with a recruiting month when prospective workers are identified, screened, contacted, and invited to participate. Coordinate personal contact with consistent promotion of the class in the church bulletin, newsletter, website, and pulpit announcements.

The first two phases of the training are in-class. The last 13 weeks are designed to coordinate with Sunday School quarters. Conduct the first nine sessions (Phase 1) of the class. Designate the last 4 weeks (Phase 2) of the first class as the recruiting month for the next class. When Class A completes its in-class training, it moves to its internship (Phase 3). That frees the classroom and instructor to start training the next class.

It takes 6 months for the first class to progress from recruitment to placement. Once implemented, however, this strategy creates a steady flow of qualified and trained new workers every 3 months. Table A illustrates 1 year utilizing this approach.

ONGOING TRAINING

If church leaders are serious about preparing believers for ministry, they must also provide ongoing training that encourages development in the life of the believer and his ministry.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

There is always a need to improve skills for effective ministry. Without ongoing training, workers may have no opportunity to grow.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Ministry is — always has been and always should be — first and foremost a spiritual endeavor. Too often those serving in ministry are so busy investing in others that they neglect their own spiritual needs.

PROBLEM SOLVING/CONFLICT RESOLUTION

When people work together, they will inevitably face problems and disagreements. In-service training gives workers the opportunity to air their concerns and gives leadership the opportunity to solve them. Unresolved problems and disagreements fester and present an ongoing impediment to ministry.

COMMUNICATION, FEEDBACK, AND AFFIRMATION

In-service training will effectively keep workers informed, hear their concerns and suggestions, and will express appreciation and give recognition for significant achievements.

PLANNING

Ministry failure and frustration are not always caused by a lack of skill, dedication, or diligence. They can result from poor planning and communication. Regular and consistent in-service training can help overcome these barriers to effective ministry.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Training gives leadership an opportunity to reinforce ministry expectations, motivate workers, provide resources, and hold workers accountable for their performance.

QUALITY IN-SERVICE TRAINING HAS OTHER IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS

1. Training needs to be required for all workers.
2. Training must be focused on age and ministry.
3. Training must be frequent (monthly or quarterly).
4. Training must be a consistent part of life and ministry.
5. Training must be done on a convenient schedule. For instance, train Sunday staff during the midweek service and the midweek staff during Sunday School.
6. Training can be supplemented with video or audio resources and participation in district or other training events, but should not be replaced by them.
7. Training must include recognition and rewards for those who faithfully participate.



ROB BURKHART, Livonia, Michigan

TABLE A: THE PREMINISTRY RECRUITING/TRAINING CYCLE

Month	Recruitment	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
August	Class A			
September		Class A		
October		Class A		
November	Class B		Class A	
December		Class B		Class A
January		Class B		Class A
February	Class C		Class B	
March		Class C		Class B
April		Class C		Class B
May	Class D		Class C	
June		Class D		
July		Class D		
August	Class E		Class D	
September		Class E		Class D
October		Class E		Class D

Smaller churches can easily adapt this schedule by offering preministry training once or twice a year.

This strategy fits easily into the adult track of an existing Sunday School or into the midweek study options some churches offer. Churches using small-group ministry can easily adopt this strategy. Recruits attend the ministry-training group for 13 weeks and then return to their own group.

While the information contained in the first 13 sessions could be presented in a weekend seminar or retreat format, it is not recommended. This process spread out over several weeks allows time for careful consideration by both the prospective workers and leadership. It provides an opportunity for people to prove they can be faithful. It allows time for leadership to develop healthy relationships with new workers, answer their questions, and gauge the seriousness of their commitment.

Once believers are placed in ministry ongoing in-service training should support them. Preministry training is not designed to give new workers every skill they need. Those involved in ministry need a process to improve their skills and maintain excellence. (See sidebar *Ongoing Training*, page 71.)

God has blessed the church with gifted and called people, and it has the resources it needs to build the Body and reach the world. But without an intentional and effective way to help people discover, develop, and use their gifts, they cannot fulfill God's will for their lives or His purposes for the local church. With training and experience, however, believers can develop powerful ministries and rich spiritual lives.

The tragedy of many churches is their greatest treasure — the ministry potential of believers — is not discovered or developed. It is also tragic for individual believers. They cannot become all that God intended and will not have the ministry or the fulfillment of faithful service they could have enjoyed. The need is there. The people and gifts are there. Leadership must not fail to challenge, motivate, and equip.

Unschooling, ordinary men led a small, persecuted sect of an obscure religion in a backwater province on the edge of a great empire. They were derisively dismissed as ordinary by the power brokers of their day. But they had been with Jesus. He had called them. He had trained them. His Spirit gifted and empowered them, and they changed the world, the future, and the eternal destiny of mankind.

Every Sunday church pews are filled with ordinary people like Peter and John. Thank God.

EPILOGUE

They said he was an empty suit. They said he lacked *gravitas*. They said he was not smart enough to do the job; he was not qualified. To many, he was a thoroughly unimpressive middle-aged man who lacked the personality and charm of his predecessor and the intelligence and seriousness of his opponent. He often stumbled over his own words and seemed ill at ease in public. He lost the popular vote and was elected president by the narrowest of margins in the electoral college. It took a decision by the United States Supreme Court to end the controversy and place him in the White House.

On September 14, 2001, just days after terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center in New York City, George W. Bush walked the ruins shaking hands and thanking the police and firefighters for their courageous service. He climbed on a pile of rubble. With a bullhorn in one hand and his other arm draped around the shoulder of a weary firefighter, he addressed the crowd.

Someone in the back of the crowd called out, "We can't hear you, George."

His impromptu response, "I can hear you, and soon those who brought down these buildings will hear from all of us," spoke of his defiance and determination and brought wild applause from the crowd. It was a moment everyone watching will remember.

In the eyes of many, George W. Bush suddenly became their president that day. He was no longer an empty suit. He became a world leader worthy of their respect, while standing in the rubble of the World Trade Center.

In the weeks and months that followed, the question was repeatedly asked. Did the tragedy of September 11, 2001, suddenly make George W. Bush a leader and a president? Some thought so. Others argued those events gave the nation the opportunity to see the real man.

Both were right, and both were wrong. ■



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The Six Essential Elements of Equipping

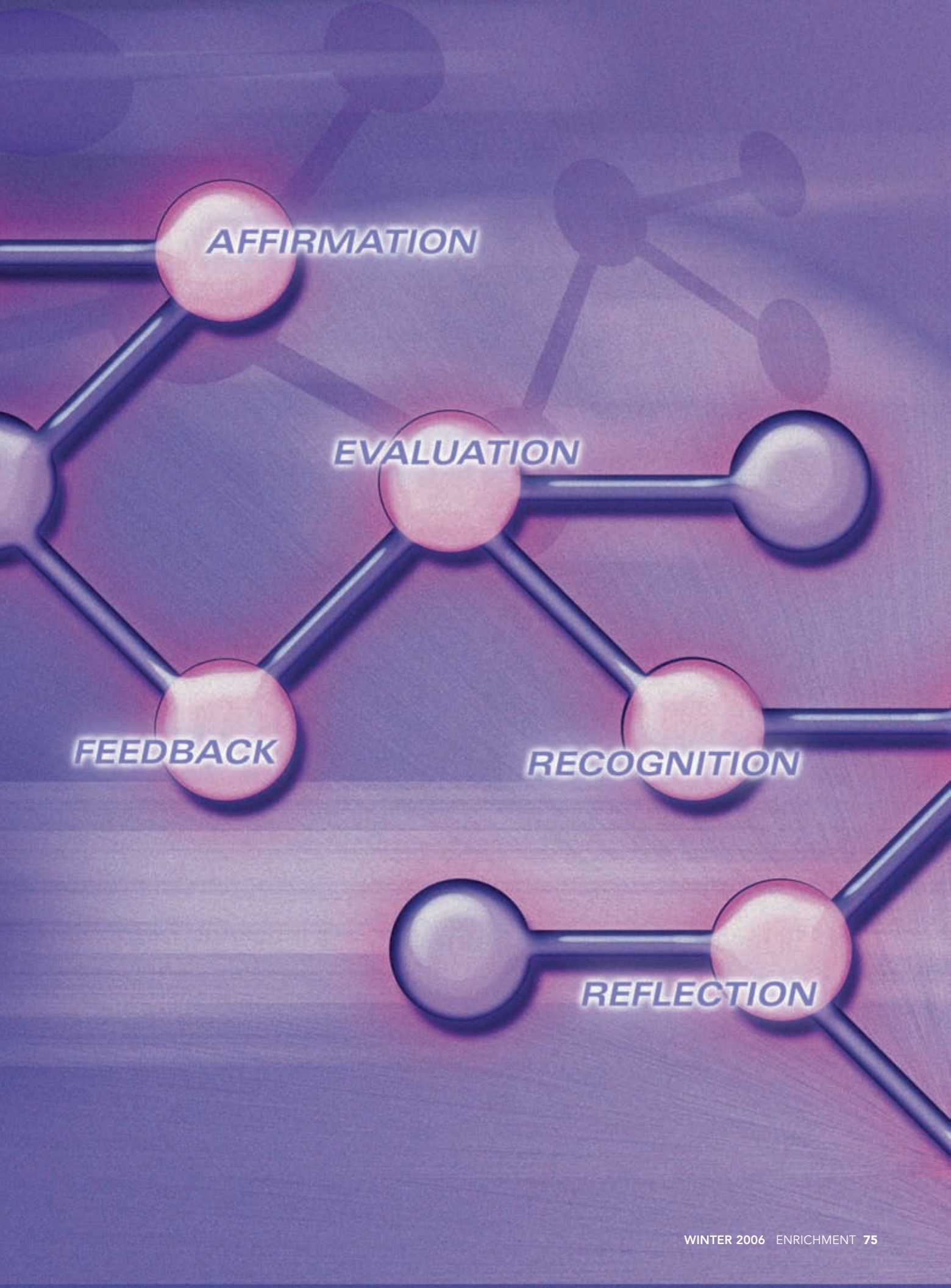
TRAINING

BY DON R. SIMMONS

In Ephesians 4:11,12, Paul made it clear that the role of pastors, teachers, evangelists, and prophets is to equip (or prepare) the saints for works of service. But knowing this imperative is not the issue. The key issue is how? What does equipping mean? Is it teaching? Providing tools? Skill building? Preaching? The answer includes all of the above. But how do pastors get a handle on the equipping process for their churches? How do pastors move their churches from sitting to serving, and from maintenance to mission?

The following six elements have proven essential in thousands of churches and organizations. They are considered the bread and butter of leading people to recognize their full, God-given potential, and to fully utilize their gifts, passions, experiences, and talents.

Many church leaders have maintained a *Field of Dreams* mentality: if we build it, they will come; and if they come, they will serve. Sadly, for most churches in North America, it does not work that way. Paul wrote to the church leaders at Ephesus that *they* must *equip*. So, what does equipping look like?



TRAINING

Training is more than talking and listening. Training involves information delivery, practice, modification, feedback, practice, and hands-on application. Training is not telling, and listening is not learning.

Pastors often overlook opportunities for training. Many churches have ushers who have never been trained in taking an offering, greeting, giving directions to restrooms, nursery, or children's church, and the proper etiquette and appropriate language and behavior for a church representative.

One California church provides a 5-minute training session before each service for the door greeters and ushers to provide them with new skills, encouragement, prayer, and to reinforce

enter heaven through our works of righteousness anymore than we can outdo God's goodness. God is sovereign, and He is in control. Our activity, even our best church activity, cannot change His opinion or love for us. Our role as leaders is to offer that same affirmation to those who serve.

Volunteers must know their pastor's relationship with them is what matters — not the work they do. Pastors can become so focused on the task of *doing* church that they forget we are called to *be* the church. Pastors need to tell their people, "I'm glad you are a part of our fellowship. Your presence encourages me. I am blessed by you."

Many pastors may need to practice how to affirm without adding a behavior connotation. How often do you call members

and tell them they matter to you, to God's kingdom, or you appreciate their service, but you appreciate them even more?

Often, because leaders

have never experienced affirmation, they are not able to demonstrate it to those whom they lead. If pastors believe that each person God sends to the church is fearfully made, a royal priest, a living stone, and a promise of God's redemptive work, pastors will be less liable to *use* people to grow their organizations and become more apt to *grow* people as disciples.

Training and affirmation go hand in hand. When people are trained it affirms that God's grace and mercy for them is operable, and He desires them to grow as disciples.

Equipping, though, is more than training and affirmation. The third element is essential to provide balance and the sharpening people need.

Many church leaders have maintained *a Field of Dreams mentality: if we build it, they will come; and if they come, they will serve.*

the idea that they are the first to welcome guests to the good news. Training is best when it is JIT (just in time, not months ahead), in small doses (minutes rather than hours), and JIP (just in place, that is, where the service will take place, not in a classroom).

Many churches have attendees who are professional trainers in the corporate and nonprofit arena. When pastors enlist them to train church leaders, the pastor becomes the catalyst for helping them connect their professional career to their giftedness and calling. If pastors are serious about discipling and multiplying their ministries beyond maintaining them for self-preservation, they must believe that if ministry is important enough to *do*, it is important enough to *train*.

Second, pastors must understand that training alone is not the answer. A corps of servants may be well trained, but they may not be passionate, engaged, or committed to stay just because they are trained. Pastors must remember that, before volunteers have positions or titles, they are *servants* who have giving hearts and souls that have been prompted by the Spirit to serve. That is why the second element is essential, but often overlooked in our haste to get the work done.

AFFIRMATION

Affirmation is not saying thank you; it is affirming people for who they are, not what they do. Church leaders often forget that people need to know they are more important than what they do. How often do pastors let volunteers know that even if no children were taught, no cars were parked, and no bulletins were folded or distributed, they would still be important, loved, necessary, and loved by God?

God loves us. He created us not because of what we can do, but to have a relationship with us based on love. We cannot

FEEDBACK

Feedback is often overlooked because most people are accustomed to negative feedback or nonchalant compliments that do little to drive them to a higher level of service and discipleship. Authentic, love-based, grace-filled feedback can do much to develop servants into strong leaders. Thus, it is necessary to understand what feedback is and how to use it.

There are three common forms of feedback. First, there are *compliments* such as, "You did a nice job, Pastor." Compliments are often general, usually pleasant, mostly verbal, and do little to enhance performance, validate training, or stimulate to love and good deeds. Compliments could be compared to a child's bubbles. They are pretty to look at, enjoyable for a moment, but difficult to grasp and use again. *Good. Nice. Pretty. Adequate.* These words sound positive, but they have no long-term benefit. Do they help people move to the next level of service and leadership? Do workers know what they need to discard? Do compliments offer ways to improve? Do

EQUIPPING IN THE SMALLER CHURCH

A *Field Guide to U.S. Congregations* by Woolever and Bruce reports the average worship attendance in the United States is 90 people. The book also notes that 65 percent of churches have only one staff person. Equipping every person in a congregation small in size and staff resources is important. How, then, does a pastor equip every person in a small congregation?

Many leaders believe they cannot develop an equipping system in their church because their church is too small and cannot afford an equipping director or a computer membership-management system. Those assumptions are inaccurate when one examines how to move a church from maintenance to ministry, no matter the size.

How can a small church become an equipping church? First, an equipping church needs visible support from the senior pastor and key church leadership. The pastor must do more than wish the church would begin to equip. Pastors and leaders must learn how to equip and release others into ministry. Too often pastors of small churches attempt to be omniscient and become micro-managers. From the pulpit to toilet repair, the pastor is expected to do everything, and to do it well. But that is not what pastors are called to do.

The biblical role of pastors is to equip others for ministry. To equip is to release and allow people—unpaid, nonordained church members—to do ministry tasks. Many pastors in small churches assume that since the congregation is small they must do it all. But that mindset keeps churches small. Pastors can hold on to leadership so tightly that ministry cannot possibly multiply and expand.

Ministry expansion is governed by the capacity of the pastor to release others into ministry. Many pastors believe their people cannot minister as well as they can. But who is responsible for equipping them? Who is responsible for providing opportunities to learn? Why should the pastor assume he is the only one capable of hearing from God, and the only one gifted to do ministry?

Second, an equipping church needs a point person who works with a team to champion equipping ministry in the small church. The small-church team may be small, but a passionate, gifted point person (who often is unpaid) can birth and develop equipping ministries.

Equipping ministries may include many uninvolved, sidelined members, and even some who have not yet become part of the church. The point person has the responsibility and authority to lead the team to address the status quo of church leadership. Point persons can set systems in place for inviting new people; assimilating visitors and members; creating a gifts discovery, matching and placement process; inviting people into ministry; and training and recognizing ministry leaders. They own the entire process and reproduce it in every ministry.

Third, an equipping church needs a full equipping system. This is especially true in the small church. An incomplete system

hinders some members from attaining mature discipleship. For example, many small churches develop a good process for gifts discovery by using one of the packaged discovery products. They do this, however, without developing a system for laying foundations, tracking involvement, leadership training, and equipping for long-term success. But the discovery process, without a strong biblical, theological, and programmatic base in the church, can give people a knowledge of their gifts but little information on how, where, and when their gifts are best used in the church. Once a member is placed, he may not be provided with any training, feedback, evaluation, or recognition for his service. This can be frustrating, and members may resign from ministry positions disillusioned and feeling used and abandoned.

The small church has a unique opportunity to build strong teams because of the tight relationships that can be formed in small groups. Leaders can develop ministry teams without building new relationships, which may be necessary in larger churches.

The small church is at a distinct advantage. A small church can adopt new practices and processes quickly because it does

The small church has a unique opportunity to build strong teams because of the tight relationships that can be formed in small groups.

not have the staff and management structures that sometimes hinder larger churches. It is true that a small boat can be turned faster than the *Titanic*.

The small church is often positioned to develop specialized ministries through equipping that would take larger churches years, countless meetings, and many dollars to accomplish. In the 90s, when earthquakes and fires devastated neighborhoods in southern California, smaller congregations responded quickly because of their simple network of communication and intimate knowledge of available gifts and passions. Larger churches cannot respond as quickly. Although the larger church may be able to provide more financial resources, smaller churches, albeit working together, provide the army of committed servants.

Because the equipping-the-saints injunction of Ephesians 4:11,12, does not have qualifiers—size, staff, rural, urban, poor, or ethnic—equipping is viable for every church.



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How do pastors move their churches from sitting to serving, and from maintenance to mission?

people know how to repeat the performance or activity to receive a compliment again? Compliments are welcome, but compliments alone are not enough to grow people.

The second form of feedback is more common. It is often wielded as a weapon and used when growth and improvement become secondary to being heard and to winning. This kind of feedback is like a strongly pitched baseball. It is *criticism*.

Criticism, like the baseball, is hard. It hurts, even when it is not intended to do so. When criticism hits, especially unexpectedly, it leaves a bruise. The human tendency is to pitch it back, to retaliate, and to devastate. Criticism often comes when people are tired, such as at the end of a worship service or teaching session. Criticism has no grip to it, has little to offer in evaluating performance or enhancing learning. Most people know how criticism feels, and may readily use it.

Criticism is built into people from an early age. Even though the church does not have a monopoly on its use, it does provide a place to practice it. When criticism hits, people often pull back, become defensive, argue, or retreat to avoid the one who criticized them. Scripture warns about a critical spirit. However, until a grace-filled process for offering feedback is developed in our churches, criticism will continue to be used.

The third form of feedback is *critique*. This form offers a positive alternative to both compliments and criticism.

There is an art to giving a critique as feedback. Leaders need to practice giving and receiving critiques. Because there are many times and circumstances when a critique is neither warranted or welcome, pastors need to learn when to give a

critique and the various techniques for giving one.

A critique is only given when permission is requested and granted. When I am exhausted from teaching or preaching, that is not the time for a critique. But when I am reviewing my notes or rethinking the process, I appreciate a thoughtful, grace-filled critique.

Begin a critique by asking, "May I offer you some feedback?" A critique needs to come from a first-hand, eyewitness perspective. This removes the possibility of gossip and backstabbing.

Since a critique can be both positive and negative, the two most important words in offering a critique are "next time." Past performance or attitude cannot be changed, but behavior can be influenced and changed for the next time. This is how God deals with people. He forgives our past and puts it as far away as the depths of the ocean. He then moves us to the next time.

A critique usually requires some self-examination. For example, "How do you think you did with that lesson?" Critique provides action steps for the next time — to improve, correct, repeat, sharpen, and grow. Critique, when given in a timely, grace-filled manner, can go far to develop what is good into something great. Because offering a critique is not our natural tendency, pastors need to take opportunities to practice both giving and receiving critiques as a necessary form of feedback.

The next element is a close cousin of feedback and is often confused with it, as well as with planning. This element is essential because it places pastors in the often-overlooked role of evaluator.

EVALUATION

Pastors do not evaluate people; God does. Pastors can offer affirmation, gratitude, correction, training, and discipline, but they should not evaluate. Pastors, however, can evaluate programs and processes.

Ministers must take serious account of *how* they do things such as accomplish their goals, operate, minister, serve, and equip. Good evaluation should lead to good planning, and good planning should lead to excellence in service. To evaluate is to look at *what* worked and *what* did not, not *who* worked and *who* did not. Evaluation provides tools and information for what to stop, start, and continue for the next time, and disciples are stimulated to grow.

Evaluation includes all stakeholders in the ministry, not only the ones who will provide agreement. Evaluation should be future-focused: How can this be done better next time?

Many churches, however, have conducted evaluations and then did nothing with them. These evaluations were filed as

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"Here I am, Pastor, telling you I'm not only quitting the choir, my class, the greeters, and program committees. In fact, I'm quitting the church. But all you do is stand there grinning and doing that silly yodeling."

interesting information, but the church did not incorporate the lessons they learned from the evaluation process.

Also, pastors may have been stung by criticisms from past evaluations and are hesitant to evaluate. This is indicative of

they will not serve very long without it. Recognition is best when it is personal, individual, comes from the people who are being served, and offers a lasting reminder that the work done made a difference in people's lives. An article in the *Journal*

of Volunteer Administration indicated that one of the principal reasons people leave their volunteer positions is they feel unappreciated — they receive no recognition.

Recognition does not need to cost anything but time. The best recognition is often a written note, a

Most churches do a good job of counting nickels and noses — tithes and attendance — but few churches count service hours and tenure of service.

the point that most churches do not fully understand feedback or evaluation.

When people are evaluated before they are trained, affirmed, or offered feedback, the church is communicating that tasks are more important than people. God's church is not primarily about successful programs, but about growing successful disciples.

Churches are often ready to evaluate projects or programs immediately after their completion without taking time to see the project or program's results. Evaluation takes time. Evaluation must be planned, and evaluation must be objective. Stakeholders who produced events are often reluctant and too fatigued to evaluate. They are not prone to be as objective as an outside observer.

During a recent project my ministry organized, we engaged an outside observer to attend our planning meetings, the event, and the postevent gatherings, and to also read our communications. She offered an amazing evaluation of our communication processes, our embedded habits, and our blind spots. She also offered some constructive suggestions for improving the way we served people. Her evaluation has proven to be the key to effectively ministering to more people in their life-transformation process.

Leaders need the humility and authenticity to ask for feedback and evaluation, or they will continue in their old habits and reject the new insights and discipleship God is providing through outside eyes. People in many of our congregations have gifts of discernment and wisdom. They need to be given opportunities to serve as process observers. A wise leader will seek evaluation and use it.

RECOGNITION

First Thessalonians 5:12, says, "Respect those who work hard among you." Recognition is different from affirmation. Affirmation honors people for *who* they are, but recognition acknowledges people for *what* they do. Recognition says: Thank you. We noticed. You served well. You matter.

Research in volunteer leadership indicates that people do not serve because they will be recognized or appreciated, but

kind phone call, or a thoughtful e-mail that is individual and connects to the person's service, and not his general area of service. Many pastors plan a time during the worship service when they ask those who serve to stand and be recognized. Although the sentiment is noble, the act does little to encourage others to serve, nor does it adequately honor those who are serving.

Consider this: a 68-year-old widow leaves home at 6:30 a.m. on Sunday. She rides two buses that eventually take her three blocks from her downtown church. She walks those three blocks, enters the church, sets up her Sunday School classroom, welcomes 24 second and third graders, greets them all by name, teaches well from strong preparation, hugs them goodbye, and reminds them she will call during the week to see if they have learned their memory verse. Then she attends worship, sings in the choir, drops her tithe in the basket, and shakes the pastor's hand on the way out.

Now, fast forward to Volunteer Recognition Sunday when she is asked to stand with 30 other teachers, deacons, bus drivers, and office helpers. This does not seem honoring or appreciative, but it is standard practice in many churches. Yet, this same widow will often serve at the pastor's anniversary reception, the welcome potluck for the new music associate, and even host the summer youth workers' going-away party. She is a real person. She would never tell anyone that she needed or wanted recognition; her service is not a matter of pride. Service is an act of servant leadership and humility, and churches need to honor and recognize those who serve in church and community ministries.

Good recognition:

- Appreciates — it says thank you for caring, serving, and giving.
- Validates — it says the service, often unseen by the crowd, is necessary, important, God-honoring, and vital to God's church and Kingdom work.
- Educates — it communicates to others what service opportunities are available and what the service does for the server, as well as the served. Many churches will not request

or recruit more volunteers without first recognizing those who already serve.

- Commemorates — it marks the holy moments of service as examples for those serving. It commemorates that the servant was alive, served faithfully and well, gave of time, talent, and treasure, and provided a benchmark for spiritual growth for the server and the served.

Most churches do a good job of counting nickels and noses — tithes and attendance — but few churches count service hours and tenure of service. The phrase, “We count what matters, and what matters counts,” is more true when it comes to giving recognition to those who serve faithfully — both for paid and unpaid staff, ordained and not ordained, and for service in the church or in the community. Recognition brings growth and new vigor for service.

Good recognition is both tangible and intangible, and is not easily forgotten. I still treasure tokens of recognition I received in my own ministry as a young children’s pastor in Texas 25 years ago. These tokens are reminders that God used me and can still use me. God wants to use me to bring others into servant leadership.

Church leaders can become so caught up in getting the work done they fail to recognize the very people for whom the work matters — those who labor alongside them. This perpetuates the myth that a pastor, deacon, or elder can do the work alone.

REFLECTION

Often our evangelical heritage does not emphasize theological or other reflection. Reflection means to look back, to see into, and to take a second look. Just as mirrors and polished surfaces reflect light, God’s people reflect His light through works of service. Pastors are sometimes busy moving from task to task or from one ministry to the next, and they fail to slow down and reflect on how and where God worked, and how He used them to accomplish His purposes.

There are reflection reminders throughout the Bible from Moses’ encounter with the burning bush to Paul’s reflection of his need to be “crucified with Christ” (Galatians 2:20) and to “know the fellowship of His sufferings” (Philippians 3:10). Jonah reflected while the gourd vine grew (Jonah 4:5,6). Mary pondered “these things” in her heart (Luke 2:19). Jesus withdrew from His disciples into the olive groves to be alone and talk with His Father (Luke 22:39–41; John 18:1).

In the New Testament, there is a distinct pattern of Jesus and the disciples retreating after ministry to a quiet place and reflecting on what had just happened. C.S. Lewis wrote, “We can have the experience and miss the meaning.” We can

often be caught in the trap of experiencing God’s work in and through our lives while missing the meaning and the message because we were busy picking blackberries instead of noticing the “bush afire with God” (Elizabeth Barrett Browning).

Reflection asks two questions: So what? and Now what? It is important to ask these questions following a service, following time with God’s people, following a mission trip or a service

Pastors can become so focused on the task of doing church that they forget we are called to be the church.

project, and after teaching Sunday School or a Bible study. People serve faithfully when they can connect their acts of service to their belief systems, their theology, and their church’s mission. They also need to make the spiritual connection between acts of service and what they are hearing and learning. God teaches His children lessons through their actions, and reflection allows His children to learn those lessons.

Following a service project for an elderly couple, I asked the college students who helped to tell me how they felt about the afternoon. They began with, “I’m tired, but it’s a good tired because I know we did something good.”

Then I asked, “So what?” With that probing question, they began to talk about becoming more like Jesus, and developing a heart for the frail, the helpless, and the disadvantaged.

With the “Now what?” question, they began to translate the service into their plans and into their discipleship. The service project becomes a lesson in the compassion of God, the kingdom of God, and God’s tender mercies.

We could have left the service project, gone home, had a shower, a meal, and called it a day. But reflecting at the site after the service helped the participants grow spiritually. That is why reflection follows the other essential elements of training, affirmation, feedback, evaluation, and recognition.

If leaders will practice these elements in every church ministry, program, and initiative, people would be disciplined in ways they could multiply and emulate. Applying the six elements of equipping does take more time. But we serve a God who created time and holds our lives in His hands. The primary role of church leadership is to “equip the saints for works of service” (Ephesians 4:11,12). If we do not have the time to equip holistically, with excellence, and with intention, what else are we doing? ■

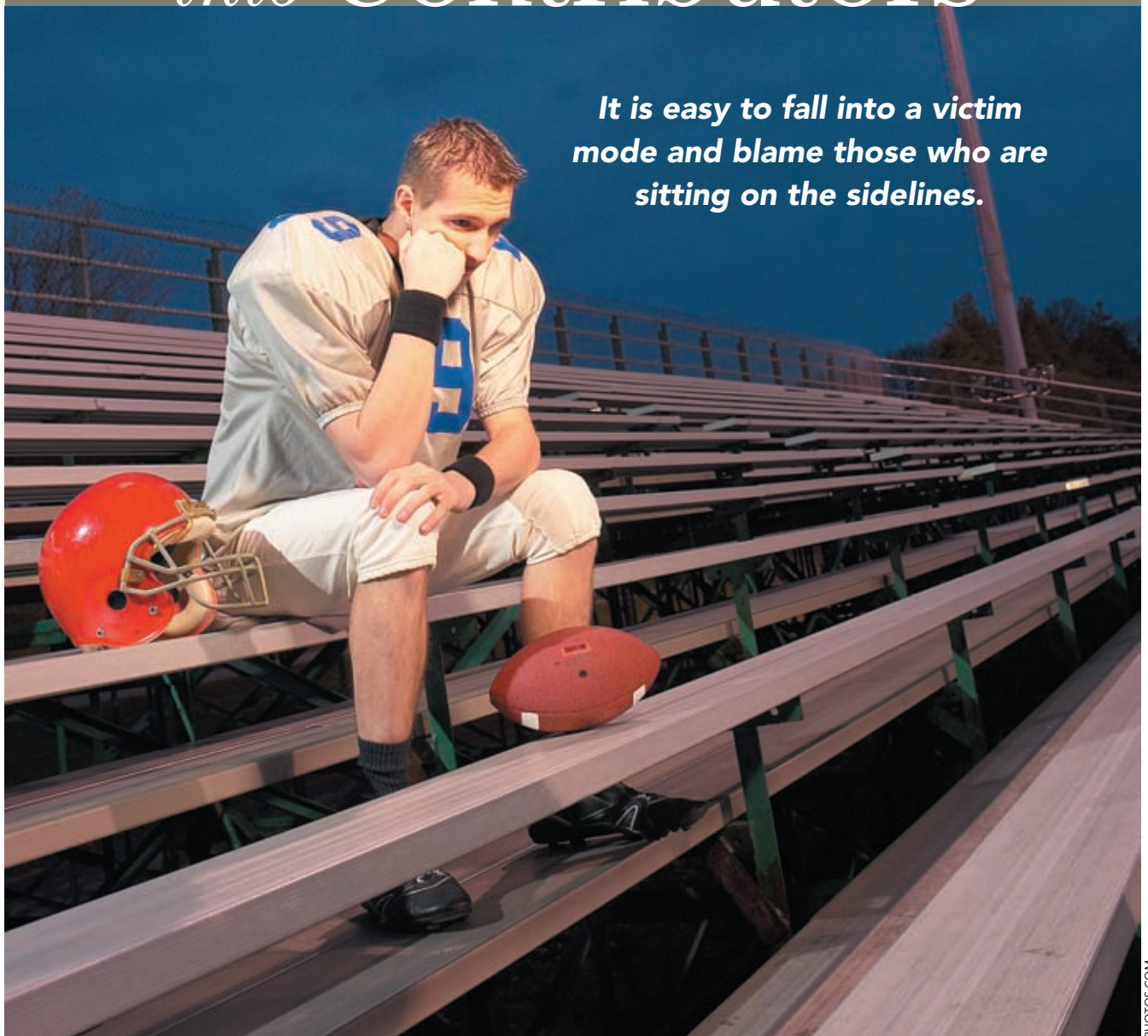


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VOLUNTEER EMPOWERMENT

Turning Consumers *into* Contributors

***It is easy to fall into a victim
mode and blame those who are
sitting on the sidelines.***



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Pastors across the country do not seem to have enough staff to accomplish the ministry of a growing church. Whether a church has 200 or 2,000 in attendance, it can use at least one more team member. This dilemma creates a constant tension between the desire to help people meet Jesus and grow in their faith and the knowledge that if the church grows it will take even more time and energy to manage. People may not say it, but many probably think, *Ministry would be a lot more fun and much easier if it were not for people.*

This tension compounds when a pastor sees people sitting on the sidelines. They check in for weekend services, and then check out. They are consumers. In their minds the church is only there for their own nourishment. How can a pastor turn these consumers into faithful contributors to the ministry? That is one of the key questions every church must address.

Since a church rarely has enough paid ministers to meet ministry needs, the church must create a culture where volunteers minister alongside staff. Volunteers need to own the ministry of the church. They need to shift their thinking from, *Why are you not helping me?* to *How can I serve you?*

But here is where the dilemma starts. It is easy to fall into a victim mode and blame those who are sitting on the sidelines. Pastors cannot let that happen, though. Pastors need to be strategic about helping people take the next steps in their faith journey, which includes actively serving Jesus and others.

To help churches with the challenge of turning consumers into contributors, I have coauthored *Simply Strategic Volunteers* with Tim Stevens, executive pastor at Granger Community Church. As the second in the *Simply Strategic* series, this book focuses on empowering people for ministry. In *Simply Strategic Volunteers* we present 99 strategies to maximize the servant quotient in churches.

Some principles we cover may be obvious, but others will probably challenge a pastor's thinking. Here are a few examples:

IF YOU NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS, YOU MAY NEED TO CREATE MORE MINISTRY ROLES

It is difficult to find one person who is willing to teach children, prepare art projects, purchase snacks, create interactive

lessons, clean the room, lead singing, and commit to an infinite number of potty breaks. On the other hand, one person may be willing to focus on only the art projects. By chunking the ministry — breaking it up into doable roles — more people are willing to serve because they know others will help. Ministry becomes a team effort. Creating more ministry roles makes it easier for people to commit to volunteering.

IF YOU WANT MORE PEOPLE TO SERVE, YOU WILL NEED TO DO LESS

Ministers need to dispel the super-pastor myth. It is not biblical for the pastor to hoard the ministry. A leader's role is "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12). For that purpose, pastors need to give away more and more of their ministry as the church continues to grow. The pastor needs to hold on to the three or four roles where his leadership adds the most value and empower volunteers to do the rest. There is no limit to the size a church can attain when both pastor and staff do not limit the ministry they give to volunteers. Building teams should be the most important role the church pays someone to accomplish. Team building should become a pastor's key measure of staff performance.

IF YOU WANT OTHERS TO JOIN YOUR TEAM, DO NOT ASK FOR HELP

Instead of begging people to fill vacant positions, help them find a place that matches their God-given shape. Teach people the benefits of serving others and giving their time and energy to something bigger than themselves. Matching gifts, experiences, and passions with ministry roles will help people experience purpose and fulfillment. Did you catch the difference?

MORE QUICK TIPS FROM SIMPLY STRATEGIC VOLUNTEERS

WE ALL LOVE A STANDING OVATION

We all need cheerleaders — people who encourage us to do the next right thing. That is probably why God instructs us to “love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other” (Romans 12:10, NLT).¹

CHOOSE PROVEN LEADERS

One quick way to check for leadership potential is to ask: Is anyone following them? Remember this advice, “Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won’t be faithful in large ones” (Luke 16:10, NLT). The right volunteer leader will take responsibilities off the pastor’s plate rather than add to it.

LEARN HOW PEOPLE ARE WIRED

“God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well” (Romans 12:6, NLT). Provide a process to help people identify their spiritual gifts and passions. Keep in mind, however, that people best determine how they are wired by trying different ministry roles. Give people the freedom to explore.

EXPECT TO HEAR, “I’M NOT READY TO SERVE”

Remember, Moses said, “I am slow of speech and tongue ... please send someone else to do it” (Exodus 4:10,13). The challenge lies in helping people balance appropriate humility while encouraging them to take their next steps in ministry. After all, spiritual maturity develops when we demonstrate faith and obedience in situations filled with uncertainty.

MENTOR YOUR MINISTRY MATES

It is not enough to just offer classroom training for volunteers. Paul, for example, did not recommend a couple of good leadership books and then send Timothy into ministry. Instead, Paul invited Timothy to join him on the journey (Acts 16:3). True discipleship happens in real-life situations through real relationships.

EMBRACE THE TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

Sometimes the skills and leadership capacities of volunteers do not keep pace with the growth of the church. Every moment we allow people to continue to serve in poorly fitting roles takes them away from ministries in which they could soar. Pastors can deny others opportunity to serve where God has best gifted them to impact the Kingdom by avoiding tough conversations.

ADD FUN PEOPLE TO THE TEAM

A leader’s attitude is his decision. As leader, you choose the attitudes of those on your team. Happy people attract more happy people. If leaders want to experience church growth, they should be ever-conscious of the attitude of their team. “I have told you this so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!” (John 15:11, NLT).

TONY MORGAN, Granger, Indiana

ENDNOTE

1. Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

The focus is not on the ministry role; it is on the person who is interested in finding a ministry. Rather than begging people to serve through guilt and coercion, they will volunteer because they are passionate about ministry and *want* to serve. This is when ministry soars. Here is a hint: instead of making pleas from the pulpit, encourage people to tap on their friend’s shoulder and ask him to join the volunteer team. People are much more likely to make a long-term commitment if they are working with friends than if they are helping just because the pastor asked.

IF YOU WANT PEOPLE TO COMMIT, LET THEM KNOW WHEN THEY CAN STOP SERVING

Most people have probably experienced instances when they agreed to help and then found themselves trapped in a role with no easy way out. A poorly defined opt-out date is a barrier to someone who might be willing to serve. Let people try out a ministry role as a one-time observation or for a 6-month commitment. Let children’s volunteers serve for one school year. Then, when their commitment has been

fulfilled, celebrate the milestone and give them opportunity to either find another place to serve or to sign up for another term. When the church embraces this culture, it gives people freedom to find where God is calling them to ministry. This approach also acknowledges that a person’s heart for various ministry roles may change over time as he grows in Christ.

IF YOU NEED TO FILL A ROLE, YOU MAY HAVE TO TURN AWAY AVAILABLE VOLUNTEERS

When filling a ministry position, select ability over availability. Do not be too quick to fill a position with the first person who says, “I’ll do it.” Take time to make sure that person has the capacity to perform the role well — particularly if it is a leadership role. Remember the advice found in 1 Timothy 5:22: “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands.” At times it may seem easier to fill the gap with the first willing person who comes along. But this often leads to more trouble and more work later. Instead of volunteers taking ministry responsibilities off your plate, they will create constant struggles when placed in a role they are not qualified to fill. Others

will notice the poor fit as well. When that happens, fewer people will be willing to serve because they will not want to deal with the added burden of poor performance and poor leadership. It is better to leave a role vacant than to fill it with someone who is not a good fit.

IF YOU WANT A BIGGER TEAM, YOU MAY NEED TO CARE FOR FEWER PEOPLE

A pastor cannot continue to add more and more people to his ministry team without jeopardizing his leadership influence and his own personal, spiritual, emotional, and physical health. If he has too many people in his direct care, they will feel cheated, his family will feel cheated, and he will feel cheated. Good relationships take time and energy. Too many relationships, whether they are solid or not, will drain even the strongest leaders. A pastor needs to limit his immediate span of care to no more than six to eight people. If he exceeds that number, he and everyone on his team and in his family will feel it. That means he will need to periodically reorganize how his ministry teams are structured and empower new leaders to care for people on his team. To touch more lives, he will need to touch fewer people.

IF YOU WANT TO GROW YOUR CHURCH, YOU MAY NEED TO ELIMINATE MINISTRY

Leaders occasionally complain about the challenges they face as they try to find enough volunteers to fill ministry roles. I ask them to show me their ministry calendar. Often it is completely packed with programs and events. In addition, they almost constantly consider new initiatives because they have fallen into the trap of thinking that more is better. The fallacy of this approach is: more events and more ministry programs mean less time people have to volunteer. Churches that do not proactively limit programming will continue to find it difficult to recruit enough volunteers. Determine which ministries are the best at helping people meet Jesus and taking steps in their faith journeys. Eliminate the rest. Be ruthless about adding new programs. Whenever you add a program, take one away. Be as committed to determining what you are *not* going to do as you are to pursuing what God wants you to do next.

The objective is not to grow a certain size church or to get a particular number of volunteers to serve. Size does not equal health. The objective is to get as many people as possible on a path toward spiritual maturity. Thus, it is critical to connect as many people as possible into volunteer ministry. As people fill serving roles, they find purpose and significance in their lives.

As they connect with other Christians, they will find the encouragement and mentoring they need to pursue a new understanding of their relationship with God. Their faith will grow. They will contribute more through tithes and offerings. They will be more supportive of the church's mission. They will be more committed to pray and reach people who do not know Christ. These attributes build healthy, growing churches. If our calling as pastors and church leaders is to present everyone perfect in Christ, we must embrace and encourage volunteers to own the ministry of our churches. ■



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A CHURCH VOLUNTEER'S BILL OF RIGHTS

1. Volunteers have the right to be treated as coworkers, and the right to know as much about the church, its policies, and procedures as possible.
2. Volunteers have the right to suitable assignments that take into consideration their personal preferences, temperaments, life experiences, educations, and employment backgrounds.
3. Volunteers have the right to training for the job as well as the right to continuing education.
4. Volunteers have the right to sound guidance, direction, and feedback on their performance.
5. Volunteers have the right to a variety of experiences through advancements to assignments with more responsibility and through the transfer from one activity to another.
6. Volunteers have the right to be heard, to feel free to make suggestions, to have respect shown for an honest opinion, and to have a part in planning.
7. Volunteers have the right to recognition in the form of promotion, awards, and day-to-day expressions of appreciation.

BRIDGET LYNCH FISCHER, Camarillo, California. Adapted from "A Bill of Rights for Parish Volunteers." Reprinted in the "Parish Ministry in Practice" series from *Today's Parish Magazine*, "Volunteers — Getting Them, Placing Them, Keeping Them: Empowering Parish Volunteers," edited by Dan Connors (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publications, 2001), 20–26. Used by permission.

“I Tried,

I tried, but no one ever called me” are painful words for a pastor who has much work to do and not enough people willing to do it. These words are painful for the person who wanted to contribute, but was



never called. These are also painful words for a person who is committed to helping people connect and contribute in meaningful ways within the church. Unfortunately, hearing these words happens too frequently in churches across the country.

One reason this happens is due to errors in the system (or lack of a system) to connect willing servants to serving opportunities. Though desperate for workers, churches often lack the mechanism to effectively link interested people to ministries that will enable people to grow in fruitfulness and fulfillment. Consider this scenario:

BY WENDI HAMMOND



But No One Ever CALLED ME”

First Assembly plans a volunteer-recruitment service. Pastor Bob uses a sermon about servanthood and a drama to make a strong plea for workers. Bulletins contain a flashy insert with boxes for people to indicate where they want to serve. On Monday, the church receptionists sorts and forwards the inserts to the appropriate staff members or ministry leaders. Unfortunately, chances are good the volunteer recruitment effort ends here.

It is unlikely that the information will get compiled into any kind of database. It is unlikely anyone will keep track of these people or contact them. Even if they are contacted, it is unlikely those contacted will explore “plan B” if their first choice does not work out. It is unlikely prospective volunteers will discuss their God-given wiring for ministry (gifts, talents, passions) with anybody. Yet, this is the typical method for recruiting in many churches. This procedure amounts to nothing more than informing. It is completely impersonal and does not ensure any training after someone is recruited. The next and often absent element is called *equipping*.

Here are some elements the church can use to connect and equip people to serve:

- Interviews or classes (or a combination) that help people explore and discover their ministry wiring, with a follow-up step for connecting to ministry (*Discovery*).
- Entry positions in various ministries where people can try out ministry and experience on-the-job discovery (*Discovery/Connection*).
- A monitored referral process to ensure follow-up. Ministry leaders voluntarily submit to mutual accountability regarding follow-up responsibilities (*Connection*).
- Ministry roles defined by written job descriptions can help people determine the ministry role that best matches them (*Cataloging*).
- An information system that stores members’ interests, their abilities, and the various steps they have taken to connect to ministry (*Tracking*).
- An information system that also catalogs ministry opportunities in both the church and community (*Tracking*).
- A ministry orientation process that is specific to the program area but is monitored to ensure no one is placed into service without the opportunity to become acclimated and feel confident (*Orientation/Training*).
- A tickler system to remind leaders to make time for training and discipleship of volunteers (*Reflection/Evaluation*).

These methods cannot remain theoretical. They must become steps or processes. Someone needs to check the system regularly to make sure it is working. The steps cannot be disjointed. The process of helping people connect to the life of the church must be seamless.

Too many churches divide these areas between numerous departments. The departments then give oversight of these areas to different people who do not serve on the same team. One person handles visitor follow-up, another handles volunteer placement, another in the office tracks members, and membership is completely separate. Even in the most cooperative environment, it is hard for all these elements to

Unfortunately, when a church is without a system or has cracks in its system, people fall through.



be a seamless system or process unless they are linked.

Processes can seem and even become sterile, lifeless, and corporate. But corporate is not automatically equivalent to uncaring or cold. When a system is working effectively, it is completely invisible to the people being served. However, leaders who care about people for more than what they can do for the church are highly visible. Leaders who are synchronized and work as a team are highly visible. People serving who are excited and joy-filled are also highly visible. Unfortunately, when a church is without a system or has cracks in its system, people fall through.

CASE STUDY: A CHURCH WITHOUT RECRUITING/TRAINING SYSTEMS

There are never enough ushers, and Erin sometimes hates her job as the usher team leader. She asks everyone she knows to volunteer and explains that having too few ushers might cause people to think the church is unfriendly. She asks herself every week, *Don't the lazy people in this church care?*

A few weeks earlier someone had introduced Erin to Diane. Diane was new in town and new in the church. Erin called Diane about the desperate need for more ushers. She asked Diane to serve just one Sunday a month. “It’s easy,” she said. “You don’t need any special skills or abilities. Anyone can do

it.” Besides, if we don’t get more workers, we might need to leave the bulletins on the pews for people to take when they sit down.” Diane feels guilty. Since she has been attending for 5 months, she figures she should be doing something. She agrees. Erin tells her when to arrive and where to go the following week.

Diane arrives at the appointed time and place. She does not remember having met Erin, so she cannot put a face with the name. No one is there to meet her, so she introduces herself to one of the ushers. “Just take a stack of bulletins and hand them out as people come in,” he says. She does not get his name; he does not offer it. She does not see or meet Erin that morning. She does not meet anyone for that matter — no one introduces himself.

The next week Diane arrives 15 minutes before services. She hopes to meet Erin and ask a few questions. No luck. She takes a stack of bulletins and chooses a door at which to stand. A few minutes later two men come and say, “This is our door.” Diane moves to the next door. No one joins her. When she thinks most people are seated, she goes into service herself. She assumes that is what she is supposed to do.

Diane’s mom is sick the next weekend, and she goes to stay with her and misses church. When she arrives home on Sunday evening there is a message from Erin. She sounds upset. “If you are going to miss church,” she says, “please call me. We really count on people to show up and fulfill their obligations.” Diane cannot return Erin’s call because Erin did not provide her phone number.

Diane continues to work in the hospitality ministry every Sunday for the next 3 months. Finally she figures out who Erin is and manages to meet several other ushers. They all seem to know each other. Their children are friends and participate in the same groups and activities. Diane, however, feels like an outsider.

By now, Diane has Erin’s number and e-mail address. One Saturday evening she feels sick and calls Erin to say she will not be at church the next morning. Diane is surprised at how good it feels *not* to serve. She decides to send Erin an e-mail to tell her she has decided this ministry is not exactly the right fit. Erin does not call or reply. In fact, Diane decides the church is not exactly the right fit either.

CASE STUDY: A CHURCH WITH PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS TO HELP PEOPLE CONNECT TO MINISTRY

Diane has moved to a new town to begin a new job. For the first time in her life she is far from the hometown she grew up in, far from many long-time friends, and far from the church home that she loves. Diane is outgoing, but this new life is a stretch for her. She visits a large church that seems full of energy. She notices that everyone seems busy, but also happy and friendly. Every weekend she observes that the campus is filled with

smiling people who make the church hum. She begins to feel a nudge to get plugged in and busy herself. She signs up for a 4-week class designed to help her learn about her God-given abilities and how she can be used in ministry. Diane discovers (what she already knew deep down) she is an extrovert who likes to meet new people — she has encouragement gifts (*Discovery*). After the last class, someone spends 30 minutes with her describing different areas where she might serve, and they talk about what Diane learned from the class. They look at descriptions of several ministry positions. The descriptions include hours and responsibilities, along with the kind of person who might be drawn to a particular role (*Cataloging*). Hospitality seems to be a good fit.

SEVEN KEYS FOR LEADING AN EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

1. Communicate the vision. People will give their time and commit to serve when the vision is effectively communicated and frequently reinforced.

2. Allow individuals to serve in areas where they are gifted or have an interest. At Fellowship Church, we offer a class called *Discovering Your Design*. This class allows individuals to discover and understand their giftedness. We then provide a ministry in the church that matches their strengths and interests.

3. Show appreciation. A pastor cannot spend enough money, write enough letters, call often enough, or host too many appreciation events to communicate to volunteers how much he appreciates their work and commitment. Human nature craves recognition and appreciation, and it is far less expensive than paying for the services they provide voluntarily. Even serving refreshments to volunteers communicates appreciation by recognizing their sacrifices.

4. Make work fun. When tasks are made fun through team building and common community, people commit longer, and become more plugged-in.

5. Make it convenient. Many people hesitate to serve because of childcare. Enable volunteers to serve by providing free childcare.

6. Communicate positive results. Regularly let those who serve know the impact they are having in their area of ministry. For example, in children’s ministries: “Last month, Sarah, you were instrumental in seven children accepting Christ.”

View your volunteer team from their perspective of involvement. Volunteering should not be complicated, difficult, or boring. Make sure the reputation of your volunteer team is the church’s best word-of-mouth advertising.

LAWRENCE SWICEGOOD, director of communications, Fellowship Church, Grapevine, Texas. From *NRB Magazine*, January 2005. Copyright January 2005, reprinted with permission from NRB.

A few days later Diane gets a call from Erin, the leader of the hospitality team (*Connection*). The two get acquainted on the phone and also discuss the hospitality ministry. Erin makes it sound like the most important team in the church. She asks Diane about what she had learned in class and comments that people like her find hospitality to be the perfect ministry fit. Diane decides to give it a try. Erin makes an appointment to meet Diane the following Sunday morning before service. Even though she is busy, Erin introduces Diane to others who serve in hospitality. She partners her with a seasoned usher, and they work together that morning. She gives Diane basic information about serving on the hospitality team — an “everything you

the opportunity to do the same. They discuss the team and ways Diane feels used by the Lord in ministry. It is a rich time. Then after she affirms that Diane still feels led by the Lord to participate on the hospitality team, Erin asks Diane to serve as a team captain. Diane feels honored and gratefully accepts. They set a time for additional training and to discuss the new responsibilities (*Reflection/Evaluation*).

Diane does not see the system. She does not know that after the Discovery Class and the interview her name and profile were sent immediately to Erin in an e-mail. She has no idea that had Erin not called her, someone would have called Erin within a week to remind her to call Diane. She is completely unaware that Erin is expected to provide feedback about her conversations with Diane; and, if hospitality is not a good fit, someone will reconnect with her to help her find a good alternative. She is also unaware that Erin is expected to keep

In a church that genuinely cares for and equips people for service, systems matter.

need to know” checklist (*Orientation/Training*). On Monday evening, Diane gets a call from Erin. “Well, what did you think of our team?” she asks enthusiastically.

Diane’s experience had been great, and she decides to join the team. Erin adds her to the schedule and e-mails Diane a copy. After a few weeks, Diane has new friends on the hospitality team. Jane invites Diane to her small group. Several others invite her to meet them before services for coffee. Diane has found her new church home.

After making many new friends on the hospitality team and completely connecting to both her church and her new community, Erin calls Diane for another coffee date, “to catch up.” They share stories of family, job, and growing up. Erin also shares what God is teaching her and offers Diane

track of the orientation and training she provides for her team. Erin’s leader helps her with this. Diane has no idea that after 6 months Erin gets another reminder to schedule some time for shepherding and discipleship with Diane.

Although Diane feels invested in and cared for, she knows the hospitality team is not about her. The hospitality ministry is about the people she serves every week. It is about her team, and, ultimately, it is about living out Jesus to them. This tangible image is bold and energizing. Diane knows she is making a Kingdom difference in the lives of the people who attend the church every week. She may not be able to quote the verse, but Diane knows she is part of “the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, (that) grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Ephesians 4:16).

Every sad story is not as bad as the first. Likewise, many good stories could be even better — much more like the second. Even though Diane was not one of them, in church work there will be people who choose to slip through the cracks, do not return phone calls, and fail to show up. People are people. The goal of an equipping system is to keep people who want to connect from slipping away. It is a stewardship issue. How do we steward the people God sends us? By using a system. Systemic ministry hums along; we do our part and the Spirit of God is free to work. In a church that genuinely cares for and equips people for service, systems matter. ■



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UNLEASHING THE CHURCH: AN ORGANIZED APPROACH

BY CRAIG E. SWEENEY

Equipping churches are not accidents. They are the result of deliberate prayer, planning, and practice. When someone wants to build a house, he does not start with the blueprints. He starts with the dream of a certain house. It is only after the dream takes shape that blueprints are designed and developed. The architect draws a picture to use as a guiding image for the designer and the builders throughout the entire process. The blueprints give step-by-step instructions to construct the dream house. Builders use the blueprints and picture many times during every stage of construction so the dream house becomes a reality.

Churches are no different. They were first imagined in the heart of God and then His dream took shape. The apostle Paul helped identify the shape of what God imagined. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul painted a picture of God's dream for the New Testament church (chapter 4). The verses are brief, but the picture has considerable depth.

Paul painted a picture of the body of Christ that is teeming with life and hope, and one that is equipping people for their callings so they may join God in His plan for humanity. Truly, it is the church unleashed, accomplishing what only God could have imagined.

Many stop to admire this portrait of a church attaining "to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). Often we walk away from this picture inspired by its possibilities, but feel unable to recreate its depth of life, vitality, or ability to equip in our own churches.

We must ask: Is it possible to have an equipping church teeming with such life and hope today? Did Paul paint an unrealistic picture?

THE ACCIDENT WILL NOT JUST HAPPEN

It is possible to be the dream church of Ephesians 4, but it will not happen by accident. Pastors must keep their eyes on the dream at every stage. The dream will only take shape through an intentional and organized effort to change church *culture*. In this article, I will describe an organized approach that works.

When the equipping-church blueprint is examined, two crucial measurements determine its success: leadership's commitment to equip, and ministry's commitment to equip. Both must be measured. Both cooperate to achieve the overall goal of equipping the saints. Here is the first measurement.

MEASURING LEADERSHIP'S COMMITMENT TO EQUIP

This measurement must not be a guess. This first measurement will determine if your dream will remain a dream. All churches do some equipping, but not all churches are equipping churches. A true equipping church embodies an equipping culture. Its leadership is committed to developing and maintaining a church-wide equipping culture.

Here are some observations about leadership's commitment to an equipping culture.

To pursue an equipping culture is to pursue change

This pursuit will test the level of leadership's commitment. The changes to be made are significant, and changes must start at the highest level. Change is life giving, but one cannot assume that everyone will embrace change. People, even good people, do not like change. Often leaders state: "I am already committed to equipping." If leadership embodied equipping as a *culture*, then they would already be living the dream.

An equipping culture begins with the right portrait

When we picture what a successful Christ-honoring church looks like, we must be sure we see the same picture God sees. Consider the following pictures of the church in Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35.

Ephesians 4 is the pre-eminent picture in the gallery. Much can be learned from the other portraits, but Ephesians 4 is the finished product. The others are not. Here God's people commit themselves to His plan for humanity. Together they equip "so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

**Equipping churches are not accidents.
They are the result of deliberate
prayer, planning, and practice.**

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ" (Ephesians 4:12–15).

Notice that nothing is mentioned about a talented worship group, church facilities, style of music, drama, the next big event, or even about how many people attended. These are important in the right context, but they are not the result. They are only tools for church use. These are vague images compared to the vibrant portrait of Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4 is the picture of a church fulfilling the Great Commission. In today's church culture with its many distractions, we need to fix our eyes on the right portrait.

An equipping culture does not want anyone working anywhere; it wants the right people working in the right places at the right times.

An equipping culture's prayers of faith

These continuous prayers are motivated by faith that people will realize their God-given calling and their redemptive potential in Christ. Such prayers demonstrate that people are the church's greatest resource, and broken people have redemptive potential. These are the values of an equipping culture. An equipping leader's prayers are guided by the belief that each person has value in God's plan. These leaders pray to have their eyes opened so they may see God's gifts in every person. They pray for wisdom and discernment to equip and release those gifts. These prayers do not show reliance on what money can achieve, but on what God can accomplish through people.

An equipping culture's work

An equipping culture focuses on effective teamwork. It is not primarily concerned about the work output of one staff member. Staff members are not hired to be professional doers of ministry. They should be hired to create and train teams of lay partners who will then accomplish ministry efforts. Staff members in this culture are not praised when they do the work of five people while straining their family relationships. They are praised for making sure five individuals do the work of five.

A person working outside his gifts and passion will burn out and take his place among the cynics of the congregation. We need to avoid processes that create cynics. An equipping culture does not want anyone working anywhere; it wants the right people working in the right places at the right times.

An equipping culture's strategies

Strategies are not as concerned with numbers as they are with quality. Making disciples is done one person at a time. Large group settings play a role in these strategies, but at some point, one-on-one training is necessary. Big, expensive events usually draw church people, but a better strategy is to get the message of hope to the lost. Many churches plan events to get more people into their facility so they can speak to them. An equipping church will use its time and resources to equip people so they can minister to people in places the pastor cannot access.

An equipping culture's goals and priorities

Long-term goals for equipping that extend out 1 to 5 years are needed. Examples of long-term goals are: raising up new lay leaders to do what paid staff have been doing (this goal frees up paid staff to do the things they love); developing mentoring relationships; developing new curriculum to

assist in equipping efforts; dealing with lay leaders and their expectations to equip other lay leaders. Goals and priorities must reflect the equipping culture.

An equipping culture's indicators for measuring success

The indicators often used today to measure success are vague images of Ephesians 4. Good attendance and finances do not tell the whole story. George Barna in *Growing True Disciples* states, "Presently, less than half of all born-again adults (44 percent) are convinced there is absolute moral truth." Fifty-six percent are not convinced. Only "55 percent claim that the primary influence on their thinking about moral truth is the Bible or the religious teaching they receive." These people are

EQUIPPING AND VISION

Preparing people for their intended place in God's design is an essential value for equipping leaders. What is often misunderstood about equipping is its relationship to church vision.

Equipping is not an end in itself or the completion of a vision. Equipping does not replace the vision and dream to win our cities to Christ. Equipping is not the destination, but how we journey. The dreams and visions God has given become more important to an equipping church for two reasons.

First, people need to be plugged into a dream so they can begin the work of ministry. One problem of many local churches is not having a dream big enough for others to join. Ministries often ask people to join them in ones and twos; but, when five show up, they have no idea what to do with them. They often do nothing with them, and in 6 weeks they wonder where their new recruits went.

Second, the church and each ministry in the church needs to answer two questions:

1. *Who* will equip potential partners in ministry?
2. *How* will we equip potential partners in ministry on a regular basis throughout the year?

We pray for workers, but many leaders would not know what to do with them if their prayers were answered. Lack of preparation or equipping is one reason many potential ministry partners quit before getting involved.

As we do the work of ministry and reach for the vision, we will bring others with us. They will learn from observation. Eventually, they will train others in the work we once did. Equipping is not an end in itself; it is a practice of ministry.

CRAIG E. SWEENEY, Clovis, California

attending our churches. The numbers do not tell us what we want to hear. An equipping culture gets personal with its people and engages them in their faith. The days of assuming everyone agrees with our preaching or teaching have long passed.

New indicators of success are needed. Success can be determined by who is engaged in the discipleship process; how many people tithe; how many people are involved in ongoing ministry; how many people are involved in relationships through small groups or Sunday School classes; how many broken homes have been saved from divorce; and how many people are being released into new ministries. These indicators are not perfect, but they give a good evaluation of whether or not a person is being made into a disciple of Jesus Christ.

An equipping culture promotes with forethought

Leaders in equipping churches are given more responsibility if their gifts qualify them for it. Promotion requires forethought. Many churches have too many players on their coaching staffs. Coaches and players use different skills, similar but different. Typically, positions of high responsibility require greater equipping skills. But those who can do the task well are not automatically good coaches. Michael Jordan is arguably the greatest basketball player of all time; but, if he cannot coach or equip a player to play as he did, he would be of little help to the team as a coach. To make him a coach would not be fair to him or the team. Promote people according to their gifts.



An equipping culture creates a legacy

A pastor's legacy is left when he moves from one place to another or when he is promoted to be with Christ. We need to ask, *Will others continue what I started and carry it on after I have left?* Or, *Is this activity one that should be carried on after I have left?*

If an equipping culture is established, then the pastor's vision and passion will become the vision and passion of

Staff members in this culture are not praised when they do the work of five people while straining their family relationships.

others as well. Equipping others to join our efforts ensures that the dream we have does not die. The greatest legacy we leave as equipping leaders is not written on plaques fixed to the inside walls of buildings. The greatest legacy we leave behind is written on the hearts of the people we helped. Each time a new person joins God in His plan for the redemption of mankind, our legacy lives on and our fruit remains.

Imagine if every one of your staff and lay leaders committed to an equipping culture. This is the first step in becoming an equipping church. The next step is taking an honest look at the ministries of your church.

MEASURING MINISTRY'S COMMITMENT TO EQUIP

With leadership's commitment secured, the next step in the equipping-church blueprint is for church ministries to reflect the equipping culture. Each ministry or department needs to be examined to determine if it is effective at equipping. Effective departments intentionally equip people as ministry is done.

Not all ministries are effective equipping ministries. Most ministries were not started, nor have they been maintained, as equipping ministries. Most ministries were birthed out of a desire to meet a need. For example, the men of the church need help to be the men God called them to be, so a men's ministry is started. Equipping may happen in small doses, but more could be done.

Each ministry needs the permission of senior leadership to measure its present commitment to equip. Sunday School is an equipping ministry. In truth, ministry equips only when its goal is making disciples. Many Sunday Schools do not equip effectively. They are on autopilot. They use the current book or tape series and teach with little or no thought for results. When one series is finished, excitement builds for the next series even though the lessons just learned have not been

SEVEN STEPS TO GETTING THE VOLUNTEERS YOU NEED

Are you tired of trying to push square pegs into round holes? Do you keep running out of pegs of any shape? If you are in charge of recruiting volunteers for your church, you know how frustrating it can be to find the right people for all the positions. The solution is not better recruiting techniques but a fresh perspective on what you are trying to accomplish.

As futurist Leonard Sweet said, “The church of Jesus does not have volunteers. It has ministers.” Do not view your job as a matter of filling all the slots but as a ministry of releasing and equipping people to exercise their spiritual gifts. Here are some practical ways to approach it.

PRAY

Sometimes we forget that the church is not merely a human enterprise. Prayer should be our first priority, not a last resort. When Jesus faced a situation where the ministry was understaffed, He did not send the disciples out to twist some arms. He told them to “ask the Lord of the harvest ... to send out workers” (Matthew 9:38). Prayer should precede and permeate each of the other action steps.

IDENTIFY THE TASKS

Write down all the functions you need volunteers to perform — not just a list of the warm bodies you must have to make do. If recruiting gifted individuals was just a matter of asking, what kinds of volunteers would you want? A riveting Bible teacher? A keyboardist who can transpose choruses on the spot?

As you do this, map out the structure of the entire ministry, showing each department and where each volunteer serves. You may find that you can alleviate a shortage in one area simply by reassigning some of the people already serving.

SPECIFY THE SKILLS

Carefully think through what gifts and abilities each volunteer needs to have. Jim Wideman at Church on the Move in Tulsa, Oklahoma, finds that many ministry leaders are uncertain about exactly what needs to be done and for how long, whether the necessary resources are available, and how to gauge effectiveness. He says, “There’s nothing that scares away volunteer workers faster than not being clear about what you need.”

WRITE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Now take what you have come up with and craft a written job description for each position. This should be something you can hand to potential volunteers so they know exactly what you are talking about and can make an intelligent decision. It also keeps you from falling into the trap of formulating a job description that fits a particular person rather than the task. Once you have described the task, you can look for the right

person to help grow the ministry. Wideman says, “I’d rather have no volunteers than the wrong volunteers.”

EVALUATE AND EQUIP CURRENT VOLUNTEERS

The person you need could already be on your team. You might just need to hone her skills or give some coaching to move her up to the next level. Evaluate your volunteers’ performance; it lets them know you have high expectations and sends the message that what they are doing is important. Ask them to evaluate themselves, telling you three areas in which they want to improve. Then help them sharpen those skills by teaching them the fundamentals and modeling good habits. (For more ideas, see Chapter 7 of *Awesome Volunteers*, Group Publishing, 1998, by Christine Yount.)

LET YOUR VOLUNTEERS RECRUIT

Those who are already serving in a ministry can enlist others more easily than you can. People expect you as the recruiter to present volunteer opportunities in a favorable light, but they trust someone in the trenches to tell it like it is. Encourage your best workers to talk to their peers about joining the team. You are still in charge of screening and training, but you do not have to be the one to find every new volunteer.

ASK ANYBODY ANY TIME

One reason we do not have enough volunteers is that we fail to approach individuals. In a survey of U.S. church members, George Gallup found that only 10 percent were active in any personal ministry, but 40 percent expressed interest in getting involved. They were not because they had not been asked or did not know how.

Do not wait for promotion Sunday to roll around or until someone resigns. Be on the lookout for good people all the time. If you meet a person who seems qualified, pull out your job descriptions and see if he fits. If so, get him plugged in right away.

Wideman suggests getting a list of all your church members who are not serving in any capacity. Then contact them one by one and invite them to consider getting involved in a particular ministry. “There are people in your congregation who need to be needed,” he says. “Find them. When you connect with these folks, they will be the most faithful workers you have ever seen.”

For additional practical tips, see the first section of *Quick Relief for Children’s Ministry Leaders* by Ivy Beckwith (Group Publishing, 1998).

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incorporated into people's lives. Individuals have the unique ability to hear teaching for weeks and yet remain unchanged.

The Sunday School's commitment to equip can be measured. It can be measured by its resolve to be intentional with its teaching. Classes need to start with a growth goal in mind. For example, growth in financial stewardship, understanding the role of husband, wife, and children in the family, or understanding ways one's retirement years can be used to benefit the kingdom of God. Once a growth goal has been agreed on by the majority or by the Sunday School teacher, materials are used that will stretch people in that direction. Then they can break into small groups to pray for God's strength to respond correctly to that week's teaching. In time, relationships are formed that offer accountability and spur one another on. Equipping motivates people to apply and internalize what they are taught. Equipping may occur in small doses in Sunday School, but Sunday School could be more intentional in making disciples.

Every ministry in the church should be measured. Once measured, leadership can redesign it to equip people. For example, the purpose of hospital visitation ministry is visiting sick and needy people in the hospital, but this ministry can equip as well. If the current leaders will take others with them and show them how to do hospital visitation, then two people are now trained to visit. Unless senior leadership creates this expectation, many ministries will not automatically equip others to minister. This is one reason leadership has to commit to equip first. John Maxwell says, "Everything rises and falls on leadership."

The last point to consider is a discipleship plan. What is the *minimum* amount of information needed by people to be effective followers of Jesus Christ? What are the basic

doctrines, practices, or disciplines that everyone needs? Answering these questions is the first step in developing a discipleship plan. The church should offer a series of classes and one-on-one mentoring opportunities where people can obtain that information. Hopefully new people are visiting the church regularly. New opportunities for discipleship need to be available throughout the year for these individuals.

Our plan starts with the altar workers. They are trained to encourage people to further their commitment by joining a class or a mentoring relationship. Classes and mentors teach foundational doctrines and disciplines. After completion, people are encouraged to join a small group and the next class on our new believer's track.

We have at least six classes that make up the discipleship process. This is an effective way to get newcomers familiar with the church community. Discipleship processes will be different for each church. The goal is to release people into ministry who are well equipped and qualified to serve. Conclude the discipleship process with a short class to assess participant's spiritual gifts. Follow the class with an opportunity for people to look at ministry options available in the church.


Equipping churches are not accidents. They are the result of deliberate prayer, planning, and practice. The dream can only take shape when an intentional and organized approach to change church culture is enacted. Equipping does not just happen in a church. Churches must go through a planning process, where ultimately leadership is given permission to work as equipping leaders. It takes committed leadership and ministry departments. Time and resources must be committed to training parishioners and to retraining leadership. The church's use of time and the expectations of pastors and lay leaders are different

when equipping is intentional.

Many leaders may think this culture shift sounds overwhelming and even frightening. I believe it is filled with possibilities and opportunities. What would be accomplished if just half of the people in the church knew their place in God's plan, were equipped, and then released to participate in that plan? This kind of church is exhilarating, stirring, relational, and is blessed with the approval of God. I love being a leader in this kind of church. This is certainly not church as usual, but that is a good thing. ■



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MOTIVATING THE RIGHT PERSON INTO THE RIGHT MINISTRY

BY GARY R. ALLEN





One of the greatest challenges for most pastors is selecting and motivating the right people into the right ministry positions in hopes of minimizing turnover and frustration. Even in the smaller church with limited personnel, it is important to coordinate people and ministry as much as possible.

BETTER PARTNERING

Effective ministry requires better partnerships between the pulpit and the pew. People in the pew are, for the most part, overworked, overextended, and exhausted by the time they arrive at church. The pastor, especially in small- and medium-sized churches, must be a leader, a manager, and a facilitator and often all three at the same time. As the leader, he does the right thing; as manager, he does things right; and as facilitator, he helps others do things.¹ He needs to help people become servant leaders who want to do what is right and also feel fulfilled in ministry.

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE?

In the past, pastors often appealed to duty and oughtness to motivate people. Sometimes pastors resorted to guilt, shame, coercion, and manipulation. This usually led to short-term commitments because people did not feel appreciated, fulfilled, or rewarded for their efforts. Today's volunteers expect more from the church but have less time to give, will financially support only what they think is meaningful, and are less loyal to a home church. They are more likely to be motivated by a meaningful purpose (something that makes a difference in their personal life, family, or community).

JESUS AS A GREAT MODEL

Jesus is a great example of a leader who understood the hearts and motives of each of His disciples. He challenged them, in different ways according to their personalities, to follow Him. He loved both Peter and John, but He recognized their personal differences and motivations as indicated in the Gospel of John:

"Then he [Jesus] said to him [Peter], 'Follow me!' Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. ... When Peter saw him, he asked, 'Lord, what about him?' Jesus answered, 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me' " (John 21:19–22).

UNDERSTANDING PERSONALITY TYPES

It is important for pastors to understand basic personality types and what motivates each type. Understanding why people behave the way they do and their thinking processes can help a pastor properly assign, motivate, instruct, and supervise their ministry.

Pastors must assume that people who love God and sense a call to serve Him want to do their best. Richard Dortch, former Illinois District superintendent, told younger ministers, "The majority of people will do what is right the majority of the time if properly informed. Your role as a leader is to inform them." If people are preached at, berated, and intimidated, they will not want to be on the team and usually will move to a more affirming environment.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DISC

Attempts to understand human behavior, "Why people do what they do," dates back to the ancient philosophers Empedocles (ca. 492–430 B.C.) and Hippocrates (ca. 460–377 B.C.). Empedocles, founder of the school of medicine in Sicily, presupposed that all matter came from the four basic elements: earth, air, fire, and water. He further postulated that these elements when put together in infinite combinations produced varied results.

Other ancient philosophers believed human behavior was somehow tied to the stars — being born under a certain astrological sign. Hippocrates, however, said, "It's none of those things." Rather, he postulated that it had to do with the natural flow of fluids throughout the human body.

Hippocrates believed that cold, fast fluids coursing through the body indicated a person would be a strong leadership-type

THE VALUE OF THE VOLUNTEER:

MOBILIZING, MAINTAINING, AND MOTIVATING THE VOLUNTEER

MOBILIZING THE VOLUNTEER

Mobilizing is recruiting volunteers to serve. But why volunteer? Harvard psychologist William James said, "The source for discovery of true happiness is to give oneself to a cause that will out last one's life."

Believers understand why they serve the Lord. They are motivated by their love for Him because of what He has done for them. How can Christians do less than give God their best?

Jesus called ordinary people along with their human tendencies and feelings. He did not choose them because of their intellect, culture, education, social standing, or wealth. They were not Jesus' clone, cardboard replicas, or wooden soldiers. Each possessed a distinct personality. Simon the Zealot was the neo-con of the group. Matthew was the IRS agent. Outside the Twelve, Luke was a medical doctor and a renowned historian. God used all of them to establish His church.

There are also biblical imperatives for serving: Jesus said, "I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27). Paul wrote, "Serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13). God gives Christians an innate desire to do good works that benefit others.

Theodore Roosevelt said, "Whenever you are asked if you can do a job reply, 'Certainly, I can.' Then get busy and find out how to do it."

When Jesus recruited His disciples, His hearty invitation was also an abrupt appeal, "Come follow Me."

In Mark 3:13, "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to Him those He wanted. And they came to Him." Jesus called "those He wanted." A generic call, "those that would like to," would not have been practical or sufficient. Jesus was specific. He knew the gifts, talents, and abilities of those He called. Remember, we cannot put Saul's armor on David.

Here are some questions I ask when seeking to fill needs in the body of Christ:

- Do you work well with others, or are you content to pursue assignments on your own?
- Can you work under supervision, or do you chafe under it?
- Do you want responsibilities clearly defined, or do you enjoy flexibility?
- How much recognition do you need?

Volunteers do the overwhelming workload in the church. Volunteers serve as ushers, choir members, musicians, teachers, Royal Rangers and Missionettes leaders, elders, deacons, and trustees. Hundreds, even thousands of God's people serve without pay. When I needed positions filled in my church I often told my church that I preached without being paid. "Woe to me

if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16). A chuckle would ripple through the congregation. I would then add, "Next week, you will work 5 days. Tomorrow, you will punch the time clock and work your shift. So will I. Tomorrow at 8:30 a.m., I will walk through my office doors. I will work all week and, like you, I will return to church next Sunday. You will teach your Sunday School class, sing in the choir, and help direct people to their seats. I will fill the pulpit. We will all serve the Lord in our respective assignments. True, there is no earthly monetary provision for your labor. Hopefully in our fellowship it never shall be. It is done as unto the Lord."

MAINTAINING THE VOLUNTEER

Maintaining volunteers is necessary. People run out of energy. Frustration and tensions develop when people are not properly gifted for their assignment. Volunteer tenure is a sensitive

People enjoy being part of what God is blessing. They want involvement in ministry that is growing and useful for the Kingdom. People respond to vision before they respond to need.

matter. How long should a volunteer continue in the same position? I was privileged to give a recognition award to a dear lady who had taught boys and girls in Sunday School for 68 years.

People enjoy being part of what God is blessing. They want involvement in ministry that is growing and useful for the Kingdom. People respond to vision before they respond to need. I discovered that when our church gave a major community presentation, volunteers were eager to help. Recruiting volunteers such as parking attendants, receptionists, greeters, carpenters, and electricians was not a problem because the joy of serving the crowd, the blessing of the moment, and the people who were being saved provided the inspiration needed for the task.

The March of Dimes provides the following rights to maintain their volunteers for duty:

- The right to be treated as a coworker with paid staff.
- The right to a suitable assignment.
- The right to know as much about the March of Dimes as possible.
- The right to receive training and continuing education.
- The right to receive guidance and direction.
- The right of promotion and a variety of experiences.
- The right to be heard.
- The right to recognition.
- The right to a suitable workplace.

MOTIVATING THE VOLUNTEER

What can be superior to the truth of eternal reward? In Colossians 3:23,24, Paul wrote: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

When I was in the junior boys Sunday School class, the class met in the coal furnace room. I remember my teacher. She promised her Savior that no boy would leave her class without a personal experience with Jesus. Time and again she would come into worship late, her arm around a boy. She would dismiss the class and remain to lead the child to Christ. Today, many of these boys are serving the Lord in the church.

Service will not end in this life. Revelation 7:15 declares, "Therefore, 'they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in his temple.'"

We turn our sad reluctant gaze
Upon the path of duty:
Its barren, uninviting way
Are void of bloom and beauty.
Yet in that road, though dark and cold
It seems as we begin it
As we pass on — lo I behold
There is a heaven in it.
—Ella Wheeler Wilcox

ERNEST J. MOEN, Sun City West, Arizona



person. A person who talked nonstop would have fast hot or warm fluid coursing through his body. If a person had fluid that was warm and slow, he would be more of the family type, stable and relational. Slow, cold fluid indicated a person was a thinker, perfectionist, or given to much detail.

Hippocrates gave names to each of these personality types: choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, and melancholy. Although his theory could not be supported medically or otherwise at the time, it was the first valid attempt to define human behavior on any level.

Twentieth-century behavioral scientists, like Swiss Psychologist Carl Gustav Jung, expanded upon Hippocrates' theory. In 1921, Jung published *Psychological Types* in which he described four psychological functions: thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition. He further classified these functions into what he called *introvert* and *extrovert* type behaviors.

Dr. William Moulton Marston, an American psychologist and expert in behavioral science, is credited with the development of the DISC profile. In his 1926 published work *The Emotions of Normal People* he outlined the current language and four personality styles now associated with DISC: D (Drive), I (Influence), S (Steadiness), and C (Compliance).

Since Marston, many individuals have contributed to the maturation of the DISC. Today, it has become a common tool companies use when selecting qualified job applicants.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PERSONALITY TYPES

It is critical for pastors to understand that people are combinations of all four personality types and have a primary and usually a secondary type. Our primary personality type is the result of our genetic makeup, family interaction, and life experiences. Our secondary type is developed in response to our environment. Sometimes this is exhibited in the person who may be outgoing and dynamic in public, but quieter and

withdrawn in the comfort and emotional safety of family and friends.

It is also helpful to keep in mind that there are three kinds of motivation: fear, incentive, and causal.² In the ministry, all three have value. As stated earlier, some ministers use guilt, shame, coercion, and manipulation to motivate people. While this creates an unhealthy fear, people need to have a healthy fear if they do not obey God's call to service or to please Him. The incentive motivation says, "What is in this for me?" In ministry there should be a sense of reward and fulfillment, but our ultimate incentive is pleasing God, serving others, and achieving an eternal reward. The casual motivation is the influence exerted by the servant leader who leads the way and causes others to want to follow.

INSIGHT INTO THE BASIC PERSONALITY TYPES

Over the years many writers have utilized variations of the personality types. Tim LaHaye in *Spirit-Controlled Temperament* uses the traditional Greek terms. Gary Smalley uses animal characteristics. Each provide valuable resources in aligning personality types and biblical principles:³

PERSONALITY TYPES CHART⁴

Tim LaHaye	Choleric	Sanguine	Phlegmatic	Melancholy
DISC Test	D Dominance	I Influence	S Steadiness	C Compliance
Gary Smalley	Lion	Otter	Golden Retriever	Beaver
LEAD Test	Leader	Expressor	Dependable	Analyst

MOTIVATION AND PERSONALITY TYPES

The following overview describes the motivational distinctives of each of the personality types:



D — Motivating Factors⁵

Highly dominant individuals like to be in control and they seek opportunities to reinforce and emphasize their personal power. They measure their progress in life by their achievements and successes, and need to maintain a

sense of personal momentum.

Being impatient and forthright, they intensely dislike situations they are unable to directly resolve for themselves — dependence on other people is anathema to this personality type. They find these kinds of situations extremely frustrating, and can be driven to wild, impulsive actions in an attempt to relieve the pressure.

Motivating the High D

The High D wants:

- to control their own destiny and the destiny of others.
- the power and authority to achieve results.
- prestige, position, and titles.
- opportunity for rapid advancement.
- to maintain their focus on the bottom line.
- freedom from controls, supervision, and details.
- efficiency in people and equipment.
- new and varied experiences.
- challenges with each task.
- a forum for verbalizing.

Managing the High D⁶

- Clearly explain the expected results.
- Negotiate commitments one-on-one.
- Define rules.
- Confront face-to-face in all disagreements.
- Provide challenging assignments.
- Teach them to be understanding and easy on other people.
- Teach them to pace themselves and relax.
- Train them to understand teamwork and participation.
- Teach listening skills.
- Make sure their emotional intensity fits the situation.
- Plan advancement and a career path.

I — Motivating Factors

Relationships with others motivate highly influential individuals. Specifically, they need to feel accepted by those around them, and they react badly if they perceive themselves to be rejected or disliked. Praise and approval make a strong impression on them, and they will sometimes go to great lengths to achieve this kind of reaction from other people.

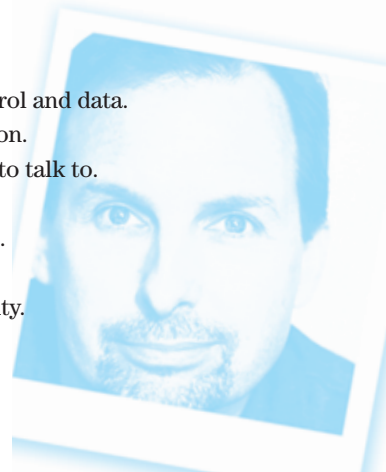
Especially important to this type of person are the opinions

and reactions of particularly close friends. When a High I develops close ties with someone, that person becomes part of his influence group. His actions will often be designed to improve and extend relations within this group, even to the extent of alienating people who are not part of his circle. This factor can make highly influential characters appear unpredictable at times.

Motivating the High I

The High I wants:

- an environment free from control and data.
- popularity and social recognition.
- freedom of speech and people to talk to.
- favorable working conditions.
- group activities outside the job.
- identification with the team.
- public recognition of their ability.
- monetary rewards.



Managing the High I

- Assist in setting realistic goals.
- Work with on-time management.
- Develop a friendship and make time for daily interaction.
- Have an open-door policy to discuss any issues.
- Teach behavioral styles to improve social interaction.
- Station them in an area where they can have social interaction and get the job done.
- Allow them freedom of movement, without control.
- Set clear objectives for each task.
- Look for opportunities for them to utilize their verbal skills.

S — Motivating Factors

The underlying patience of this type of person is the root of their motivating factors. They need to feel they have the support of those around them and, more important, time to adapt to new situations. They have an inherent dislike of change, and will prefer to maintain the status quo whenever possible; sudden alterations in their circumstances can be difficult for them to deal with.

Once embarked on a task, they wish to concentrate closely on it and see it through. Interruptions and distractions of any kind can be particularly demotivating in these situations.

Motivating the High S

The High S wants:

- logical reasons for change.
- identification with team members.
- harmony — a happy home and work life.
- procedures that have been proven.
- a road map to follow.

- closure on tasks.
- time to adjust to change.
- appreciation.
- recognition for loyalty and service.
- to know you care.
- to work with a small group of people and develop relationships.



Managing the High S

- Clearly explain upcoming changes to prepare them.
- Give tangible rewards.
- Make an effort to get to know them and their needs.
- Allow them opportunity to finish tasks.
- Assign them fewer, larger projects.
- Encourage their contribution in meetings.
- Involve them in long-term planning.
- Work carefully to stretch them to new heights.
- Create a nonthreatening environment, allowing disagreement.
- Reward them for good work habits.
- Clearly define the parameters and requirements of a task.
- Assign them a small group of people to work with.
- Do not switch them from team to team.
- Praise in public, rebuke gently in private.

Managing the High C

- Involve them in defining undefined standards.
- Involve them in implementing standards.
- Clearly define job requirements and expectations.
- Allow them opportunity to finish tasks.
- Set goals that challenge them.
- Encourage their contribution in meetings.
- Involve them in long-term planning.
- Teach them people skills and negotiating.
- Respect their personal nature.
- Allow them to work with a small group of people in a less active area.
- Do not criticize their work unless you can prove a better way.

CONCLUSION

How can a pastor improve his ability to motivate people into effective ministry? Intentionally and prayerfully taking the following steps will be helpful:

- Learn to better understand people, what motivates them, and how you can better affirm them to draw the best from them for the good of themselves and servant ministry.
 - Learn to pray more specifically for yourself. Rather than praying, “God help me,” pray, “God help me as I meet with Don because I know I can unintentionally irritate him at times. Help me say and do what is right and be most effective with him.”
 - Learn to pray more specifically for others. When a pastor better understands why people act the way they do, he can pray more specifically for them and for his interaction with them.
 - Place volunteers where they fit best, will be most effective in ministry, and receive the most fulfillment.
- By doing these things, you will likely develop ministry-effective volunteers who are fulfilled in their ministry and who will, in turn, be great leaders and motivators of others. ■

C — Motivating Factors

The one factor that has a significant effect on a High Cs motivation is certainty. They need to feel completely sure of their position, and of others’ expectations of them, before they proceed. Because of this, they have a strong aversion to risk, and rarely take any action unless they feel absolutely sure about its consequences.

Motivating the High C

The High C wants:

- operating procedures in writing.
- safety procedures.
- to be part of a quality-oriented team.
- no sudden or abrupt changes.
- reassurance that the job is being done correctly.
- available information and data.
- time to think.
- objective, tough problems to solve.
- a manager who follows company policy.



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The PENTECOSTAL ANSWER To the 90-10 Dilemma From Numbers 11

BY ROGER D. COTTON



How many ministry leaders are on the verge of burnout because of the 90-10 dilemma among their people? That is, 90 percent of church work is done by only 10 percent of the people. Many of the leaders and workers who make up this 10 percent are stressed. They may frequently consider leaving their ministry responsibilities or the church altogether. To make matters worse, the church has also turned its view inward. The workers, along with the other 90 percent, have begun to squabble about mundane, internal matters. They have lost their vision for the hurting world around them. Stagnation has set in. Numbers 11 teaches that Pentecost is the answer to the problems caused by the 90-10 dilemma.

THE CONTEXT OF NUMBERS 11

Numbers 11 contains one of the most significant references to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. This chapter is part of the account of Israel's journey from Sinai — where they were established as God's covenant nation — through the wilderness to the Promised Land, where God would use them to bring the Savior into the world. The Israelites were on a mission with an eternal purpose. As they began their journey with faith

and enthusiasm, God, through Moses, instructed them concerning organization and holiness (Numbers 1–10).

In chapter 11, however, the trials and testing of their faith began. The people complained about their hardships, and God dealt with their rebellion. Moses interceded and the judgment ended. Then, the people, stirred up by the dissatisfaction of some non-Israelites among them, wailed about the food they had left in Egypt and complained about the manna the Lord was graciously and miraculously providing for their journey. The Lord became angry and Moses, responding to both God and His people, became troubled.

Moses began to focus on the pressures from the people, the present circumstances, and his own limited ability (verses 11–15). The Hebrew word for “trouble” and “ruin” (verse 15) is the same word used to describe the hardships the people were complaining about in verse 11. In their pain and hardship, both leader and people complained against the goodness of God. Moses listened to the demands of the people, looked at his own limited ability and resources, and concluded that his burden was too great. He would rather die than continue toward his “own ruin.” Moses had forgotten his divine calling and enabling for mission. He even expressed unbelief that the Lord could provide enough meat to feed the people.

GOD'S ANSWER — PENTECOST

God's answer was not simply to send meat, which He later did, nor was it to do what Moses requested — kill him (verse 15). God's answer was not a quick fix for the immediate felt-need but a long-term solution to all such stresses in the ministry and missionary journey of God's people. The Lord's answer was to put His Spirit — which was on Moses — on 70 other leaders to help Moses bear the burden of the people so they could continue on their mission. This event has many implications for ministry today.

First, the answer is not in us, but in God and His Spirit who is working in and through us. We must keep turning our eyes to God, never losing the sense of awe of and dependence on His power and wisdom.

Second, God's ministry and mission are always accomplished by the working of His Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). All along, the Spirit had enabled Moses to accomplish God's purpose, even though nothing is said about the Spirit and Moses prior to this

passage (Numbers 11:17). Perhaps, this was an ancient assumption reflected in the references to Joseph in Genesis 41:38 and Bezalel and Oholiab in Exodus 31:3 and 35:31. They had been given God's Spirit for wisdom and the ability to carry out their important leadership functions. Thus, whether the Bible explicitly mentions the Spirit or not, God intends His people to assume the Pentecostal understanding that His work is to be done in the power of His Spirit.

Third, it is no problem for God to distribute the burden beyond the weary 10 percent and enable others also to carry the burden. Perhaps God waits until people realize their need and are willing to relinquish their exclusive hold on power, much like He waited to create Eve until Adam felt his need for companionship (Genesis 2:18).

Fourth, like Moses, leaders must gather workers for God from those already known to be leaders among the people. God did not force the people to accept new leaders who were strange to them. God calls for wisdom in the organization of His people for effective ministry and mission.

Fifth, there is an amazing prefiguring of Pentecostal empowerment for God's mission. When the Lord put His Spirit on the Seventy, He gave them an observable sign so the people would know that God was working supernaturally by His Spirit in their lives, and that He had chosen them for ministry (Numbers 11:25). The form of the Hebrew verb, "to prophesy," indicates that these men were speaking prophetically and were empowered by God (compare 1 Samuel 10:6; 19:20,24). Some scholars have suggested that the divine sign in Numbers 11 — prophetic speech — was basically the same experience as the speaking in tongues referred to in Acts 2,¹ an event that was the beginning of what can happen for all believers.

The biblical idea of prophetic speech involves communication flowing out from intimate communion with the Lord. Prophets were allowed to be God's spokespersons because they had such intimate contact with Him. God's Spirit coming on a person for ministry and mission is a prophetic experience.

Sixth, God retains sovereign control over the gift of the Spirit. It is interesting to observe that not all who received the Spirit in Numbers 11 did so in the official way at the designated place. God had called the Seventy to come before the tabernacle, the place of His presence. But two did not come. God, however, still put His Spirit on these two while they remained in the camp. In verse 28, Joshua asked Moses to stop these two from prophesying. In contrast, Moses expressed no jealousy for his authority, but instead wished that all God's people would be empowered by God's Spirit and be prophets.

Like Moses, pastors need to relinquish any self-serving, narrow-minded restrictions over who may minister. Yes, all workers and leaders must be proven, solid disciples, but sometimes people are not released to the ministries God wants for them because of the pastor's insecurities and his selfish control of the various ministries in his church. Sometimes only 10 percent are doing all the work because leadership has an unhealthy need to be indispensable. Ministers must be open to God working in ways that cut across their pride and rigid traditions.

Pentecost has always offended extremely controlling people. Real freedom from the stresses of ministry comes when God is given control. God uses leaders to bring order and direction to a group, but leaders should not make those decisions on their own or ever think or act as though they have the power in themselves. Pastors

need to act as God's obedient messengers. Furthermore, no human is given authority to control the transfer of the Spirit to others. God transferred the Spirit from Moses to the Seventy; Moses did not do it.

Finally, from Numbers 11 Moses looked ahead to Pentecost and expressed the heart of God in his wish that all God's people would be prophets, have intimate communion with Him, and experience His power for His mission in the world. Joel prophesied that the fulfillment would come in the latter days. According to Peter, this fulfillment began at Pentecost (Acts 2).

Moses modeled a return to a faith that focuses on God's promises and a return to leadership that helps people move toward God's goals. If pastors will yield to the heart cry of God, they will desire all God's people be empowered by His Spirit for ministry.

If this is truly a pastor's heart desire, he will work to organize his church or ministry in a way that encourages a wide distribution of ministry. Pentecost is a grassroots, nonelitist movement. God's goal is for all His people to participate in His work on earth. When we are truly Pentecostal, we expect God to empower people other than ourselves to accomplish His mission. That lifts the false burden of self-sufficiency. It also breaks the ministry out of the 90-10 dilemma and keeps it focused on God's mission to reach the world with the gospel. Numbers 11 points to Pentecost as God's answer to stresses in ministry. ■



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ENDNOTE

1. Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 105,106.

Answering Pilate: The Concept of Truth in the Postmodern Context

BY STANLEY J. GRENZ



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What is truth?" Pilate asked rhetorically in response to Jesus' claim that He had come into the world to testify to the truth (John 18:38). Many people, especially those educated prior to the 1970s, might dismiss Pilate's wistful words as the outmoded machinations of a premodern skeptic. For the answer to his question, they would likely direct the Roman governor to modern scientific advances that in their estimation have assisted in the discovery of many truths about the world that were unknown in the first century. Yet, just when the scientific understanding of truth seemed to have attained undisputed sovereignty, Pilate's haunting query, "What is truth?" has re-emerged with a vengeance.

PARTICIPATORY TRUTH

Contrary to what some commentators suggest, postmoderns have not dismissed truth. On the contrary, like people in every era, they too are on a quest for truth. Nevertheless, postmoderns tend to operate from a conception of truth that differs from the reigning modern view.

The modern era was born when certain philosophers concluded that they had at last determined the definitive answer to Pilate's question. Truth, they

asserted, is a characteristic of true statements, and a statement is true if it declares accurately what is in fact the case. Paralleling this conception of truth is the assumption that the world operates according to universal laws. This assumption emerged full force during the Enlightenment (the 1600s and 1700s). Although the laws of nature function independent of the human mind, Enlightenment thinkers theorized that the laws of nature could be discerned by human reason. Consequently, the truth (or falsity) of any particular statement can be readily determined, at least in theory, by comparing it to the dimension of the world it purports to describe. An assertion is true, therefore, if it corresponds to — that is, if it represents accurately or describes correctly — a specific facet or detail of the world. For example, according to the modern concept of truth, the assertion "snow is white" is true if snow is indeed white. We can determine the truth of the statement by inspecting snow to determine its color.

Most of us operate on similar assumptions. The modern project, however, took the matter a step further. Enlightenment thinkers believed what human reason could supposedly fathom was boundless. They hoped that human scientific discovery would eventually devise the one true and complete description of the real world. In so doing, they hoped to inaugurate a utopian society.

Postmodernism questions the central assumptions of modernism. According to postmoderns, truth is not merely an inherent quality of statements that accurately ascribe properties to the world. Neither is truth limited to what can be verified by reason and the empirical scientific method alone. Instead, postmoderns are convinced that, in addition to reason, there are other ways of knowing — through the emotions and intuition. Postmoderns do not view the world as a realm of impersonal laws, but as historical, relational, personal, and participatory.

Postmoderns, therefore, would answer Pilate's question by inviting him to participate in the truth. Pilate would never know that Jesus is the Christ unless he participated in what Jesus embodies. To know the truth Pilate must respond personally to the Master's invitation, "Come and see." Postmoderns might also urge Pilate to realize that the discovery of truth involves his whole person. It must grab his emotions and stir his intuition, as well as satisfy his reason. In fact, the pathway to knowing involves all these dimensions simultaneously. For this reason, Pilate should have

taken his wife's disconcerting dream seriously. Through her intuition, she may have gained insight that his intellectual cynicism prohibited him from accepting.

CONSTRUCTED TRUTH

The modern infatuation with truth as the correspondence of statements with a supposed objective reality led to a particular understanding of how truth is gained. Enlightenment thinkers argued that the pursuit of truth required objective observation — viewing the world from a neutral vantage point above the world.

Postmoderns deny the concept of an Archimedean vantage point — a “view from nowhere” — from which a purely objective view of reality can be gained. Not only is the world participatory, they aver, people structure or construct the world they experience through the concepts they bring to it. Hence, words used to describe the world, including seemingly empirical terms such as *snow* and *white*, do not denote or describe existing realities. Rather, language consists of a set of social conventions or agreed-upon human constructs that allow people to experience the world in a particular manner.

Some postmoderns claim that people do not inhabit a single objective world. They believe people live in the particular worlds they create. Consequently, there is no final basis for determining truth, no real world against which we can adjudicate in some final, objective fashion among the different linguistic worlds of various people groups. As a result, many postmoderns allow seemingly conflicting constructions of reality to exist side by side.

The postmodern conception of truth may be illustrated by the following situation. One Sunday morning a lapsed Roman Catholic attended a Pentecostal church at the invitation of a student. Due to illness, the student was not present in the service.

Postmoderns are converted to community before they are converted to Christ.

Later, the former Catholic told her friend how, at the close of the service, she had been drawn to the front of the sanctuary where the pastor prayed for her. “There at the altar,” she explained, “I fainted.”

Hearing this, the Pentecostal student cried out, “Oh, no. You didn’t faint. You were slain in the Spirit.”

Modernism would attempt to determine what really happened that Sunday morning. The inquiry would focus on what comprised the central issue in question: Did the woman faint or was she slain in the Spirit? Modernism would try to answer the question through an objective, neutral, and detached viewpoint of the incident.

For postmoderns, however, fainting and being slain in the Spirit do not represent a right or wrong description of what happened, but two alternative conceptual frameworks. They are merely aspects of two different community-based worldviews. The woman’s initial understanding of the event in the Pentecostal church service was within a modern, scientific framework. In this linguistic realm — a realm where the scientific method reigns supreme — people faint. But in her conversation with her friend, the woman was introduced to another linguistic realm, the realm inhabited by Pentecostal devotees. In this worldview, people can also be slain in the Spirit.

The point is this: In the modern era, the appeal to the language of empirical science was believed to be the only real world. Scientific knowledge, with its appeal to neutral, objective facts attained by means of dispassionate, disconnected observation was assumed to be the sole claimant to the lofty designation truth. Postmodernism questions the narrowing of the concept of truth to the sphere of empirical science.

Postmoderns, therefore, might respond to Pilate by suggesting that his cultural training as a Roman had disposed him to view religious commitment in the cynical manner that characterized his response to Jesus. But Jesus offered him a new framework, a new way to see himself, and a new set of categories that comprised a glorious new world in which he could have lived. Jesus’ invitation to Pilate was, “Change worlds.”

NARRATIVE TRUTH

The incident involving the woman who visited the Pentecostal church evidences another aspect of the postmodern view of truth. Truth is connected to narratives.

As I noted above, the modern understanding of truth is based on the belief that the world operates according to universal laws that can be discerned by human reason. Consequently, modernism searches for the unchanging laws that govern one’s changing life. Moderns generally view stories as mere illustrations of abiding principles. Once we discover the universal, applicable principle a particular narrative illustrates, we can discard the story. Postmodernism, in contrast, sees an integral connection between story and truth. Truth is a lived narrative. The goal of storytelling is not merely to extract the truth it supposedly illustrates, but to inhabit the story.

The request of James and John for prominent places in their Lord’s coming kingdom illustrates this (Mark 10:32–45). In explaining this text, the modern preacher usually seeks to dissect the biblical story to find the timeless principle the narrative illustrates. The modern thinker attempts to answer questions. For example, what universal, transcultural truth was Jesus seeking to convey to His disciples? Or, what lesson does Matthew want his readers to learn from the story? These questions treat the text as an indicator of a deeper truth rather than an embodiment of truth itself.

A postmodern preacher, in contrast, seeks to draw his hearers into the narrative. For him, the truth does not lie in the principles the story supposedly indicates, but in the story itself. Truth emerges as hearers are drawn into the narrative, as they become James and John, and as they hear the Lord admonish them as well.

The narrative character of truth may also be seen in the sacraments or ordinances of the church. Debates regarding the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, which have agitated theologians

declare that the specific truths people accept and even their understanding of truth is a function of the social group or the community in which they participate. Truth fits within a specific community; truth consists in the ground rules that facilitate the well-being of a community.

The communal nature of truth results in a new kind of relativism. This new relativism is precipitated by life in social groups — or tribes — that have their own language, beliefs, and values. The older individualistic relativism elevated personal choice as the “be all” and “end all.” Its maxims were: “Each to his own,” and “Everyone has a right to his own opinion.” Postmoderns, in contrast, tend to espouse a communal relativism that is expressed in maxims such as, “What is right for us, may not be right for you,” and “What is wrong in our context, may be okay or even preferable in your context.”

The postmodern situation is encapsulated in an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* entitled “Ethics.” An accident has denied Lt. Worf the use of his legs. In

Klingon society, this means he is the same as dead. In keeping with his own cultural mores, Worf plans to end his life. He asks his good friend, William Riker, to assist him in the death ritual. Loath to participate in such a despicable act, Riker goes to the

Truth fits within a specific community; truth consists in the ground rules that facilitate the well-being of a community.

since the 16th century, find their place here. Yet, from a postmodern perspective, the power of these celebrations does not lie in the attempts to describe if or how being baptized or communing at the Lord’s Table mediates divine grace. Rather, baptism and the Lord’s Supper are enacted narratives. The goal of these community rites is for Christians to participate in the biblical events anew in this symbolic manner. Participation emboldens Christians to live that story daily as well. In this manner, grace is enacted in Christian lives.

The postmodern, therefore, might respond to Pilate by telling him “the old, old story of Jesus and His love.” In doing so, the apologist becomes an evangelist. Telling the narrative invites the cynical Roman governor to forsake the narrative inculcated in him by his pagan, imperial overlord and gives him opportunity to participate in the glorious narrative of God at work in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

ship’s captain Jean-Luc Picard for advice. Rather than invoking any individualistic or objectivistic concept of absolutes and universal right and wrong, Picard suggests to Riker that from his cultural perspective assisting Worf might appear to be condoning an act of suicide; but the same act, when viewed through the cultural perspective of Klingon society, is perfectly permissible, and even necessary. He then concludes his remarks by counseling Riker to make his decision based on Worf’s need and the fact Worf is looking to him as a trusted friend.

Here again, the pragmatic understanding of truth emerges. For the postmodern, Pilate’s question can only be answered within a particular social context. Viewed from this perspective, truth is not confined by indubitable facts that ascribe qualities to the world. Instead, truth is active. Truth is what accomplishes a goal. Truth is what works. Truth comes to expression in the relationships shared by members of the group.

The postmodern understanding of truth provides a great opportunity and a great challenge to Christians. Postmoderns are less impressed with well-reasoned arguments that supposedly prove the rightness of the church’s claims to truth than with the life of a truth-embodying community. Consequently, when viewed from a postmodern perspective, the final answer to Pilate’s question lies in the fellowship of the disciples who live in the light of the crucified and resurrected Jesus by the power of the outpoured Holy Spirit. Postmoderns are converted to community before they are converted to Christ. But then, this should not be a surprise. Jesus declared, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). And love for one another between people who love God and are loved by God is the ultimate description of the kind of truth that, when known, sets us free (John 8:32). ■

PRAGMATIC TRUTH

The idea that the world is constructed through the social conventions people bring to it leads to a decisively communal understanding of truth. Postmoderns



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A Fire in Your Belly

BY T. RAY RACHELS



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A youth pastor asked his senior pastor to critique his preaching. “You have wonderful content,” said the pastor to his young friend. “You are personable in the pulpit. But your preaching lacks fire and passion.”

The pastor continued: “When you and the youth group narrowly escaped a tragic accident as you were coming back from a meeting, you preached on Sunday night with great passion. That passion is missing in your regular preaching. Get some fire in your belly and you will touch people where they live.”

Roger Ailes, a brilliant political communication strategist but not the best personal role model for Christian leaders, directed George Bush’s presidential media campaign. He believes the reason Bush won the election was the force of his convictions — the fire in his belly.

Ailes also said that having your own fire is not enough; you must start one in other people, transmit to them the power of your convictions, and lead them to action.

The work of ministry includes giving clear and passionate voice to the Christian message, starting a fire in other people, transmitting to them the power of your convictions, and leading them to Christ.

Recently, a pastor and his wife talked to me about Jim, a young electrical engineer in their congregation. They said, “He finds people.” His public speaking skills were poor, but speaking was not

a high priority to him anyway. He felt called to full-time ministry and was more interested in finding people who needed Christ than in preaching from a sanctuary’s pulpit.

“He is known throughout our community by people who are down-and-out,” said the pastor. “He is now on our church staff.

He walks the streets, finds people, and calls them by name. He has earned incredible favor and access with community business leaders because they see and appreciate what he is doing — helping people get their lives turned around.”

For the last few months Jim has been calling, visiting, and gently cajoling one of the men in town, trying to convince him of his need for Christ, but to no avail. The man has refused to answer or return Jim’s phone calls. He knew Jim’s number because of his persistence; and, when it appeared on his caller I.D., he ignored it. Apparently, he did not want to be bothered.

Refusing to be discouraged, Jim borrowed a friend’s phone and tried again. When the man answered the phone, Jim said “Hello,” then quickly added, “Daniel, this is Jim. Do you want me to give up on you?”

There was a long pause. “No, don’t give up on me, Jim. Please don’t.”

Undiscouragable passion works, often when other tactics do not.

Ailes listed several factors that facilitate transferring the fire in your belly to others. I have also included a few thoughts from Jamie Buckingham.

STROKE YOUR DESIRE TO WIN

Successful communicators know what they want, have a clear vision, and play to win. Know what is at stake with every goal you pursue. Stay focused, and settle for nothing less than the best.

LISTEN

Pastors need to know the heartbeat of their congregation before they speak to them. They need to know not only the people sitting in their congregation, but also where they hurt, what grabs their attention, and what they are looking for in life. Nothing would be worse than to prepare a sermon on raising kids only to find everybody in the congregation that morning was childless.

Successful communicators know what they want, have a clear vision, and play to win.

KNOW YOUR CONVICTIONS

People do not want or need to hear their pastor argue both sides of a question with equal conviction. A minister must think through and articulate the positions for which he is willing to fight and die. Pastors move their listeners when they distill their messages to what matters most. Congregants will believe their pastor when he entrusts his deepest beliefs to them.

NEVER, NEVER GIVE UP

Calvin Coolidge said: "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men of talent. Genius ... will not. The world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan, press on, has solved and will always solve the problems of the human race."

Pastors whose churches are going through crises — either of the pastor's making or for some other reason — have learned to grab the helm and call for full speed ahead. Churches (and ships) that slow down in rough water know the danger of sluing, getting broadside to the waves, and capsizing. With Coolidge and the apostle Paul, let your watchword be "Press on!"

GIVE YOURSELF TO YOUR CONGREGATION

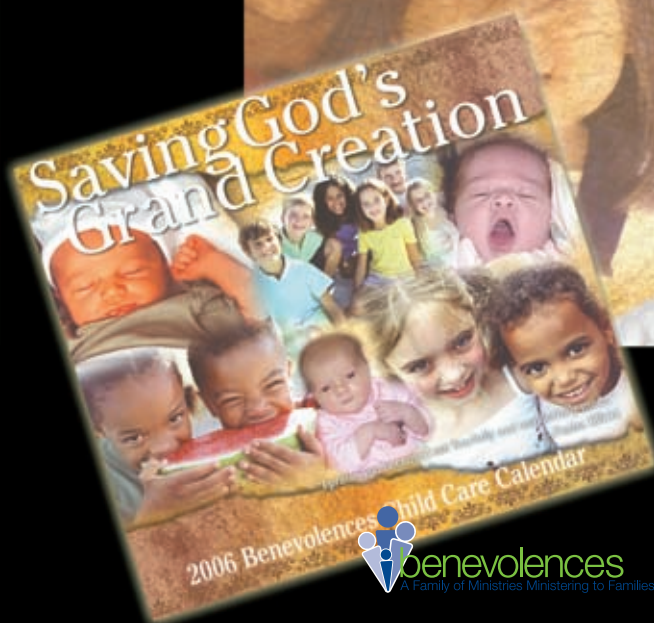
The real secret to communicating is dropping the mask and sharing one's deeply felt emotions. Pastors need to be open with their listeners so they not only hear the pastor's words, but also catch his spirit. A pastor needs to bring hearers close enough to catch the fire of his ideas and life so they will burn also.

I conclude with John the Baptist's address at the Jordan River taken from Eugene Peterson's *The Message*: "I'm baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. The real action comes next: The main character in this drama — compared to him I'm a mere stagehand — will ignite the kingdom life within you, a fire within you, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He's going to clean house — make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned" (Matthew 3:11,12). ■



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Screening Out the Word

BY DEAN MERRILL

Thank God for technology. Aren't you glad for Palm Pilots, cordless microphones, and e-mail? The days of doing Sunday bulletins on messy mimeographs or having to fire up the church furnace by hand at 5 a.m. on Sundays are long gone.

Sometimes, however, technology gives us more than we bargained for. "Technology is not neutral," says University of Southern Mississippi professor Arthur W. Hunt, III.¹ "It has the propensity to change beliefs and behavior. For example, any historian will tell you that the printing press hurled Europe out of the Middle Ages and into the Protestant Reformation.

"What most often escapes our notice in public discussion is how new technologies create unintended effects. Techno-enthusiasts are incessantly expounding what a new machine can do for us, but little deliberation is ever afforded to what a new machine will do to us."

When I read that portion of Hunt's book, I paused to consider our ubiquitous love affair with PowerPoint and other projection technologies. Personally, I love them. I design my own slides for my speaking engagements, and occasionally help my church by running its system on Sunday mornings as part of the tech team. The multimedia impact is dramatic; we reinforce visually what is said from the

platform. The pastor starts to preach and the Scripture text appears on the screen for all to read. How convenient.

But what is this doing to the average person's engagement with the Word of God? What used to be a passage on a page in a book now stands alone. Every time the preacher goes to a new text, the next portion appears.

One result may be fewer churchgoers carrying their Bibles to church. Not only young moms laden down with a baby, a diaper bag, and a purse, but also those who have free hands. *Why bother?* they say to themselves. *Anything important is going to be projected on the screen.*

Not that heavenly favor is given for bringing a Bible into the sanctuary. There is some merit, however, in being able to scan the context of a verse, to look back a paragraph and determine what Isaiah or Peter was saying previously, to observe the overall argument, bookmark a passage for later reflection, or even write a cogent note in the margin.

Using PowerPoint unintentionally atomizes the Word of God and breaks it into random segments rather than presenting it as a unified revelation. God did not intend His Word to become a preacher's grab bag of one-liners from which to bolster sermon points. This practice makes the Word less central to one's life of faith.

If people do not need the Bible on Sundays, then maybe they do not need it on weekdays either. Personal devotions? Wrestling with the theme of Nehemiah or Romans? That is too daunting. After all, something from those books will be on the screen next month, or next year.

Just as the microwave made profound changes in how people prepare family meals, just as the iPod is revolutionizing how people select and listen to popular music, so projection technology is impacting how (and how much) people absorb God's Word. Not everything that can be done should be done.

Many Christian leaders know how it feels to give a newspaper reporter a 45-minute interview (despite their busy schedule), to fully explain the nuances of a theological or ethical subject, and then find only two sentences used in the final article. They feel used and taken advantage of. They tried to give serious, intelligent answers to the questions when the reporter only wanted a brief clip.

Does God feel that way when His revelation is reduced to 25 words or less? What do we miss in our push to make everything concise?

Engaging pew-sitters on Sunday morning is the fervent desire of pastors. None intend to marginalize the Word of God. All wish personal Bible reading in their congregations would grow instead of wither. The challenge is to ensure technology aids that goal rather than works against it.

What if, instead of displaying a verse or two, only the reference was projected on the screen so people would know where to follow in their Bibles as the text was being read? Granted, when a speaker says, "I want us to go to the account of the Triumphal Entry starting in Luke 19:28," some listeners may get the numbers garbled or may even miss the name of the book. It would be helpful to show the text reference while the pastor reads aloud. That way everybody would eventually be able to find his place.

If some do not find the correct paragraph, it is not the end of the world. There is also a benefit from simply listening to the Word of God. Some people, in fact, are far more adept at oral learning than at getting knowledge from a page. When Paul told his young apprentice, "Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture" (1 Timothy 4:13), I doubt members of the Ephesus church had scrolls in their laps. They became grounded in the truth of God mainly by hearing it.

Many people in business and higher education have suffered through PowerPoint seminars where virtually every spoken word from the podium also appeared on the screen. The result is dullness, lack of suspense, and no dynamic surprise in the presentation. It would be far better for the speaker to hold center court and use good rhetorical skills along with visual enhancements wherever they fit best. The visual, however, should not steal the thunder of the oral. The screen must not upstage the spoken word. Keep some things to catch the audience off guard.

Whatever we choose to do with technology, we must not reduce the Bible to an ancillary role. It is far more than a resource for one-liners and proof texts. It is "the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct" (A/G Fundamental Truth No. 1). Anything that disconnects believers from that storehouse of wisdom is not an improvement, but a hindrance. Pastors must always remain, and teach their congregations to remain "people of the Book." ■



Dean Merrill is the coauthor of such best-selling books as *Fresh Wind*, *Fresh Fire* with Jim Cymbala and *In the Presence of My Enemies* with missionary survivor Gracia Burnham. He and his wife are active at Radiant A/G, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

ENDNOTE

1. Arthur W. Hunt, III, *The Vanishing Word* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2003), 14, 17.

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Charles Finney: CONTROVERSIAL EVANGELIST

BY WILLIAM P. FARLEY



In the autumn of 1821, a 29-year-old legal intern began to seek the Lord. During the past year a revival was sweeping his hometown of Adams, New York. He had resisted involvement. But afterward he began to pray. Forty years later, he recalled his conversion: “The Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul. I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed it seemed to come in waves of liquid love, for I could not express it in any other way. It seemed like the very breath of God. I can remember distinctly that it seemed to fan me, like immense wings. No words can express the wonderful love that was spread abroad in my heart.”¹

Thus began the ministry of Charles Grandison Finney (1792–1875), one of the most prominent and influential evangelists in American history.

Finney’s ministry was the high-water mark of the Second Great Awakening (roughly 1792–1835). His was a time of rapid westward expansion and unparalleled population growth. Americans had internalized the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, and with it optimism in human achievement and potential that was unique in history. Finney was the spiritual embodiment of this ideal.

Summing up Finney’s importance, Mark Noll writes, “A good case can be

made that Finney should be ranked with Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, and Andrew Carnegie ... as one of the most important public figures in 19th-century America. Beyond doubt, he stands by himself as the crucial figure in white American evangelicalism after Jonathan Edwards.”²

EARLY YEARS

Shortly after his dramatic conversion, Finney began to study under his Presbyterian pastor, George Gale. Gale encouraged him to attend Princeton Seminary. But despising both theology and theologians, Finney wrote, “I plainly told them that I would not put myself under such an influence as they had been under.”³

In his memoirs, Gale remembered it differently: “Finney did not go to seminary because he was unable to gain admittance.”

Whatever the reason, Finney did not pursue formal theological education. As a result, his presbytery apprenticed him under Gale and another pastor. In 1823, Finney was licensed to preach, and was ordained in 1824.

About this time the Female Missionary Society commissioned him to work as an evangelist in the wilderness villages and towns of northwestern New York. There God gave him some success.

In 1825, there came a turning point in his ministry. Finney was invited to preach in Utica, New York. Utica was located near the newly dug Erie Canal. It was a bustling, growing western metropolis. For two years Finney preached in Utica and the surrounding towns of Rome and Syracuse with increasing effectiveness.

Finney’s techniques were novel. He did not evangelize like his predecessors, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and Asahel Nettleton.⁴ To secure conversions, he deliberately raised the emotional timbre of the meetings. He adopted and popularized the Methodist practice of asking converts to come to the altar or sit on an anxious seat to signify their decision to follow Christ. To wear people down so they would make a commitment, he lengthened his meetings. Sometimes his meetings lasted four hours or longer. These forms of manipulation did not escape his critics.

NEW LEBANON CONFERENCE

Finney achieved significant success, but because of his new measures, a ground swell of resistance arose. His principle opponents were two national figures, Lyman Beecher and Asahel Nettleton.⁵

In the summer of 1827 a conference was called at New Lebanon, New York, to

work out their differences. According to Iain Murray, the conference “was a question of being for or against, not emotion, but rather the adoption of means, *in addition* to preaching and prayer, to *promote* emotion.”⁶

Nettleton and Beecher were on one side; Finney and his supporters were on the other. Nettleton and Beecher were both graduates of Yale. They represented the New England theological tradition of their forefathers. Finney, lacking formal education, stood for personal interpretation of Scripture and change.

The New Lebanon Conference ended in a stalemate. The failure to censure Finney became a Finney victory. It gave him a measure of respectability that was previously lacking. For the first time the churches in the great cities on the eastern seaboard opened to his ministry. From the summer of 1827 to the fall of 1829 he conducted campaigns in Wilmington, Philadelphia, and New York.

REVIVAL IN ROCHESTER

From the fall of 1830 to the summer of 1831, Finney’s ministry hit its high point in Rochester, New York. God’s Spirit was with him in great power. Like Utica, Rochester was a bustling commercial center near the newly completed Erie Canal. Such was the power of God on Finney’s work that the entire business district often shut down to attend his meetings. Great crowds followed Finney as he preached from church to church.

A Finney biographer, Charles Hambrick-Stowe, notes, “Many were to say that it was the greatest local revival in American History.”⁷ Quoting Beecher, he continues, “The nationwide revival sparked by Rochester was ‘the greatest work of God, and the greatest revival of religion, that the world has ever seen in so short a time.’”⁸

The Rochester campaign also united Christians around two significant social issues — temperance and the abolition of slavery. Both were to have far-reaching implications.

WRITING AND TEACHING

In 1832, the revival fires began to cool and Finney took a pastorate in New York. In 1835, the newly founded Oberlin College (Ohio) invited him to be its first professor of theology.

Finney was 43 and exhausted. Needing rest and sensing the change in spiritual climate, he accepted. For the

rest of his life he alternately taught at Oberlin and conducted revivals in several places, including New York, Boston, and England.

Until then, Finney had kept himself to evangelism. Because he was not published, his theological assumptions were relatively unknown. All of that changed in 1835 when Finney published his *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*. Summing up the content, Nathan Hatch writes, “Finney launched a blistering critique of Calvinist orthodoxy, going straight for the jugular of the Calvinist system. He denied the implicit authority of learning, mocked the impotence of carefully crafted written sermons ... and decried the detached and dignified style of educated ministers. He railed at ecclesiastical bureaucracy, particularly the theological hairsplitting and heresy hunting that had come to characterize Presbyterian enclaves. ... Finney called for a Copernican revolution to make religious life audience-centered. He despised the formal study of divinity.”⁹

**Finney’s ministry was unique.
At a time when most pastors
read their sermons, Finney
preached without notes.**

The problem was Finney wrote *Revivals of Religion* while he was an ordained Presbyterian minister. This exposed his opposition to his own denomination’s theology. In addition, later writings confirmed that he believed in the possibility of sinless perfection for newly converted Christians, the denial of the imputation of Adam’s sin and guilt, the human ability to create for oneself a new nature, the denial of the substitutionary Atonement, and the power to manufacture revival by the application of specific techniques. In other words, he denied large sections of the Westminster Confession that he had sworn to uphold. He and Asa Mahan (1799–1889), the president of Oberlin College, later developed these ideas into what is labeled “Oberlin theology.”

In 1837, sensing pressure from his Presbyterian colleagues, he resigned from the Presbyterian denomination and affiliated himself with the Congregationalists.

In 1851, under pressure, Mahan resigned from the presidency of Oberlin and the faculty unanimously called Finney to assume the presidency. He was 59. Finney held this position until 1866 when he resigned due to age. But he continued to teach at Oberlin and evangelize until his death in August 1875.

FINNEY’S MINISTRY

Finney’s ministry was unique. At a time when most pastors read their sermons, Finney preached without notes — and usually without preparation — rising to speak as the Spirit gave him utterance. Later he spoke from a skeleton outline.

Finney looked down on formal training. His preaching style was sometimes criticized for its harsh judgmental spirit.

Finney practiced many innovations. Since he did not believe in original sin, he believed men could turn to God in repentance without supernatural intervention. Therefore, any measure that could elicit a decision for Christ was legitimate. Altar calls, the practice of

praying publicly for unconverted people that were present, and the demand for instant decisions to follow Christ characterized his work.

Although Methodists, and some Baptists, had been practicing these techniques for sometime, Finney popularized them. They remain in use today. As Murray notes, “What happened there [Western New York under Finney] became a watershed in evangelical history and introduced the first major controversy on the meaning of revival between leaders who equally professed their belief in the work of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰

To his credit, Finney also motivated the social application of the gospel. Finney, Mahan, and his followers were early leaders in the movement to abolish slavery. He also took a strong stand against the Masonic order.

FINNEY’S THEOLOGY

Finney was outspokenly Pelagian. His other theological beliefs mentioned earlier further revealed his revulsion of theological training. One historian sums up Finney’s theology: “The whole idea that an unregenerate man was governed by a fallen nature was all wrong. ... A decision of the will, not a change of nature, was all that was required to be converted. ... If conversion was the result of the sinner’s decision, and if the inducing of that decision was the responsibility of the preacher ... then any measure that would bring the unconverted right up to the point of instant and absolute conversion had to be good”¹¹

These ideas were contrary to the prevailing orthodoxy that most had accepted since the *Mayflower* had landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620.

Where did Finney get these ideas? Most historians point to the influence of Nathaniel William Taylor (1786–1858), professor of theology at Yale. Finney’s views were almost identical to those found in Taylor’s “New Haven Theology” also labeled the “New Divinity.”¹² “The voice was Finney’s,” notes Murray, but

“the thinking Taylor’s.”¹³ Or, as Nathan Hatch put it, “The abstractions of New Haven theology had suddenly come to life in the coarse, bustling fanaticism of [Finney’s] New Measures.”

Ultimately, the New Haven theology, popularized by Finney, produced a split. In 1838, the Presbyterians divided into the Old School and the New School. The former represented the theological tradition that had descended from the Reformation through the Puritans. The latter embodied the new divinity of Taylor and Finney.

FINNEY’S STRENGTHS

Finney’s many strengths help explain the powerful way God used him. One of his strengths was his prayer life. He was a man of intense and prolonged prayer, a discipline pastors need. Finney thought he could produce revival through certain techniques, but his prayer life was a greater contribution. He often spent hours in prayer both before and after revival meetings.

His second strength was the liberal anointing of the Holy Spirit’s power that rested on him. When he preached, people would often fall into hushed silence. Then they would come under a deep, prolonged, piercing sense of their sin, and a great turning to Christ would result, which human means alone could not explain.

Finney’s third strength was his work ethic. When conducting a revival he labored 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. After such intense exertion, he would retreat for several weeks each summer to his in-laws’ New York farm to recover his strength.

Fourth, Finney’s evangelistic zeal was unparalleled. He loved lost people and gave himself extravagantly for their redemption.

WEAKNESSES

Finney also had weaknesses that limited his long-term usefulness to the church, and in some cases have caused great harm among the undiscerning.

The first was his lone-ranger mentality — me and the Bible only. For Finney, theology and church history were flyover territory. Because of this, he was often unteachable and uncorrectable. (We have noted his unwillingness to listen to his seniors at the New Lebanon Conference in the summer of 1827.)

For example, Finney wrote, “There is a vast ignorance in the churches on the subject of revivals. ... There are very few who have any real consistent knowledge on the subject.”¹⁴ But great revivals had been occurring in North America and England since 1790. Probably the greatest revival in history, the Great Awakening, took place under Whitefield, Edwards, and Wesley in the 1740s. Ignoring recent history, Finney assumed he was the first to really understand revival.

“Finney began his own religious quest,” notes Nathan Hatch, “by denying the force of inherited religious authority. He relied upon his own enlightened, albeit theologically untutored, reason.”¹⁵ This posture excluded him from historic confessional Christianity on many significant doctrinal issues. Some of these we have already noted.

His second weakness, which is related to the first, was the elevation of reason over revelation. Finney demanded that many biblical mysteries be pressed into rational human formulas. Finney struggled to “adjust the truths of Christianity into such a harmonious system of thought that no violence should be done to the dictates of reason,” observes Murray. “This, as he often said, was (after that of the actual conversion of souls) the great aim of his life.”¹⁶ Finney could not accept mysteries, like the congruence of the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man.

LESSONS

We can learn many lessons from Finney’s life. First, God delights to use imperfect

vessels. God perfected His power through Finney's weaknesses (2 Corinthians 13:4). This should encourage every pastor. Despite Finney's imperfections, God delighted to use him. Despite our imperfections, He will use us as well.

Second, we need to be discerning. God's supernatural power is not an endorsement of everything a man believes or does. God anointed Samson even though he slept with Philistine prostitutes. God anointed and loved Charles Finney even though he rejected original sin and substitutionary Atonement.

But the opposite is also true. A man's failings do not negate God's ability to work through him. Balaam was an idolater, but God still spoke prophetically through him. We learn from Finney not to reject the power of God on a man just because his life or doctrine is imperfect.

Third, our theological assumptions will determine our practice. Finney's New Haven theology determined his evangelistic techniques. He overemphasized the place of human decisions because he rejected original sin. His high view of man governed his evangelistic practice. In the same way, our theological assumptions determine our practice.

Fourth, be humble. Do not be a lone ranger. Read church history and learn from it. Study the theology of great Christian thinkers such as Augustine, Calvin, Luther, and Edwards. You won't be disappointed because —

History is His story. ■



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ENDNOTES

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2. Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 176.
3. Finney, 47.
4. For more information on the methods of his predecessors see William P. Farley, "Asahel Nettleton — The Forgotten Evangelist," *Enrichment* (Fall 2005).
5. See William P. Farley, "Asahel Nettleton — The Forgotten Evangelist," *Enrichment* (Fall 2005).
6. Iain Murray, *Revival and Revivalism* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1994), 243. Emphasis mine.
7. Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *Charles Finney and the Spirit of American Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 110.
8. *Ibid.*, 113.
9. Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale, 1989), 197.
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11. Murray, 245,246.
12. See William P. Farley, "Asahel Nettleton — The Forgotten Evangelist," *Enrichment* (Fall 2005).
13. Murray, 262,263.
14. Murray, 248.
15. Hatch, 199.
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ANIMAL HOUSE CONSIDERS GOD

BY RUSTY WRIGHT



How would you like this introduction for your speaking engagement?

The terrazzo floor is glazed with stale, dry beer from the weekend's wild party. As students stream into the dining room, it is obvious no self-respecting cockroach would have wanted to live in the adjoining kitchen. A few composite portraits of members hang — somewhat askew — on the paneled walls. The room buzzes as the 60 men swap stories and engage in friendly banter. Then their leader gavels them to order. Welcome to the fraternity meeting.

First up is a profanity-laced tirade by the president condemning two rival University of Miami fraternities and a UM campus administrator. Next, an officer blasts some members for lagging participation. A sharp crack of the gavel awakens a sleeping brother, who responds with an obscene gesture. The president declares he is stressed out and cannot wait to get away for spring break so he can get drunk and sleep with some chicks he does not know. A few minutes later he announces a speaker who has come to talk about brotherhood.

As you step up to speak, you might think, *So, I break my back raising support to get to do this?*

Some friends, Christian campus workers at the University of Miami, lined me up to speak at this fraternity. Ken and Robert were eager to reach the campus Greek community. Of course, fraternity and sorority members have no special standing in God's eyes. But Greeks are

leaders on many campuses, with significant potential influence for Christ. They often live together which helps facilitate small groups and discipleship. Ken was a member of this fraternity on another campus, as was I, and his relationships in the Miami chapter opened doors. We prayed that God would work through this meeting.

My opening joke bombed. My stories and illustrations about communication skills, conflict resolution, and brotherly love seemed to connect; they laughed and appeared more relaxed. The chapter advisor had told me that internal feuds were affecting his men. As I spoke, I was convinced the Holy Spirit had arranged this presentation on this topic for this audience at this moment. To catch a glimpse of what went on that evening, here is a bit of what the men heard.

BACKFIRED ROAD TRIP AND BROTHERLY LOVE QUOTIENT

I related this incident: During my freshman year in college, two other pledges and I took my fraternity big brother (an older student mentor) on a road trip. We borrowed his car (he was generous), took him to dinner, and then drove to a remote location with plans to strand him there. All went according to plan until we arrived at the remote location. Somehow, he overpowered us, grabbed the keys, and drove off, leaving *us* to find our way home. Of course, we were red-faced. Eventually, his forgiveness soothed our embarrassment.

In the same way, these men to whom I spoke could forgive when wronged, but care enough to confront when appropriate. Balancing truth and grace can be challenging.

Some questions helped them analyze their attitudes and brotherly love quotient:

1. How often do I use biting sarcasm?
2. How do I act toward members whose participation lags?
3. Do I participate in chapter activities as I should? How is my attitude?
4. How do I feel about the brother who casts a vote against my favorite rushee (prospective member)?
5. How do I relate to rushees to whom we did not extend bids to join the fraternity? Later, when I see them on campus, do I give a friendly smile and greeting? Or was all that just for rush?
6. I am in love with the beautiful blond in Chemistry 101. So is another member of my chapter ... and *they* are going out tonight. How do I feel toward that brother?

Number six may be the ultimate test of brotherly love.

How does one get the internal power to love and accept others unconditionally? I related to these men that as I struggled with this question some friends suggested I consider the spiritual dimension. I learned in coming to faith as a freshman that God can provide inner power to enhance life and relationships.

The men seemed fairly attentive and were gracious in their applause. Had the

Holy Spirit penetrated hearts? The men's written comments gave some clues:

- "On target."
- "Very good but a bit idealistic to me."
- "If I did not know any better, I would have thought that you had lived here for months. You clearly know the ins and outs of fraternity life, and you hit the nail right on the head. I especially like what you said about the situation where two brothers like the same girl [sic]; it happens more than we would like to admit. Thank you."
- "Boring."
- "Very sincere. I am not the most spiritual person. But you made sense."
- "You read my mind."
- "I would be interested in receiving your articles and more about brotherhood."

Arrogance, wrath, and lasciviousness sometime mask empty hurting hearts.

Ken continued his ministry in that house. Two years later, the chapter gathered at 11 p.m. to hear a Christian perspective on sex. When my host and I departed after midnight, several men followed us out the door with heartfelt questions. Animal house was not a church sanctuary, but God was at work.

LESSONS FOR COMMUNICATING IN SECULAR UNIVERSITIES

Consider some lessons from this story that relate to one-on-one, small-group, and public speaking situations.

Pray. Ken, Robert, other friends, and I prayed before the outreach. The warm response was God's answer. Wisdom and skill help, but ultimately it is God who works in hearts.

Meet on their turf. To present Christ to hardened nonbelievers in their own home might seem scary, but they feel more comfortable there among their friends than in a church or a neutral campus location. Use various outreach venues as appropriate, but also go where people are. Jesus and Paul went to homes, the marketplace and synagogues.

Transcend differences. In a Greek house or dormitory, you may encounter pinups, porn, drunkenness, and foul language. At one outreach meeting in my fraternity house, one member welcomed guests while tied to a cross. Other members heckled the speaker. The speaker responded with poise, engaging them in friendly dialogue about Jesus. We are seeking to rescue lost people who do not always feel lost. Pick your battles and learn to overlook the flaws of natural people so you can relate spiritual truth.

Establish personal relationships. Ken's friendships with fraternity leaders helped open doors for our meeting and for continued ministry there. That we were both members of their fraternity did not hurt. Use the opportunities you are given; but warm, personal relationships can open many doors for the gospel.

Use humor and stories. Those men could relate to the story about my backfired road trip, laughing with — and at — me. Humor can involve risk. I have studied, written about, and used humor often. I also have had hilarious stories fall flat. Learn from these situations, develop recovery techniques, but realize that circumstances and specific audiences may generate different reactions. Do not be discouraged when your best zingers or illustrations bomb. Ask others to critique your presentation, but keep telling stories to connect with today's campus culture.

Connect with their situation.

Learn your listeners' intellectual and emotional languages. This applies to any people group you seek to reach. In this case, stories about fraternity life and recognizable social situations — using terms familiar to them — helped gain and hold attention.

Connect their interests with spiritual matters.

The brotherly love quotient questions helped listeners consider their need for inner strength to love unconditionally. From that point, discussing spiritual matters, God's inner power, and my own journey to faith followed naturally. Do not simply tack the gospel onto your secular material. Show a clear connection.

Trust the Holy Spirit for long-term fruit and open doors.

After Paul presented Christ to the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill, "some laughed, but others said, 'We want to hear more about this later.' ... Some joined him and became believers" (Acts 17:32,34, NLT).¹ Similarly, in our attempts to reach secular students and professors, some will scorn, some will want to know more, and some will believe. As we are faithful to trust the Holy Spirit to open hearts and doors of opportunity, God will work. "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes" (Proverbs 21:1, NASB).² ■



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ENDNOTES

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TEN TIPS

for Balancing Your Ministry and Family:

Help for the Tug-of-War

BY GREG LEITH

I slipped into his room late one evening when I arrived home from work. He was still awake, snuggled under the covers.

“Hey Dad, it’s Wednesday,” my 12-year-old said. “Tonight was our date night, Dad. You forgot.”

Somewhere between the deadlines, donors, and to-do list, I had forgotten the most important ministry God had entrusted to me — my family. It had been weeks since my wife and I had a date together, just the two of us, without our work worlds on the agenda. I knew things needed to change and fast. Instead of focusing on work, I needed to focus on my family and let them know they were as important as my ministry.

FAMILY MATTERS

We set out to meet our ministry goals and somehow in the midst of our work we forget a young boy is waiting at home to play catch, a teen-age girl is waiting to talk about boys, and a spouse is waiting to be treated with the attention she received when you were dating.

Why does it happen? How does it happen? How can you prevent it from happening to you? Why do we feel we need to work so long and hard?

Recently I met a ministry leader for a cup of coffee. In between sips of Starbucks®, the truth about his family came out. Similar scenarios have occurred many times before with other ministry leaders. The leader I was meeting with told me where things were with his ministry. The ministry was doing well, but his family was suffering. Later, he temporarily stepped aside from his ministry to focus on his family until things turned around. I was glad he did this, but surprised that I had witnessed another incident where ministry had edged out a leader’s family.

Nobel Prize winning Harvard biologist George Wald has some thoughts: “What one really needs is not the Nobel laureates, but love. How do you think one gets to be a Nobel laureate? Wanting love, that is how. Wanting it so badly, one works all the time and ends up a Nobel laureate. It is a consolation prize. What matters is love.”

If we were sitting at a Starbucks near your house talking about your day, I would ask you a personal question. What is the prize you are striving for? Is it possible the prize has edged out your precious family or the spouse you were madly in love with during your courtship days? They need your best time, not your leftover time.

TEN TIPS

Before the Starbucks gets cold and we both need to run, it is time for a rebalancing of ministry and family. Here are 10 ideas to jump-start your thinking and help you get back on track.

1. Get your family together and craft a family mission statement. It is just as important to be intentional as a family as it is to be where you work. We wanted our family to understand why we were here on earth and what principles would govern our time together. We wanted a grid for decisionmaking and conflict to pass through. Need a head start? Here is ours:

"Our family is going through life's journey together, growing roots in Christ and wings for our mission — to become equipped to make a difference in our world by learning to live like Jesus, for Jesus, and in Jesus."

We have designed other elements of this mission statement into the shape of a house with walls of laughter, doors of prayer, and windows of other important character traits.

2. Plan time for your family each week in advance. Put it on your calendar. Stop believing you need to get one more thing done before you leave for home. Plan your week with specific ending times and stick to them.

3. Jettison things from your schedule that are not important. March to the mission Jesus called you to, not the mission others want you to do for them. Be ruthless here.

4. If your work situation requires constant excessive hours to get the job done, it is time to evaluate other ways to accomplish the task. You cannot accomplish the mission of the organization single-handedly, so stop trying. Ask the Lord to send workers into your harvest field and then watch Him go to work. Pray for supernatural results from the time you put into your day, then go home and be a minister to the other mission field God gave you — your family.

5. If you lead others, have your people write into their job descriptions the need to be committed to their family and specifically how they will do it.

6. Develop an activity with your entire family or with individual family members. For example, hiking, a date at Denny's for breakfast on Saturday, or coffee with your spouse where you pray together for your day. As you do this, remember teachable moments are almost like intentional accidents — they happen — but not always because you planned them. Be sure to plan large quantities of time throughout the year so teachable moments will have a chance to occur.

If we were sitting at a Starbucks near your house talking about your day, I would ask you a personal question. What is the prize you are striving for?

7. Create a spiritual-life development plan for each of your children by outlining their strengths, their areas needing improvement, and your plans to shape their character as they grow under your care. Our children are arrows that are being sent to a world we cannot fully see. Our job is to shape our children into arrows that will fly straight and travel the distance to the Kingdom target God intends for them.

8. Schedule an hour each week with each child and your spouse and focus only on them. Getting together with family members does not need to be expensive; time together is the critical ingredient here. When our budget has been tight, I have spent time in my backyard with my son.

9. When you are traveling, send an e-mail or a postcard to your family. Call them on the phone and pray with them in addition to chatting.

10. At the end of the day, ask your kids or spouse three questions: "What happened today that you are proud of?" "What happened today that you wish you could do over?" "Where did you see God in your day today?"

When I speak to men about fatherhood at FamilyLife marriage weekends, I ask men to use single words that describe their memories of their fathers. Many of the words used are negative words such as "absent," "domineering,"

and "detached." If your children were asked to describe your parenting, or if your spouse was reviewing your life at your funeral service, what words would they use? If you are not happy with the words they would use, it is time to make some changes in how you lead your family. If you are the man in your family, do not abdicate the work of family leadership to your wife. Leadership is not to be shouldered solely by her. Get involved.

Eugene Petersen's *The Message* says, "Exploit or abuse your family, and end up with a fistful of air" (Proverbs 11:29).¹

When my work years come to an end and the castles of my ministry stand tall and strong, I want to be holding more than air. Are you pleased with the investment you have made in building your family and your marriage? If the answer is no, why not leave this article and make a few important dates with your kids and your spouse.

"Hey, Dad. I passed," says my 15-year-old daughter." I am writing this from the Department of Motor Vehicles. I came here with my daughter to get her driving permit. Some days you cannot balance, so lately I have been working on integration — aren't laptops great? As my daughter and I celebrated her passing the test with a big hug in the lobby, I was glad I had decided the to-do list at work could wait. The memory of this morning with her will last forever. ■



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ENDNOTE

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Rich Dad, Poor Dad: Rich Theology or Poor Theology

BY RANDALL K. BARTON

(Part 2)

The personal finance book *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* by Robert T. Kiyosaki and Sharon L. Lechter became a No. 1 *New York Times* bestseller because it challenged popular notions of what leads to financial success. Part 1 examined three lessons learned from *Rich Dad*.

- The Rich Don't Work for Money — Financial security is best realized by letting people and money work for us.
- Teach Financial Literacy (Buy assets, not liabilities.) — Financial literacy is best realized by spending less than one earns and investing in assets.
- Mind Your Own Business — Financial freedom is best realized by doing something we love coupled with a sound business strategy. This creates the climate to mind our own business.

Consider the following additional lessons from *Rich Dad*.

LESSON FOUR: DEVELOP A FINANCIAL IQ

Rich Dad teaches that financial knowledge is power in today's complex society. A high financial IQ is comprised of knowledge in four financial subjects: accounting, investing, understanding markets, and legal structures. Scripture teaches in the multitude of counselors there is wisdom. Proverbs 15:22 says, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." Proverbs 10:14 says, "Wise men store up knowledge."

Financial IQ represents the synergy of many skills and talents. Within the body of Christ, the skills, talents, and expertise exist to create stewardship

opportunities in the church as believers increase their financial knowledge.

LESSON FIVE: THE RICH INVENT MONEY

Rich Dad teaches that old ideas and paradigms hinder financial success. On the other hand, the seeds of great opportunities are not seen with one's eyes, but with one's mind. When these seeds are planted, nourished, and begin to flourish, great opportunities result and money is invented.

When one's mind is trained to recognize opportunities, he suddenly finds himself on the road of financial success. On that road, sometimes people win, and sometimes they learn. (If you learn, you never lose.)

Many people do not win because they are afraid they may make mistakes and lose money. According to *Rich Dad*, failure is part of attaining financial success, and people who avoid failure avoid financial success.

The Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14–30 is a parable deep with spiritual and financial meaning. Consider the lesson it teaches on fear and finances. The wicked, lazy servant was too afraid to invest what he had, so what he had was taken away. Not only did he not gain any interest, but he also lost what he had.

The true secret to long-term financial success is not to avoid risk, but to manage risk with wisdom from a developed financial IQ and from consultation with wise advisors.

LESSON SIX: WORK TO LEARN

Rich Dad suggests it is more important to work to learn than to work to earn. In other words, find a job that offers the greatest learning opportunities, even if it pays almost nothing. Work in a variety of fields and enterprises to develop an understanding of the complex factors that comprise any successful enterprise. Proverbs 18:15 says, "The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out."

While knowledge and expertise are often requisites for obtaining a good job, most successful people in the fields of finance and business also know a little about many subjects, combining breadth with depth.

Rich Dad, Poor Dad, while written from a secular perspective, challenges us with six lessons that are consistent with the biblical principles of stewardship. *Rich Dad* concludes: "If I could leave one single idea with you, it is ... whenever you feel 'short' or in 'need' of something, give what you want first and it will come back in buckets. This is true for money, a smile, love, friendship."

That is rich theology. ■



Randall K. Barton is president and CEO of Assemblies of God Financial, Springfield, Missouri.

FAITH AT ITS FINEST TEXT: Genesis 22

MESSAGE

1. The requirement.

a. What?

- (1) To take Isaac, Abraham's only son and miracle child, and offer him as a burnt offering to God.
- (a) What does God require of us (Luke 14:26)?
- (b) Our Heavenly Father offered His only Son (John 3:16).

b. Why?

- (1) To test Abraham's love and obedience.
- (a) Not to tempt, but to test. There is a difference (James 1:13). Satan tempts; God tests (Exodus 15:25).
- (b) Faith is always tried (1 Peter 1:6,7).

2. The resolve.

- a. Walk of faith (Genesis 22:3,4). The exhibition of Abraham's faith.
 - (1) It was prompt. Abraham got up "early the next morning." When God speaks we must hasten to obey.
 - (2) It was persistent. Verse 4 says, "On the third day." He was resolved and unwavering in his

faith (Romans 4:20,21).

b. Witness of faith (Genesis 22:5,8).

The expectation of Abraham's faith.

- (1) Abraham said to his servants, "We will come back to you." This was a confident confession (Hebrews 10:2,3). Little did the servants know what a declaration of faith Abraham had made.

- (2) Abraham said to Isaac, "God himself will provide." Faith must rest on God alone (Hebrews 11:1).

c. Work of faith (Genesis 22:9,10).

The execution of Abraham's faith.

- (1) The proof of Abraham's faith was seen by his works (James 2:14–20). Faith was validated by Abraham's works and not by his witness (words) alone.
- (2) The power of faith lies in obedience to God. Abraham was willing to obey God at any cost. He was steadfast to the end.

3. The reward.

- a. Welcomed provision (Genesis 22:11,14).

- (1) A stay of execution was given.

Isaac was spared. Only the intervention of God prevented Abraham from completing this extraordinary act of faith. The sacrifice was commanded, but not demanded.

- (2) A substitute was given. A ram was caught in a thicket. God provided — Jehovah-jireh. The same place where God provided the ram, He also provided His Lamb, our substitute on Calvary.

b. Wonderful promises

(Genesis 22:15–18).

- (1) "I will surely bless you" (verse 17).
- (2) "I will ... make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore" (verse 17).
- (3) "Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies" (verse 17).
- (4) "Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed" (verse 18).

—Nelson Brenner

Pocomoke City, Maryland

GOD IS GREATER TEXT: 1 John 3:11–24

INTRODUCTION

If Christians could grasp the full reality of the greatness of God in relation to our own needs, there would be no limit to what God could do through faith in our lives.

MESSAGE

1. "This is how we know what love is" (1 John 3:16).

- a. "Jesus Christ laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16).
- b. "That we should be called children of God" (1 John 3:1).

2. "Whenever our hearts condemn us" (1 John 3:20).

- a. The heart of the matter — guilt complexes.

b. "Who is he that condemns" (Romans 8:34)?

- (1) Not God.
- (2) Satan.

c. What condemns us?

- (1) Our hatred for our brother (1 John 3:15).
- (2) Our closed heart to the needs of others (1 John 3:17).
- (3) Our unreadiness to give ourselves for others (1 John 3:16).

3. "God is greater" (1 John 3:20).

- a. Greater than our heart

- (1 John 3:20).

b. Greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4).

c. Greater than the witness of men (1 John 5:9).

4. "Anything we ask" (1 John 3:22).

- a. Because we keep His commandments.
- b. Because we do those things that please Him.

CONCLUSION

Love God and He makes things happen.

—Warren McPherson
Springfield, Missouri

THE SECOND CHRISTMAS

INTRODUCTION

Christmas should be celebrated twice a year, once as a general observance and once as a private remembrance; once for the Savior's physical birth and once for the individual's spiritual birth; once for the Incarnation and once for our transformation.

"Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born,
Unless He be reborn in thee
Thy soul is still forlorn."

MESSAGE

1. What happened on Christ's physical birthday?

- God invaded earth (Matthew 1:23).
- He made a beachhead at Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
- The event climaxed history (Galatians 4:4).
- The birth was miraculous (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22,23).
- The Incarnation was, and continues to be, a mystery (1 Timothy 3:16).
- His life on earth was unique (John 1:14).

2. What happened on your spiritual birthday?

- You were changed (Matthew 18:3).
- You were born again (John 1:13; 3:7).
- Christ began to be formed in you (Galatians 4:19).
- The transformation is a mystery (Colossians 1:27).
- You were born not of human seed, but of the divine Word (1 Peter 1:23).
- His indwelling is continuous (Ephesians 3:15).

3. What similarities are in the two events?

- Both were accomplished by divine power (Luke 1:35; Titus 3:5).
 - Outside the pale of human design.
 - Impossible for man, but easy for God.
- Both were celebrated as epochal events (Luke 2:9–14; 15:10).
 - Each was startling and spectacular.
 - Each calls for a bold announcement.

- Both awakened antagonism (Matthew 2:13; John 17:14).
 - Herod schemed to destroy the baby Jesus.
 - The depraved nature of man reacts as Herod did.
- Both called for submissive human wills (Luke 1:38; Revelation 22:17).
 - Mary submitted to God's plan and was willing to bear stigma, reproach, and misunderstanding.
 - His invitation can be ignored if we choose.
- Both brought dramatic changes (1 John 2:8; 2 Corinthians 5:17).
 - The world has never been the same since Jesus came.
 - New birth produces changes always for the better.

CONCLUSION

Let us individualize the well-loved carol, and pray:

"O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend on me, I pray;
Cast out my sin and enter in,
Be born in me today."

—Don Mallough

FOLLOWING JESUS FOUR WAYS

INTRODUCTION:

When people gather for church, they usually represent at least four levels of faith and Christian commitment. These four levels can be seen in the life of Peter.

MESSAGE:

1. Level one: those who are curious.

Peter came to meet Jesus because he was curious. His brother Andrew was excited about finding the long-awaited Messiah, and Peter wanted to see for himself (John 1:35–42). Application: Our witness should attract seekers.

2. Level two: those who are convinced.

Many fair-weather admirers were unwilling to follow Jesus past the miracles. Peter seemed to be saying, "Lord, I am not staying with you because others are doing it; I am following you because it is the right way" (John 6:66–69). God revealed this truth to Peter (Matthew 16:13–17).

Application: God must do the convincing (John 16:7,8).

3. Level three: those who are crucified.

Jesus meant submitting to the lordship of Christ. There are no shortcuts to success in the Christian life. Before Paul experienced the power

of the Resurrection, he learned to be conformed to Christ's death (Philippians 3:7–10).

4. Level four: those who are clothed with the Holy Spirit.

To be endued is to be clothed. Peter was among those who were filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. It was the beginning of a life of fruitful service through the power of the Spirit (Luke 24:49).

CONCLUSION:

Which level are you at today?

—Samuel Bush
Jasonville, Indiana

THE BREATH OF GOD TEXT: Acts 17:22–25

MESSAGE

1. God's breath gives life

(Acts 17:25).

- He gives life — real and genuine, active and vigorous, and devoted to God.
- He gives breath — the breath of life (Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4).
- And all things — whatsoever, any, as much wanted, the whole.

2. Jesus breathed on the disciples

(John 20:21,22).

- Not a filling, but an impartation of His Spirit for salvation. (The Day of Pentecost had not yet come.)
- He breathed on them — to blow or breathe upon (John 20:22). The word *emphusao* (breathed) was also used by the translators of the Septuagint in Genesis 2:7, where God breathed into Adam and Adam became a living soul. The original creation was completed by an act of God. The new creation was completed by Jesus, who

baptized the 120 in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).

The word *lambano* (receive ye) means to receive what is offered or to take upon oneself.

3. Why do we need the breath of God (Ezekiel 37:9–14)?

- His breath will give life to our dried bones.
- His breath will raise up an exceeding great army.
- His breath will put His Spirit in us.

4. The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:2).

- The day God breathed on the 120.
- What is the purpose of Pentecost? It is not:
 - an achievement to boast about.
 - a trophy to put on public display.
 - a toy to play with.
 - a treasure to be selfishly hoarded.
 - a stepping stone to an official position.
 - a cure-all for spiritual ills.

(g) a guarantee against lukewarmness or a departure from faith.

(h) a climax of spiritual experience.

(i) the ultimate goal of a Christian.

We should never say we have the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit should have us.

5. The baptism in the Holy Spirit.

- Enduement with power from on high (Luke 24:49).
- Divine enablement to witness (Acts 1:8). No longer are we spectators or bystanders, but we are participants.
- The Baptism opens the receiver to the availability of the full range of spiritual gifts.

CONCLUSION

One passes from the ordinary to the extraordinary, from the usual to the unusual, and from the natural to the supernatural through the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

—Buddy Barnett
Mathis, Texas

THE CURRICULUM OF COMFORT

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 1:3–11

INTRODUCTION

The Lord Jesus Christ serves as dean for the school of Christianity.

- The possession of Christ (2 Corinthians 1:3), “our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- The person of Christ (2 Corinthians 1:3), “our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- The purpose of Christ (2 Corinthians 1:3), “our Lord Jesus Christ.”

MESSAGE

1. The philosophy of comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3–7).

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father

of compassion and the God of all comfort.” (*Paraklesis* is used 7 times and *parakaleo* is used 7 times in verses 3–7.)

The objectives of this course are to:

- empathize with human sorrow (2 Corinthians 1:4).
- experience divine sympathy (2 Corinthians 1:5).
- endure through common suffering (2 Corinthians 1:6).

2. The geography of comfort (2 Corinthians 1:8–11).

“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia.”

The prerequisites of this course are:

- an understanding of the human

limitations (2 Corinthians 1:8).

b. a confidence in the divine Leader (2 Corinthians 1:9).

c. a familiarity with the actual liability (2 Corinthians 1:10).

CONCLUSION

We need to make every effort to successfully pass the courses in comfort during our time in the school of Christianity.

- The hidden resource for our studies (2 Corinthians 1:11).
- The multiplied results of our studies (2 Corinthians 1:11).
- The real reason for our success (2 Corinthians 1:11).

—Steve D. Eutsler
Springfield, Missouri

THE DEITY OF JESUS

TEXT: Matthew 16:13–17

INTRODUCTION

Someone said, “Jesus’ birthday is kept around the world. The day of His death sets a gallows against every skyline.” Who is He? The Scriptures leave no doubt about it — He is God.

MESSAGE

His deity is attested by:

1. His virgin birth.

- Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled in Him (Isaiah 7:14).
- God’s reassurance to Joseph witnessed to the Virgin Birth (Matthew 1:20).
- In answering Mary’s questions, the angel bore witness to the miracle of the Virgin Birth (Luke 1:35).

2. His holy life.

- Testimony from both Testaments (Isaiah 53:9; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22).
- He took our sin, but did not know sin by practice (2 Corinthians 5:21).

3. His miracles.

- Peter’s testimony at Pentecost (Acts 2:22).
- Nicodemus’ testimony (John 3:2).
- Peter’s witness to the Gentiles in Cornelius’ house (Acts 10:38).
- Miracles and signs still speak of Jesus’ deity.

4. His atoning death.

- He died to bring us life (Hebrews 2:9; 1 Peter 3:18).
- Only one who is God could die in our place because only one who is

God is sinless.

5. His resurrection and ascension.

- The testimony of the angel at the empty tomb (Matthew 28:6).
- Paul testified that His resurrection was followed by His exaltation (Ephesians 1:20).
- Following His ascension, angels testified that He had gone back to heaven and would return to earth in the same manner (Acts 1:11).

CONCLUSION

Jesus’ credentials are in His birth, life, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension. He is what He says He is — God Almighty.

—David J. Torgerson
Pleasant Hope, Missouri

THANKSGIVING

Psalm 100

INTRODUCTION

Every fourth Thursday of November we celebrate a national holiday called Thanksgiving. Every day, however, should be a day of thanksgiving for the child of God. Psalm 100 is a great thanksgiving Psalm.

MESSAGE

1. The praise and thanksgiving (Psalm 100:1).

- Thanksgiving and praise need to be normal for God’s people.
- Paul said we should give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
- All people need to give thanks, “all the earth.”
- We should “forget not all His benefits” (Psalm 103:2).

2. The practice of thanksgiving (Psalm 100:2).

- There is enjoyment in serving God and being in His presence (Psalm 16:11). It is impossible to praise and complain.

- Paul and Silas sang praise to God at midnight (Acts 16:25).
- Paul wrote of singing and praising God (Ephesians 5:19,20). Singing is one method of praising and worshiping God.

3. The people and thanksgiving (Psalm 100:3).

- We must recognize God.
- We must have faith in Him (Hebrews 11:6).
- We must have faith that He is God, and that He made us.
- We must know that He created us in His image (Genesis 1:26).
- We may communicate with Him because we have a soul.
- We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. We are His children (John 1:12; 1 John 3:2).

4. The pattern of thanksgiving (Psalm 100:4).

- Note the praise in Psalm 103:1,2.
- Thank Him in song, praise, and worship.
- Thank Him by living for Him.

- Enter His presence with praise.
- All earth and heaven should praise Him (Psalm 69:34).
- We should bless His name.
 - His name is above all names (Philippians 2:9–11).
 - Through His name only is there salvation (Acts 4:12; Romans 10:13; John 14:6).

5. The person in thanksgiving (Psalm 100:5).

- God is good (Romans 8:28).
- His mercies keep us from destruction (Lamentations 3:22).

CONCLUSION

Thanksgiving needs to be a vital part of our life. Thanking God for our blessings extends them. Failing to thank God for our blessings may end them. Count your blessings and you will have reason to be thankful to God every day.

—Croft M. Pentz
Union, New Jersey

BREAKOUT CHURCHES

Thom S. Rainer

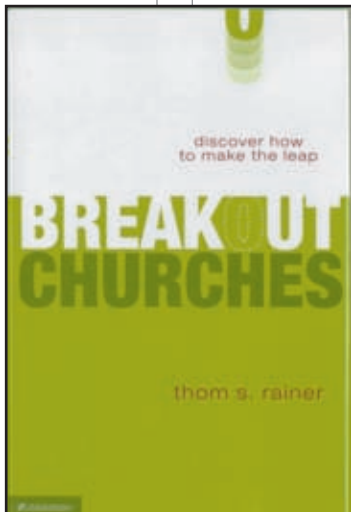
(Zondervan, 272 pp., hardcover)

The church in America is not growing. From 1990 to 2000, the U.S. population grew from 248 million to 281 million, a 13 percent increase. During the same time, however, worship attendance grew by less than 1 percent. The facts reveal that the church is not even keeping up with population growth. Rainer faces this depressing reality head-on in his latest book, *Breakout Churches*.

Inspired by Jim Collins' business classic, *Good to Great*, Rainer researched more than 50,000 churches. He then developed a five-stage process to identify potential breakout churches. Only 13 churches met the criteria. Their stories and their similarities make this book valuable to church leaders.

While the author does not provide any neat, effective formula that will guarantee church health and church growth, he does provide an intimate, comprehensive study of these 13 churches. It documents their transition from mediocrity to excellence. A full chapter covers the six steps to becoming a breakout church.

- Acts 6/7 Legacy Leadership.
- The ABC Moment (Awareness, Belief, Crisis).
- The Who/What Simultrack (what the church is and what God



desires it to be).

- The VIP Factor (Vision Intersection Profile).
- Culture of Excellence (creating an environment of excellence).
- Innovation Accelerators (viewing innovation as accelerators, not solutions to the church's needs).

Rainer and the church leadership provide a refreshingly candid overview of their breakout journey.

The final chapter and personal postscript provide insight that, if applied, can move a church from mediocrity to greatness. A great read.

—Reviewed by Wes Bartel, director, national Sunday School Department, Springfield, Missouri.

BUILDING LEADERS: BLUEPRINTS FOR DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP AT EVERY LEVEL OF YOUR CHURCH

Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini

(Baker Books, 336 pp., paperback)

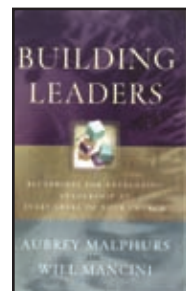
If you want a practical guide your church can use to develop a leadership culture, this is the book for you. Here are biblical patterns of effective leadership, strategies of dynamic leadership modeling, and methodologies to transform any church into a leadership-producing enterprise.

Conversely, if you are unwilling to admit your attitude of neutrality toward the challenge of raising up new leaders and if you are content with the

status quo, reading this book will be a waste of your time. Who wants to work his way through several hundred pages of leadership development theory when his heart has no passion for the matter?

Across the continuum of response, you will find your place. If you are stuck in neutral, maybe you should give the book a chance. Your heart might be set aflame with a deep urge to shape future leaders. If you are committed to producing dynamic leaders or if you are already a leader producer with measured success, you will find the practical patterns, programs, and strategies will catapult you to a new level of effectiveness as a mentor and model of powerful leadership.

The message is wonderfully relentless. Page after page drives home the unavoidable truth that the church must cultivate effective leadership. But it goes further. It lays out how the challenge might be expressed. The book concludes with the stories of a small church and a



large church. The patterns and methods both used to cultivate a culture of leadership development whereby Spirit-called and empowered followers of Christ were transformed into dynamic leaders are described.

Pastor, it boils down to this: Do what Jesus did. He trained leaders, and so must you.

—Reviewed by Richard Dresselhaus, D.Min., former senior pastor, First Assembly of God, San Diego, California, and executive presbyter.

DOING CHURCH AS A TEAM

Wayne Cordeiro

(Regal, 240 pp., hardcover)

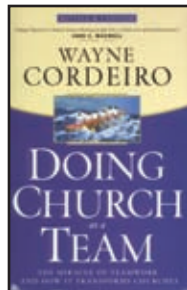
The author's credentials alone make

this book worth reading. Bill Hybels calls Wayne Cordeiro “one of the best team-building leaders I’ve ever known.” Cordeiro is senior pastor of New Hope Christian Fellowship in Oahu, Hawaii. Since planting the church in 1995, its attendance has grown to 10,500, and it has mothered 22 church plants. An estimated 26,000 people made first-time commitments to Christ during these first years.

Cordeiro’s central thesis is that “the influence a church has on its community will be determined in large part not by the personality of the pastor, the size of its building, or how long the ministry has worked in the community. It will be determined instead by the percentage of involvement in the ministry of each member.” Furthermore, “doing church as a team isn’t one person doing a hundred things. It’s a hundred people doing one thing each — each doing what they do best.” As he repeatedly asserts, “*everybody is a 10 — somewhere.*”

The first half of the book is written primarily to laypeople, including a practical chapter on discovering one’s own ministry gifting. In the more leadership-oriented second half of the book, the chapter on fractal teams was most fascinating. Fractal teams are based on the small-group concept of a leader and four team members for every area of a growing church’s ministry. Fractal teams are both task-oriented and nurturing. Cordeiro also illustrates their ability to replicate as a church grows numerically.

His discussions on vision, values, and church culture are insightful and challenging as well. At the end of each chapter application study questions provide a step-by-step process for



integrating team-building principles into the reader’s local situation.

—Reviewed by James Bradford, Ph.D., senior pastor, Central Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri.

MARRIAGE MINISTRY: A GUIDEBOOK

Bo Prosser, Charles Qualls
(Smyth & Helwys, 144 pp., paperback)

Marriage Ministry is a practical guidebook written specifically for ministers and church counselors who work with couples. The book’s premise is healthy marriages do not just happen. When couples are struggling, renewed commitment and hope are often not enough to restore relational health. Successful, missional marriages require intentional effort.

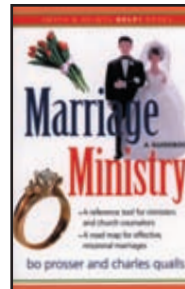
The role of the pastor and church in a couple’s life, through sermons from the pulpit or through personal counsel, can be invaluable. Because resources written

specifically for pastors dealing with marriages are hard to find, the authors compiled this book to help ministers become more intentional in their marriage ministry.

Prosser and Qualls do an excellent job addressing marital issues with which pastors may struggle. They recommend counseling tests, worksheets, and questionnaires that can spur thoughtful communication. They also include ideas on how to conduct marriage ceremonies.

The authors address topics such as: premarital issues, communication, money management, conflict, parenting, sexual intimacy, infidelity, grief, and midlife struggles.

The book offers thought-provoking questions and suggestions to help



pastors become more missional in their marriage ministry. *Marriage Ministry* is a valuable resource for counseling, seminars, and sermon preparation.

—Reviewed by Tricia Cunningham, LPC, Springfield, Missouri, a marriage intensive therapist with the Smalley Marriage Institute, Branson, Missouri.

BECOMING A HEALTHY DISCIPLE: TEN TRAITS OF A VITAL CHRISTIAN

Stephen A. Macchia
(Baker Books, 256 pp., paperback)

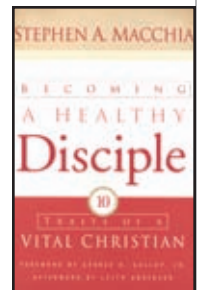
While most believers recognize the value in living a healthy, balanced Christian life, many struggle to attain the discipline

needed to do so. In *Becoming a Healthy Disciple*, Macchia discusses 10 traits required for a vital Christian life and presents the keys to desiring and maintaining this lifestyle.

Macchia does an excellent job of providing tools for personal character building and family life, as well as for building relationships inside and outside church. Christians are encouraged to consider their reason for being and to examine why God has blessed them with the gifts and skills they possess. Macchia emphasizes the stewardship responsibilities that accompany the privilege of living in a land of abundance.

This book is a valuable resource for sharpening one’s personal disciplines. Pastors and church leadership will find it an excellent tool for teaching and fostering Christian maturity.

—Reviewed by Clarence St. John, superintendent, Minnesota District of the Assemblies of God, Minneapolis, Minnesota.



UNFINISHED BUSINESS: RETURNING THE MINISTRY TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

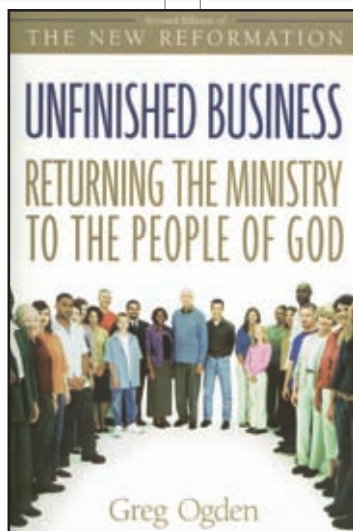
Greg Ogden

(Zondervan, 282 pp., paperback)

Unfinished Business is a new and revised edition of *The New Reformation* (1990). Ogden's original title compares the first Reformation of the early 1500s, which placed the Bible in the hands of the people, with a second reformation that will place ministry in the hands of the people. Changes in today's world have confirmed that such a reformation is breaking upon us.

Ogden traces the transformation of ministry through eight renewal movements that have changed our understanding of Christian life, ministry, and the character of the church (the Charismatic, Small Groups, Worship Renewal, Spiritual Gifts, Seeker Church, and New Paradigm movements).

With 24 years of experience in pastoral ministry and as director of Fuller Seminary's doctor of ministry program, Ogden writes with clarity and passion. Blending biblical exegesis, theology of ministry, and practical insights into the contemporary church, Ogden makes a compelling case to join the revolution. He lays the foundation needed to help pastors shift ministry from passive to active, from maintenance to mission, from clergy to laypeople, and to see his role not just as a teacher/caregiver,



but as an equipping enabler. What better way to recruit and retain volunteers for the work of the Lord.

—Reviewed by Deborah M. Gill, Ph.D., national director of the Division of Christian Education and commissioner on discipleship for the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri.

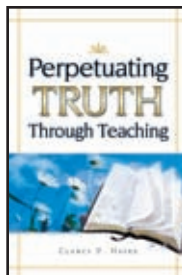
PERPETUATING TRUTH

Clancy Hayes

(Gospel Publishing House, 162 pp., paperback)

Clancy Hayes speaks to the teacher's heart in his book *Perpetuating the Truth Through Teaching* (student book). Hayes trumpets the value of teachers by showing their indispensable role in God's plan.

In eight easy-to-read chapters the reader discovers spiritual principles, practical applications, and proven examples for sharing the faith. Hayes begins each chapter with a dramatization from the life of a Bible hero and gives specific insights into the mind-set and methods that made this hero effective in God's purpose. Next, he extracts lessons for believers and reports on people and churches that are putting them into practice.



Each chapter closes with a section for reflection. It calls the reader to personalize the truths with questions such as: "What steps can you take to become more student centered in your approach to teaching?" "What prevents you from living a reckless life in obedience to God?" And, "In what ways can you become a resource to those who are facing trouble?"

Hayes explores the experiences of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Deborah, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul to challenge the reader to faithfulness, authenticity, compassion, leadership, involvement, conviction, relationships, and instruction. The author exudes passion and conviction for perpetuating the truth through teaching.

Hayes urges teachers and tells them how to be part of the community, to present a clear message in the midst of the culture, to be honest about the cost of discipleship, to coach people, and to leave ministry results with God.

I recommend every teacher experience the personal and ministry enrichment this book offers. As a district Christian education director, I plan to make it a key element in our training events.

The book is included in the *Perpetuating Truth Leaders Kit* (02TW0516). The *Leaders Kit* includes a leaders guide, a student book, and a CD. *Perpetuating the Truth Through Teaching* (02TW0517, student book) is available in Spanish (02TW0518).

—Reviewed by Mel Surface, Christian education and men's ministries director, North Texas District of the Assemblies of God, Hurst, Texas.

PUT ON YOUR OWN OXYGEN MASK FIRST

Bill Easum

(Abingdon Press, 176 pp., paperback)

Have you wondered why your church is not growing? You have attended church growth seminars and read church growth books and still nothing works. Perhaps

you have wondered if you should stay in pastoral ministry. If you have asked these questions, consider exploring *Put On Your Own Oxygen Mask First*.

Easum's basic assumption is that many pastors expend their energy doing nonessentials. He feels pastors must be renewed and refreshed before they can succeed as leaders. Easum argues that pastors are to equip, not serve, church members. Until pastors grasp this concept and practice it, they will continue to feel stressed, abused, and burned out.

Easum believes four convergence factors contribute to authentic and effective leadership. These factors are: call, leadership style, context, and skill set. Easum dedicates a chapter to each factor helping readers determine their fitness for their present ministry situation.

A unique element is the author's assertion that pastors who are not truly called to full-time ministry should consider finding a new career rather than continue to hurt themselves, their families, and the church. He provides a list of alternative career and ministry options for those who feel limited by ministerial education and experience. An appendix demonstrates how to write a resume that highlights skills performed in the pastorate in a manner that makes them desirable to employers in many fields.

—Reviewed by Clancy P. Hayes, training coordinator, national Sunday School Department, Springfield, Missouri.



THE SPIRIT AND SUFFERING IN LUKE-ACTS

Martin W. Mittelstadt
(T. and T. Clark International, 161 pp., paperback)

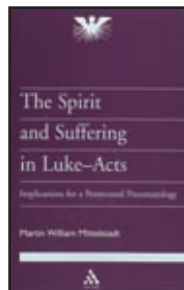
This volume is a fresh contribution to Pentecostal scholarship. Mittelstadt,

an Assemblies of God minister, is a faculty member of the Bible Department at Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri.

Mittelstadt contends that Pentecostal scholars in their zeal to defend basic Pentecostal themes, such as Spirit baptism as distinct from conversion, have not explored adequately the biblical context of suffering and persecution — in the life of Jesus, in His disciples, and in the Early Church — in which the empowerment of the Spirit is described. Throughout the book, Mittelstadt refers to four Pentecostal scholars that he cites to support his claims: Roger Stronstad, James Shelton, Howard Ervin, and Robert Menzies. He appreciates the contributions these scholars have made to the biblical defense of the Pentecostal message, but he points out where they could have strengthened their presentations had they included the promises of suffering and persecution that surround the various Spirit-empowerment stories in Luke and Acts.

The importance of the themes of suffering and persecution for Pentecostals in the Western world is, according to the author, to challenge a tendency to complacency and a sense that we are entitled to enjoy happiness — without much regard to the possibility of resistance and conflict. For Pentecostals in the second and third worlds, Mittelstadt sees in the connection between the empowering of the Holy Spirit and suffering a strong promise of victory in the midst of difficulty.

The author has worked through key biblical passages with copious references to the significant scholarly materials available. This documentation is useful for scholars. The book, however,



is not written for scholars alone. It carries a strong message for pastors and laypeople in the contemporary church. This book makes a useful contribution to the Pentecostal movement.

—Reviewed by William W. Menzies, Ph.D., longtime Assemblies of God educator, Springfield, Missouri.

WHAT'S YOUR PASSION? PROVEN TIPS FOR WITNESSING TO ANYONE, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

Ken Gaub
(New Leaf Press, 144 pp., paperback)

I recommend this book to the people of our church. It is a practical tool for witnessing. Gaub is a wonderful evangelist. I have watched him work when picking him up at the airport, sitting with him in a restaurant, or talking to people in a hotel lobby. Gaub is a soul winner who writes from his passion to witness.

Gaub's tips involve understanding one's own personality and the other person's personality when witnessing. He gives the dos and don'ts.

One chapter deals with helping our spouse and children know Christ and is written with faith and the hope that they will come to know Him. He talks about winning shy people, strangers, relatives, religious people, and people who think they know everything. Gaub helps the reader understand how to know if people are ready to make a decision for Christ and how to plant seeds that will eventually lead to a decision.

What's Your Passion? will make witnessing easier for anyone who is trying to reach others for Christ.
—Reviewed by Wayde Goodall, senior pastor, First Assembly of God, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.



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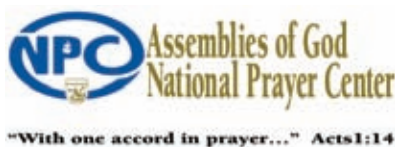
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Global University personnel monitoring the site have reported positive feedback from believers in other nations who are grateful to have this resource available to them. A large number of decisions for Christ have also come in via the site.

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"Our Super Bowl outreach edition is a powerful evangelism tool that our churches are able to use to reach people for Christ," says *Evangel* Associate Editor Kirk Noonan, who coordinates the edition. "This year's issue, like those in the past, will have many in-depth profiles of pro football players who've learned there is more to life than fame and fortune.

"Each year we are amazed at the people who've sent in salvation reports to share of their newfound faith in Jesus Christ — influenced by the testimonies they've read in the Super Bowl Outreach Edition. We don't try to glorify the players in the issue, but instead show how the Lord has sustained those athletes and used them for His purpose."

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Called to Serve: Mobilizing and Training Volunteers

BY DEBORAH M. GILL

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION

When Jesus gathered the twelve disciples, He made a strategic decision to build His kingdom as a volunteer-intensive organization. He could have built His ministry on other options, such as a solo act or a wholly professional staff, but He chose to use volunteers.

The same is true with the Early Church (Acts 2:42–47). From its inception, the Church was a volunteer-intensive organization. Few people would derive their income from the church. Paul instructs pastors to mobilize everyone in the church — to equip them, to train them, to impart a vision to them, and to lead them — into a lifetime of voluntary service to Christ (Ephesians 4:11,12). Paul was a volunteer pastor. He supported himself as a tentmaker so he would not be a drain on the church. Lay leadership is God's idea.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

God's vision for the Church is for every member be a minister. The Bible (Old and New Testament) uses distinct vocabulary for the people of God. There are generic Hebrew and Greek words that refer to people in general, but Scripture uses specific terms for God's people. In the New Testament, the word is *laos*, from which our English word *laity* is derived.

The term *laos* has no sense of second-class status, nor is laity inferior to clergy. Instead, *laos* has a lofty connotation. Distinct from other people, the

laos are redeemed for a higher purpose — to represent God in the world. That is what it means to be the people of God. The laity are ministers of God in this world.

In what ministries can laity serve? In the Old Testament, priest and prophet were not positions to which others could aspire. They were exclusive. They were also rare — few people served in either role. But such is not the case in the New Testament church. First Peter 2:4,5,9,10 (and Revelation 1:5,6) explain all God's people are His priests. Acts 2:17,18 explains in the last days the Holy Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, qualifying all Christians to be His prophets.

The unique ministry of the priest — intermediary between God and humanity, representative in the realm of the sacred — is a ministry for *all* God's people today. All believers have direct access to God; they are priests in their own right. The church is a new nation of priests mediating the light of Jesus Christ to this dark world. The unique ministry of prophet — to hear from God and speak for God — is open to all. There is no gender barrier (sons and daughters will prophesy). There is no generation barrier (young and old will see visions and dreams). There is no socioeconomic barrier (even servants and handmaidens qualify for this gift). The Day of Pentecost changed everything. Instead of exclusive roles, prophetic and priestly ministries are the domain of all the laity — a chosen people, a holy nation, the people of God.

Even the title *minister* does not connote any superiority in the biblical sense. Ministry equals service. Service equals ministry. They are the same word in New Testament Greek (*diakonia*).

PENTECOSTAL APPLICATION

If any church should value lay leadership and excel in volunteer ministries, it should be the Pentecostal church. We understand that the Holy Spirit gifts all members of Christ's body for charismatic ministry (1 Corinthians 12:12–30). We can appreciate that spiritual gifts come in various motivations (Romans 12:3–6) so each member finds great joy in making his unique contributions to ministry. And pastors must function in their biblical role as leaders in the church: to equip God's people for ministry.

By understanding the biblical paradigm, by valuing the vital role of the laity, and by helping laity discover, develop, and deploy their gifts, pastors can experience the joy of releasing volunteers in ministry. By equipping and empowering laity to do the work of the Lord, pastors multiply their effectiveness and share the most exciting action in the universe — being a coworker with God. ■

Deborah M. Gill, Ph.D., is national director of Christian Education and commissioner on discipleship for the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri.