

SHARE MANUAL

Sustaining Health And Relational Excellence



For Pastors and
Congregational Leaders

Church of God Ministries
Anderson, Indiana

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INTRODUCTION: THE SHAPE/SHARE JOURNEY

In 2003, the Church of God began a journey that has transformed the way we think about ourselves as leaders, the way we think about the church, the way we think about ministry, and the way we think about each other as those who “have been given to be” (Eph 4:11) leaders bound together by the ministry of the Holy Spirit among us. SHAPE—Sustaining Health And Pastoral Excellence—has impacted the lives of pastors across North America in significant ways and continues to expand its influence among our pastors. In order to understand SHARE—Sustaining Health And Relational Excellence—we must give recognition to the vital ministry of SHAPE and those who have helped give this journey direction and substance.

This SHAPE journey, since its inception, has been a long and continuing conversation about discipleship, giftedness, and leadership. And SHAPE continues to be a work in progress simply because SHAPE has proven to be a discovery process. God is the author of SHAPE. There is no question about that in the hearts and minds of those who worked to understand and implement it. Like an archeological dig, we have been delving ever deeper into fertile ground. Layer upon layer has revealed to us that what we are doing is deeper and richer than anything we ever thought possible.

**We give glory to the God who started and sustains SHAPE
and who provides the vision for share.**

Persons of significance in the early development of the SHAPE experience include Lewis Alexander, Ann Brandon, Ryan Chapman, Paul Dreger, Tom Dumbacher, Al Ells, David Ferguson, Jeannette Flynn, Elton Hume, Julie Nance, Thom Pratt, Tony Wheeler, Greg Wiens, and Arthur Kelly, compiler and editor of the *SHAPE Formation Manual*.

SHAPE has also been greatly affected by a distinctive, creative relationship between Intimate Life Ministries and Church of God Ministries. We wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for the many contributions to the development of SHAPE. But even more we are indebted to our friends, especially David and Teresa Ferguson, Lewis Alexander, and Joseph Loehr, at Intimate Life Ministries, for their willingness to share not only the gospel but their very lives, guiding us on a journey of deepening, evolving life as disciples of Jesus Christ.

The ministry of SHAPE is also the result of contributions of regional pastors from those states who have joined the SHAPE journey. We would be remiss if we did not express our gratitude to those leaders and states: Florida, Indiana, Oregon, Washington, Oklahoma, Kansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, central and northern California, the Eastern states, Southern California, Colorado, Michigan, Louisiana, Alabama, Missouri, western Canada and eastern Canada.

In the early years of the SHAPE journey, it became evident to pastor participants and coaches that addressing issues of health and personal/professional growth and development through the sharing of SHAPE principles and practices with congregational leaders and constituents would undoubtedly strengthen the life of a local congregation. Out of this concern and conversations with regional directors, coaches, and participants, the ministry of SHARE has been developed. SHARE is designed to provide a theological foundation, as well as ongoing resourcing, for pastors and congregational leaders as they develop an effective, efficient, God-honoring, mission-fulfilling ministry in their world. Our prayer is that congregational leaders, in close working

harmony with pastors, can enjoy the life-changing experience of journeying together into the fullness of health and ministry and that the congregations they serve can function as agencies of personal and community transformation.

SUSTAINING HEALTH AND RELATIONAL EXCELLENCE

During the early days of SHAPE, it became evident that to address issues of pastoral health at the exclusion of addressing issues of congregational health would ultimately lead to a failure to transform the life and ministry of the Church of God. The disparity between health and unhealth at that level of relationship would certainly prove to be a hindrance to the goals of SHAPE. The task then became to adapt the principles and practices of SHAPE for the lay leaders of local congregations and to provide within the SHARE curriculum resources that enable a congregational leadership team to address issues that can lead to greater effectiveness in ministry and mission fulfillment.

As developed, SHARE is divided into two distinct experiences:

1. The Theology and Practices of SHARE. This initial phase will introduce congregational leaders to the same relational theology and practices of the SHAPE journey with a few minor adjustments. This manual has added content that will more fully describe the intent of a relational theology for the life of the church. This new focus can be summarized in the following areas:

- The development of an intentionally focused community growing and maturing into the fullness of Christ.
- The development of a discipling environment.
- The experience of a common set of experiences, practices, and resources that help establish parameters for a healthy, effective leadership team.
- The development of a personal/corporate plan of growth and development. Healthy leaders and missionally effective congregations intentionally plan to be healthy.

2. An Intentional, Specific Health Plan for the Congregation. Beyond the common experiences of SHAPE/SHARE that lead to a healthy community, there are specific needs to be addressed in the life of every congregation. The intent of SHARE is to provide every pastor/leadership team with exercises, information, and resources that enable each team to develop a training/growth program that best fits their needs at any given time.



SHARE ORIENTATION GUIDE

WELCOME TO THE SHARE JOURNEY!

Sustaining Health And Relational Excellence—SHARE—has grown out of the hearts of pastors across North America and the National Leadership Team of SHAPE—Sustaining Health And Pastoral Excellence—as a means of sharing the rich and wonderful blessing that this latter ministry has brought to hundreds of pastors. The stories of changed lives and transformed ministries have been rich and powerful as pastors have testified to how their journey together in life has generated support and encouragement in service, healed relationships, brought new insight into ministry, and renewed the joy of kingdom mission fulfillment.

More than an institution, more than an organization, the church is the *body of Christ*. We are the life of Jesus Christ being lived out by the power of God's Holy Spirit in our world, however that world is defined. We are a people identified by our relationship to Jesus Christ, united in faith and in knowledge of the Son of God (Eph 4), and motivated by a common purpose of helping as many others as possible to experience the eternal joy of finding their life's identity and purpose fulfilled through a personal relationship of faith with Jesus.

As the body of Christ, the heart and soul of our life is the relationships we have with God and with one another. Most often in the life of the local congregation, it is not broken methodologies but broken relationships that cause the most distress. What we bring to the life of the local congregation spiritually and relationally as leaders has as much to do, and perhaps even more, with the success of ministry than the programs and methods we embrace. In other words, our *being* is just as important, if not more so, as our *doing* in the life and ministry of the local congregation. The spirit in which any method is embraced will ultimately determine its effectiveness.

To state briefly, SHARE is about being the body of Christ fulfilling the mission of Christ in the world; it is about leader formation and leadership development; it is about kingdom health and growth experienced in the life of the local congregation. The ministry of SHARE is built upon the foundational message of Jesus Christ found in the Great Commandments (Matt 22:36–40):

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” 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 Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (NIV)

Whatever programmatic elements may be involved in the implementation of SHARE, first and foremost, the goal of SHARE is to assist kingdom servants in their lifelong quest to *be* Great Commandment and Great Commission leaders.

LIVING AS A COMMUNITY OF FAITH

It is within the context of community that we, as followers of Jesus Christ, experience the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11–13). In community we know and are known. Scripture affirms numerous times that we need each other in order to know ourselves fully or to know God as fully as we can. In *The Prodigal God*, Timothy Keller writes,

Christians commonly say they want a relationship with Jesus: that they want to “get to know Jesus better.” You will never be able to do that by yourself. You must be deeply involved in the church, in Christian community, with strong relationships of love and accountability. Only if you are part of a community of believers seeking to resemble, serve, and love Jesus will you ever get to know him and grow into his likeness. (p. 127)

The truth is, we need each other. Pastors and congregational leaders must lead the way in developing that kind of loving, caring, growing community. In doing so, we each carry to that experience a common personal awareness that provides a common ground for our continuing growth and development.

The Johari Window, below, is an example of why we need each other and, at the same time, provides reason why pastor and leaders in *koinonia* are vital to personal and professional growth.

	KNOWN TO SELF	NOT KNOWN TO SELF
KNOWN TO OTHERS	OPEN (1)	BLIND (2)
NOT KNOWN TO OTHERS	HIDDEN (3)	UNKNOWN (4)

The Johari Window, named after the first names of its inventors, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, is one of the most useful models describing the process of human interaction. A four paned ‘window’ ... divides personal awareness into four different types, as represented by its four quadrants: open, hidden, blind, and unknown. The lines dividing the four panes are like window shades, which can move as an interaction progresses.

1. The “open” quadrant represents things that both I know about myself, and that you know about me.
2. The “blind” quadrant represents things that you know about me, but that I am unaware of.
3. The “hidden” quadrant represents things that I know about myself that you do not know.
4. The “unknown” quadrant represents things that neither I know about myself, nor you know about me.¹

As relationships develop and mature, the individual in loving, trusting community can identify blind spots in quadrant 2, deal more effectively with hidden, unhealthy issues in quadrant 3, and be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit to discover spiritual growth and renewal in quadrant 4.

¹ www.noogenesis.com/game_theory/johari/johari_window.html

Growing into Christlikeness is a privilege and responsibility that can only be accomplished as we submit self to the joys and challenges of living honestly and humbly within the body of Christ.

The hope of SHARE is that your leadership team becomes a kind of community in which participants celebrate and grieve together and that has a confessional nature that provides for safe disclosure, repentance, forgiveness, and new growth. It is a way for your team to learn together and from each other. And it is a community in which each person works for a common goal and the personal good of each one.

CREATED TO BE

As we think about what it means to be the church our minds usually race first to buildings, programs, or organizational structures. As pastors we may think of sermons to prepare, budgets to develop, visits to make, lessons to write, agendas to follow, expectations to fulfill. It is possible that our kingdom service is little more than servitude to the expedient rather than obedience to the Spirit of God. Unquestionably we are called to action for the sake of the kingdom (Matthew 7:21 and Ephesians 2:10 immediately come to mind). Yet our first calling is not to *doing* something for the Lord but *being* in intimate relationship with the Lord through faith in Jesus Christ. When we begin to think relationally about the kingdom, we think first of who we are, not what we do. And there we come face-to-face with the power of the kingdom. We were created by God and for God.

For by him all things were created...all things were created by him and for him.
—Colossians 1:16 NIV1984

...created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
—Ephesians 4:24 NIV1984

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
—Genesis 1:27 NIV1984

We were created to be in intimate relationship with our Creator and Sustainer. Our value and worth is not determined by our position or power or performance. The One who created us loves us dearly and has provided all that we need to live in that divine intimacy. From the opening pages of Scripture we are confronted with the loving God who makes and gives and sustains, who is deeply involved in creation. Time after time we are reminded that it is God who makes of kingdom people much more than they could ever make of themselves. (See Gen 2:7–8; 12:2; 32:9; 48:14; Deut 9:14; Isa 49:6; Matt 4:19, where God says in a variety of settings: “I will make you...”) Paul reminds us that those who are to lead the church do so not by their own choosing but by the creative gifting of God: *It was he who gave some to be...* (Eph 4:11). Our giftedness for life and ministry is not first about a role or position or activity, but rather about an intimate relationship with the Giver and with those others whom the Lord has given to *be*.

In Exodus 3, Moses is confronted by the life-giving, life-sustaining God who calls us to *be*. In verse 14, after exhausting his reasons for not taking up God's mission to the Hebrews, Moses asks for that clarifying, identifying declaration of God's being that would convince the Hebrews that he had been sent by their God. God's reply was simple: "Tell them I AM has sent me to you." Could it be that there is something inherently profound and powerful in that response that is valid for we who have been created in divine image? When we move toward the attitude and spirit that enables us to declare with confidence the "I Am" of our own being—not encumbered by the weights of competition and comparison—we begin to build a strong foundation of a healthy relational life with God, self, and others. It is a foundation, not of power, but of love. It is the foundation that enables us to declare along with Paul, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation..." (Phil 4:12 NIV1984). The personal "I Am" of human experience enables us to declare with confidence:

I Am: Created in God's image (Gen 1:27)
Fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps 139:14)
Loved by God (John 3:16)
Capable of loving all that God loves (1 John 4:19)
Gifted and empowered to give myself away to my world in the name of Jesus
(Ephesians 4:11)

I Am able to become all God desires me to be!

Such a spirit enables us to live in a freedom that God alone can provide:

Freedom to Be: With the Father
Submitted to Divine Lordship: "God alone"
Unshackled from the chains of comparison and competition
Filled with peace, joy, love, hope
A vessel of divine love

...the person God created me to be.

As we think about the life of the local congregation, we must always remember that most often conflict arises not as the result of broken methods but broken relationships. What we bring to the table spiritually as leaders has far more to do with the success of the ministry of the church than the programs and methods we embrace. That is not to downplay the value and importance of effective and productive methodologies. But the spirit in which any method is embraced will ultimately determine its effectiveness. The foundation of true holiness and unity in the body of Christ is love, and that love becomes part of the local congregation through the lives of its people. We must never underestimate or neglect the power of love in the life of the church. Love is the factor that can make or break the methods we choose to embrace as we serve our world in the name of Jesus. To serve in the name of Jesus, we can do no less than build upon the foundation of love. Anything else will fall short of the work the Lord desires to do in us and through us (Eph 3:20).

ON BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST

Without being too simplistic, it might be said that the church exists for one reason alone: to bring honor and glory to God on earth. We do that primarily through two means: (1) moving together into the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:11–13), and (2) engaging in the mission of Christ in the world under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:18–20; Acts 1:8). In the acknowledgments to his book *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster states, “Books are best written in community” (p. vi). That thought could be restated to say, Life is best lived in community. New Testament analogies of the church share a common theme of *connectedness*: vine and branches, family of God, living stones being built into a holy temple, body of Christ. As the church, our identity and purpose can only be fully understood in light of that connectedness. The purpose of SHARE is to bring us into a deeper understanding and experience of that connectedness so that we can more completely grow into the fullness of Christ and more effectively fulfill the mission of Christ in our world. Thus, whatever we consider in response to the call of God in our lives—our gifting, calling, equipping—must be understood and exercised within the context of holy community.

These opening pages of this manual provide a necessary theological foundation for the SHARE journey. Please do not minimize the importance of “landing” these biblical concepts before moving on to other practices and lessons that may be relevant to your congregational life. If these principles are not intentionally embraced, SHARE becomes little more than another program that will be discarded when the next program comes along. The intent of SHARE is to transform the heart and soul of a congregation; to focus on the fulfillment of the mission of Christ in the world today rather than the maintenance of a local organization. *Being* must always precede *doing* in the life of the body of Christ.

FOUR KEY METHODOLOGIES

There are four key methodologies in the fulfillment of the Message and Mission of SHARE, as defined by the SHARE hallmarks and goals: the leadership team, developing a discipling environment, sharing a common vision and mission, and personal/corporate growth and development. Each of these—and the relationships inherent in them—is a primary means by which leaders are shaped toward health and excellence.

No single one of these methodologies is more important than the other; each has a specific and vital role to play. **The goal is that Christ will be formed in all.**

Leadership Team

The development of an intentionally focused community for the purpose of growth and maturing into the fullness of Christ (Eph 4) is the primary context for the development of the Christian leader. Within such a community, relationships are established and nurtured; learning is facilitated and shared; and growth—personal, relational, and missional—is achieved and measured. Each person belongs to and covenants with a group of fellow leaders/disciples to stay together through their servant journey and to be encourager, collaborator, commentator, and accountability partner to achieve a long-term anticipated outcome.

Developing a Discipling Environment

The congregation that participates in SHARE is led by a pastor who has experienced the SHARE journey and understands the role of coaching and discipling in the SHARE ministry. The coach-discipler is *the* facilitating partner in the overall processes of SHARE and will function in a wide-ranging set of roles and responsibilities, but at its core, the role of the SHARE coach/discipler is defined in terms of mutual discipleship. We are all called to a life of growth and development as disciples of Jesus Christ, so that, as Paul states, we can all attain “to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” and so that “we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ” (Eph 4:13, 15 NIV1984). The pastor/coach will assist the leadership team in the formation of a covenant group, provide healthy guidance in the creation of relational connectivity through a variety of experiences, and facilitate the development of the LAMP, a long-term plan for continuing health and growth individually and corporately.

Common Experiences

There is a common set of experiences, practices, and resources that constitute key elements of SHARE in building healthy individuals working in an effective leadership team. These are designed to expose SHARE participants to new experiences, new information and perspectives, and new means to go deeper into themselves, their relationships with others, and their relationship with God.

Personal/Corporate Growth and Development

Individuals or congregations do not achieve health by accident. Healthy leaders and missionally effective congregations intentionally plan to be healthy. The LAMP is a planning tool that sets the direction, limits, and the means by which the SHARE hallmarks are connected, within which the SHARE goals are measured, and through which growth in Christ is achieved. An acronym, LAMP reflects the inclusive focus of SHARE: **Life And Ministry Plan**. Through the use of the LAMP, participants will create the means by which they grow. It is intended as a key process in SHARE as well as in the whole life of participants. All elements of SHARE lead to the LAMP. Key elements of the development of the LAMP are mapping, assessment, and accountability.

Mapping—All SHARE participants take part in a life-mapping exercise related to their past, present, and possible future as a means of seeing the big picture of one’s whole life so that the basis for the LAMP is laid. Mapping is “a way of looking at your life by displaying its component parts so that you see key events, patterns, and your potential in a fresh, new way. It involves ‘storyboarding’ your past and your future so that you become an active participant in rewriting your own life story. And its goal is to move you with clarity and conviction to healthy relationships, Christlikeness, and a hope-filled future” (Trent, John. *Life Mapping*. WaterBrook Press, 1998).

Accountability and responsibility—Each SHARE participant enters into meaningful covenant relationship: with their pastor, with the congregation they serve, and with the members of their leadership team (these will be covered in a later section). Accountability is a learned trait, but it is central to the fulfillment of any covenant and at the heart of any relationally-based program—“I have to trust you; the basis of my trust is that I can hold you and be held by you accountable to the covenant we have entered mutually.”

Within the SHARE experience, accountability is defined primarily in terms other than legalistic ones. David Ferguson says that accountability is the “third base” of the relationship; it has to be

preceded by deep knowing and deep caring. Al Ells has defined accountability in similar terms: “Participants invite coaches and cluster members to help them to stay true to what they said they want to do or be.” The relationships produce accountability and bring about change.

Assessment—Through a variety of assessment tools, leaders discover and learn their level of commitment to growth and development within their calling; the level of healthy involvement in their work; their spiritual health, emotional health, relational health, and physical health; their desire to learn; some sense of their financial health; and a good understanding of their leadership style. Each congregational leadership team will determine the assessments that will be used. It is recommended that assessments focusing upon personality, behavior, relational needs, and spiritual giftedness be considered.

All three of these key elements are essential. They strengthen each other, and the absence of one weakens the whole.

AN INTENTIONAL HEALTH PLAN

SHARE is designed as a once-a-month leadership team experience that guides leaders through a series of experiences, practices, resources, and relationships in order to more fully sustain health and relational excellence. It is as important—or more so—than the fulfilling of the “business” of the church. As such, as much or even more time should be committed to SHARE as to the conducting of the business aspects of the congregation.

The following represents the flow of the SHARE experience within the life of the leadership team:

- Landing the Vision: What Is SHAPE/SHARE?
- The 4-C Person
- The 4-M Church
- Building a Healthy Community: Baseball Diamond (Mark 3)
- Introducing the Hallmarks
- Building an Altar of Remembrance
- DiSC Assessment
- My Journey In Love
- Which Christ Do I Need?
- Coaching: 21st Century Discipleship for the Church
- The Priority of Hearing God: A Bible Study
- Spiritual Gifts Inventory
- Relational Needs Inventory
- Personality Profile/Assessments
- Life and Ministry Statement
- Drawing My Life Map
- Introduction to the Life And Ministry Plan (LAMP)
- Developing My LAMP
- Developing a Specific Training Plan

The Assessments—DiSC, Spiritual Gifts Inventory, Personality Profile (16pf, Myers-Briggs, Spectrum, or other similar), Emotional Intelligence Assessment, Relational Needs Inventory—should be used throughout the experience as a means of providing adequate information for the development of a meaningful LAMP.

In addition to these SHAPE experiences, a variety of resources are available in the form of group experiences, studies and resources in this manual, within the Church of God, or from other ministry groups. These resources should be used in relation to the needs present within the leadership team/congregation at the time. After the foundation of SHARE is understood (it is good to review these foundational issues at least annually), the pastor/coach/discipler should be sensitive to which opportunities for growth and development should be addressed. Resources found in this manual include:

Values

The Christian Leader (2 Tim 2)

Core Values for the Body of Christ: We Hold These Truths

The Lifecycle of a Church

Lifecycle Presentation

Qualities and Characteristics of a Godly Leader

Biblical Guidelines for Church Leaders

Personal Growth and Maturity

Called to Be a Disciple

The Pathway to Maturity

Building an Effective Leadership Team

The Heart and Soul of Teamwork

The Differences We Possess

The Followers of Jesus...

Styles of Leadership, Communication, Thought Processing

Embracing an Effective Decision-Making Process

Dealing Effectively with Change

Types of Change

A Plan for Implementing Change

Managing Change Effectively

Conflict & Stress Management

Conflict Resolution within Congregations

Conflict Resolution in Small Groups or Between Persons

Developing A Missional Church

The Relational Church

Five Essential Elements of Mission Fulfillment

The Spirit of a Growing Church

The Growth Journey of a Local Church
Fulfilling the Mission of Christ in Our World
Growing Healthy Churches

In addition to these exercises and studies, a resource list of effective teaching and training models available from various ministry groups is provided so that the pastor and leadership team can have a variety of resources from which to choose. The resources and studies will provide a common ground for discussion and provide a foundation from which each congregational leadership team can develop a meaningful plan of growth and development for the life and ministry of their congregation. These resources should not be the first line of experience for the team, but supplement the SHARE journey after the initial theology of SHAPE/SHARE is embraced. Never should “doing” overshadow the essence of “being” that provides the foundation for health and excellence in life and ministry.



SHARE: THE CORE VALUES

SHARE is not intended to be merely a program. It has not been developed to simply be a notebook that can be pulled off the shelf and plugged in to address a problem. It is deeper and more vital than that. SHARE is about life change. It is about culture change. It is about ministry change. SHARE is not an event-oriented ministry in which the focus is on isolated occurrences; it is not propositional ministry in which the focus is primarily only knowledge acquisition; it is not about segmented ministry that results in fragmentation; and it is not about competitive ministries in which the “us vs. them” mentality operates.



SHARE is a collaborative national and regional ministry initiative designed to encourage and facilitate pursuit of proactive, planned, and sustained strategies so that followers of Jesus Christ may achieve and integrate the hallmarks of good and faithful ministry—spirituality, connectedness, knowledge, leadership, vision, and personal physical and emotional health—into their life of kingdom service.

SHARE is about discipleship; it is about leader formation and leadership development; and it is also about congregational health and church growth.

SHARE is rooted in the fundamental conviction that the underlying message of the Bible is found in the Great Commandment of Jesus Christ:

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matt 22:36–40 NRSV)

Whatever programmatic elements may be involved in the implementation of SHARE, first and foremost, the goal of SHARE is to assist kingdom servants in their lifelong quest to *be* Great Commandment and Great Commission leaders.

The ultimate goal of SHARE, in partnership with other Church of God constituencies and agencies, is to provide a holistic, seamless cycle of self-directed and collaborative practices that will sustain and nourish Church of God leaders as they seek to serve the kingdom through the common stamp of God upon each of us in the body of Christ and also the unique calling of her or his life.

SHARE exists to motivate and sustain kingdom servants as they enhance their calling—a “good and faithful ministry”—by becoming more balanced as persons so that those life experiences that can lead to separation from active kingdom service can be avoided and multifaceted growth can

occur. SHARE exists to build and sustain relational networks that enhance the relational health of pastors, leaders and congregations of the Church of God reformation movement, resulting in healthy interdependence.

SHARE is founded on five fundamental assumptions—core values—about Jesus, self, the church, relationships, and healthy leaders.

Assumption 1: The Centrality of Christ

Assumption 2: The 4-C Person

Assumption 3: The 4-M Church

Assumption 4: The centrality of relationships in healthy ministry and ministries

Assumption 5: The definition of a sustainable healthy ministry

ASSUMPTION 1: THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST

At the heart of both the health and un-health of leaders and churches is the image of Jesus carried in the hearts and minds of God's children. Who Jesus is; how Jesus relates and cares; our unhealthy and nonbiblical pictures of Jesus—each of these contributes to our own sense of esteem, how we relate to others, and how we relate to God. If our image of Jesus is of a judging, finger pointing Jesus, our lives and ministries will be judgmental, demanding, and unfulfilling. If our view of Jesus is of one who is excited to be with us, then our lives and ministries will be connected, healthy, compassionate, and open to God and others.

As David Ferguson writes:

The real Christ is attentive and caring, sensitive and compassionate. He does not have a tally sheet in heaven, and is not too preoccupied to care about each of us individually. He is not detached or distant, disappointed or displeased. In fact, Christ, the Savior of the world, wants a relationship with us! The real Christ wants to be close, intimate friends with you and me. He is excited when we wake up in the morning, and cannot wait to talk with us and relate to us. He is delighted to know us and be with us. The real Christ generously and graciously gave up His life because He could not bear the thought of eternity without you. He is pleased with you because He sees you with the eyes of a Master Creator, One who admires His handiwork and values each of His treasures because they are unique and wonderful. Of course, the real God is also holy, without spot or blemish, and His plan is that, out of our deep love for Him, we would live out His commands. For this reason, He has sent His Spirit to empower us with His holy life and abundant love. This is the character of the real Christ, the One to whom we have the privilege and honor to relate.¹

¹ David Ferguson, *Relational Foundations* (Austin, TX: Relationship Press, 2004), 57–58.

ASSUMPTION 2: THE 4-C PERSON

How, then, should we respond to Christ who comes to us in holiness and abundant love? We come to him in reverential love and faith. We believe that a fundamental truth of our life in Christ is that we were created to be in intimate relationship with God and all of God's creation. The effectiveness and power of the church is dependent upon what we individually and corporately bring to our shared experience as the body of Christ. Consequently, it is helpful to understand the personal dynamics that inform who we are as the people of God and that help shape the lifestyle that we embrace in the local congregation. This view of the individual life that we bring to the life of the church is what we call **The 4-C Person**.

The 4-C Person challenges us to bring an individual perspective to our corporate experience that reflects strongly our commitment to our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Questions such as "Why do I exist?" and "What is my purpose in life?" are often answered by looking at the positions we fill, the roles we play, or successful performance in the events of life. Rather than defining our identity and purpose through experience, we define that identity and purpose through a deepening understanding of how our life's experience has formed us in our life of love, and how we have embraced our common commission as a personal response to that message of love. As one pastor recently said, "It is every Christian's role is to fulfill the mission of Christ." And he was right. **We need not rewrite, nor can we improve upon, the mission statement that Christ provided us in Matthew 28:18–20.** Consequently, how we grow, mature, and fulfill that mission becomes the focus of our lives as individuals: our Life And Ministry Plan. **The 4-C Person leads us to explore both our created purpose and our commissioning to make disciples within the framework of love and embrace them as "nonnegotiable as the message and mission we affirm for the church."**

1. Foundational Level: *Created*

As people created in the image of God, we possess a common purpose for life and living that provides the foundation for the unity of God's people and a proper attitude toward all of creation. We were created by God so that, through the divine image inherent within, we might love God in return. *Imago Dei*: many of us have neglected to comprehend the powerful meaning and tremendous potential inherent in our being created in divine image. It is a reality that should impact every moment of our life in every way possible. This reality provides a common identity that embraces *every human being*: the capacity and potential to be intimately related to God.

The Great Commandment—to love God with all our being and to love neighbor as we love self—identifies our common purpose, but to love God completely is also to embrace a love for his creation that affects our attitude and actions in relationship not only to humankind but also to the entire created order. When God created humankind, he blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every living creature that moves on the ground" (Gen 1:28 NIV1984). In Genesis 2:15 we are told, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." As God's people undertook the challenges of inhabiting the Promised Land, God instructed them: "...the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants. Throughout the country that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land" (Lev 25:23–

24 NIV1984). The psalmist eloquently reminds us that “the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it” (Ps 24:1 NIV1984).

As we embrace a holistic understanding of our created purpose, we are drawn to affirm our love for God, a love for all people created in God’s image, and a love for all that God has created. Put simply:

We have been created to love God and to love all that God loves.

This created identity and purpose is ordained of God. We have been entrusted with the stewardship of creation. There has never been a person born who has not been endowed with the capacity to enter into this created purpose. As people created in the image of God, we share a common identity purpose. It is a purpose that has the potential of binding all of us together. How we respond to this gift of life becomes the focus of a lifelong journey of intimacy with our Creator: a perspective that affects every aspect of life.

The beauty of God’s creative plan is that God is not only the creator of all but also the sustainer of all that is, and he is intimately involved in the midst of his creation. Thomas Jay Oord and Michael Lodahl write:

Just as people affect others through relations, God as the Maker and Sustainer of all things also affects all things, all people, all the time, everywhere. There is no environment in which God is not related to others as a present, active and loving agent. To think about God in this way is to believe that God is the most important actor in everyone’s environment. God affects all others and does so in every moment.²

Our created identity and purpose—persons loved by God and created to love God and love all that God loves—also provides the foundation for the life of holiness we are called to live in loving response to God’s creative act: a life of holiness in all our relationships. Again Oord and Lodahl observe:

Love functions well as the core notion of holiness. Love provides the foundation and framework for faith. God’s love for us and our love in return, as well as our love for our neighbors and ourselves, resides at the core of Christianity. Love provides holiness with the foundation it needs to flourish as the theological distinctive of the Holiness tradition. And love is a truth for which we can live and die.³

Just what, then, does this love look like? How can we know if we are responding to our created purpose in God-honoring ways? Consider these three expressions of love:

Love is rooted in an intimate relationship of worship and adoration of God.

Because God *is* love (1 John 4:8) any true experience of love begins—and ends—with an encounter with him that affirms his sovereignty and our submission. To enter into God’s presence

² Thomas Jay Oord and Michael Lodahl, *Relational Holiness* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2005), 32.

³ *Ibid.*, 69–70.

in this spirit sensitizes us to our stewardship of life as it relates to all of creation. It is in this experience of divine intimacy that we become partakers of the Spirit of God. The apostle Paul identifies the fruit of that encounter as *love, joy, and peace* (Gal 5:22). As we enter into God's intended relationship for us, his Spirit is made manifest in our spirit and these divine qualities become the foundation for all of our relationships. Intimacy with God is the fertile spiritual soil in which all of life becomes vigorous and healthy.

Love is outwardly focused.

"For God so loved the world that he gave..." (John 3:16 NIV). The nature of love is to give. Living in a world that has perverted the true meaning of love to a self-serving self-indulgence challenges us continually to keep our love life properly focused. To love is our joyous response to the grace of God that has been lavished upon us. Much of what our world labels as love is actually lust: a desire to satisfy self through the use of people and resources. Lust is self-serving; love is outwardly focused on honoring God and serving others. Love is marked by a sacrificial service reminiscent of the sacrifice of our Lord for our own salvation. To love is to say, "I will live my life to help every person I encounter experience this love that God has so freely shared with me—to help them have an intimate encounter with God in their own life's journey." The fruit of that spiritual encounter with God transferred to our interpersonal relationships is marked by: *patience, kindness, and goodness* (Gal 5:22). When we rest by faith in God's love for and acceptance of us, we find freedom to practice the fruit of that love through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit in all of our relationships. Patience, kindness, goodness, compassion, and grace become extensions of our intimate walk with God and part of the living out of our created purpose in practical ways. Passages such as 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Philippians 2:1–11, and 1 John 3:11–24, as well as many others, remind us of the practical, outward focus of our journey of love.

Love is a conscious choice made in response to the grace of God experienced inwardly through a faith relationship with Jesus.

While love is most certainly an emotional experience, the foundation of love is a conscious, deliberate choice to enter into an intimate relationship with God and to allow that relationship to shape and form every part of our own life's journey. Love is a cooperative effort between the God who has saved us and our own personal determination to order our own life by the grace that birthed and sustains our life in Christ. The discipline of our own spiritual life in growing into the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:13) leads us to a discipline of self and relationships that will continue throughout all of life. Even here the Holy Spirit empowers and inspires us. Paul reminds us that the fruit of the Spirit—specifically *faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*—are God's means of guiding us in the stewardship of our own life and development (Gal 5:22). Our own spiritual formation is informed significantly by our willingness to enter into this life of divinely ordered discipline.

2. Next Level: *Commissioned*

As we think about the impact of being created *imago dei* and how that informs life's purpose, we are reminded once again that God has provided this foundational piece for our personal devel-

opment and maturity and understanding. Just as we have each been created purposefully, so we have been commissioned for a common purpose:

**We have been commissioned to help others discover
and live out their created purpose.**

It is tempting to relegate the mission of the church to a board, committee, or congregational program. However, God calls us individually to invest in the work of introducing persons to their created identity and walking with others as we, and they, enter into a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ and move, in community, into the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:13). While we have spent countless hours and dollars developing methods to win the lost, we have sometimes neglected the truth that binds us all to the mission of Christ in the world. The Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20) is not first fulfilled by groups or committees or through programs and promotions. It is first fulfilled by persons who are so in love with Jesus that they will do whatever they can to introduce other people to him and walk with those people as they develop as faithful disciples of Christ and to make disciples as we live from day to day. If we understand the Great Commission methodologically rather than relationally, we run the risk of reducing disciple-making to one of many programs and losing sight of the mandate. When, however, we understand this commissioning as relationally flowing out of God’s creative purpose, we are able to live out the commission in loving relationship to everyone and everything that our world comprises.

“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:1–5 NIV1984). This passage is not a sentimental desire for what might be in an ideal world but is the natural outcome for the person who is growing and maturing in their created and commissioned life in Christ.

Penn Jillette, an avowed atheist, and his partner, Teller, were a very successful Las Vegas show. But Jillette has a very interesting take on evangelism that can be viewed under “Penn Jillette gets a gift of a Bible” or “Atheist Perspective on Evangelism” on YouTube. On that video he makes this statement:

I’ve always said I don’t respect people who don’t proselytize. I don’t respect that at all. If you believe that there is a heaven and hell and that people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life or whatever, and you think that, well, it’s not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward...How much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? I mean if I believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that a truck was coming at you and you didn’t believe it, but that truck was bearing down on you, there’s a certain point where I tackle you. And this is more important than that...

This issue is more important than that! If we truly believe that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, that reality should impact and shape and direct every relationship that we have. The commission to help as many others as we can discover and live out this relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ is for all of us.

3. The Level of Individuality: *Called*

Here the commonality of our created purpose and commissioned mandate give way to the uniqueness of God's intimate relationship to us as individuals. Each of us is called uniquely:

To serve our world in the inspiration and power of the Lord.

“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it” (Eph 4:7 NIV). “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men” (1 Cor 12:4–6 NIV1984). “For by the grace given me I say to everyone of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us” (Rom 12:3–6a NIV1984).

In addition to the uniqueness of God's work in us, there are numerous other influences that affect our uniqueness: personality, preferences, experiences, expectations, communication style, spiritual maturity, leadership style, calling, thought processing, and work style. The list goes on. The differences we possess can provide great strength to the body of Christ and the mission of Christ in the world today, or great weakness, depending upon our spirit and attitude. God intends for our differences to be used for the good of the body of Christ, to lead her to growth and maturity and service. As we learn to live out of our corporate createdness and commissioning, we also learn to set aside jealousy, envy, and a competitive spirit in order to live out of a spirit of self-sacrifice, respect for others, faith and trust and commitment to the beauty of the wisdom and grace of God, and the uniqueness of our life in Christ.

We live in the reality that any day we may be faced with physical, relational, or emotional trauma that challenge the affirmation of our uniqueness and call us to question God's wisdom, love, and grace. “In this world you will have trouble...” (John 16:33 NIV). Even though difficult to explain and endure, such times do not negate the love of God or the foundation of our life in Christ. When we root our lives in our created purpose and faithfully seek to live a life of consecrated service to those around us, God visits us with his peace and joy and offers a hope that can lead us through the most difficult of times. Never underestimate the capacity of love to empower the call, no matter what life might hold.

4. The Top Level: *Committed*

To engage my world in meaningful service as I live out my created and commissioned purpose.

In an environment that emphasizes methodologies over the building of healthy, God-centered relationships, it is easy to develop ministry programs that react more readily to our own perceived resources, preferences, and comfort of activity rather than to the needs of our community and world. Consequently, our ministries often become little more than means to support and perpetuate the ongoing agenda of our congregation. We see our community as a resource to be used to achieve our programs and budgets rather than seeing our programs and budgets as means to transform our communities into loving, caring, serving persons intimately related to God and to each other. We, at times unconsciously, consider the support and sustainability of our congregational agenda as somehow fulfilling our responsibility to God. How many congregations fulfill programmatic agendas and meet budgetary quotas yet never see anyone saved or show little or no spiritual, emotional, and relational growth in their fellowship or transformation of their community? But if we anchor our methods to our created purpose and commissioned mandate, then at this level we intentionally engage our community at their point of need—and God’s point of concern—to reveal the love of God “where they live” and introduce them to the One who can help them experience the deepest needs of their lives met in communal love and grace. As we provide people an opportunity to identify and define their own perceived needs, or at least shed some light on those needs, we open the door for meaningful engagement where the love of Christ can be shared in transformational ways.

Our challenge is to engage our world as a response to God’s love for all of creation: this is a challenge that may lead us outside our traditions and our structures and programs. In an ever-changing world, our methods and ministries must be continually evolving. But rooted in our created and commissioned purposes, our ministries will never lose their relevance in a world created for God’s pleasure and delight.

The 4-C person is solidly focused upon Jesus Christ, committed to personal formation within the context of the Christ community. The 4-C person is committed to community engagement from a global perspective, realizing that the Holy Spirit is continually doing far more than all we could ever ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within and among us (Eph 3:20).

ASSUMPTION 3: THE 4-M CHURCH

SHARE is not only about leader health, because the context of the leader’s life and work is ministry, usually in a very specific place—a congregation of the Church of God. While the focus of SHARE is the leader, there is foundational conviction that there is a strong symbiotic relationship between the health of the leader and the health of the congregation—for better or worse.

One of the factors affecting healthy ministry is the continuous flow of newly devised methodologies to grow, strengthen, or develop some area of church life. These methods often promise near miraculous results.

The reality of most ministries is that they are conducted at the programmatic or methodological level. Program and methods absorb time and personnel. They are alluring and demanding because they are tangible, visible, and action oriented. And, since most leaders and congregations desire to get the work of ministry done, we tend to applaud anything that produces results.

One of the convictions of SHARE is that this primary emphasis on program, methods, and ministry may not only lead to exhaustion but may also be moving churches closer and closer to irrelevancy—or simply to weariness.

A key assumption of SHARE as it relates to leader and congregational health is what is called *The 4-M Church*. This is an understanding about church life and pastoral leadership that is life giving, empowering, visionary, and deeply rooted in the Scriptures.

As with any construction project, the foundation must be built first—everything else builds up from a “firm foundation.”

1. Foundational Level: The Message

The Message is our identity. It is who we are. It is our spiritual DNA. It is spoken of in Scripture as the Great Commandment:

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:28–31 NIV1984)

This is and always will be the foundation upon which everything else rests. This is what drives ministry. Its importance cannot be overstated. In a shorter version we are to “passionately love God and sacrificially serve others.” Everything else in life and ministry is to be informed by this. There is no exception. After all, Jesus said it. It informs our mission; it informs our ministries; it informs our methods.

It’s about a relationship. Listen to these words from Ephesians: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he had freely given us in the One he loves” (Eph 1:3–6 NIV1984).

The Message is basic and yet profound. It is simple and yet consuming. We cannot be on mission, should not launch ministries, and will only argue about methods if we do not get this foundation and live it out daily with one another and with those in our communities.

Since our ministry of effectively sharing Christ and his love with others will not be any greater than our ministry to the Lord, to become a Great Commandment church, we start by developing intimacy with the Lord of the church—Jesus Christ.

Our understanding about Christ, that is, our Christology, has to be healthy. We need to be people who listen, yield, and are grateful to God through Jesus. Yet how we view Jesus and Jesus' attention toward us is crucial to healthy ministry and ministers. How can we long to listen, yield, and be grateful if we view him as inspecting, disappointed, and distant?

But what a difference occurs if we see him as the welcoming Jesus, the Jesus who prays for us, the compassionate Jesus, the embracing Jesus, the grace-filled Jesus, the serving Jesus, and yes even the Jesus who lovingly confronts us.

To become Great Commandment churches and leaders, it is essential to see Jesus as excited to love us. This incredible love relationship with Christ is at the heart of being a Great Commandment people because it is about what kind of God is the God we love.

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:5–9 NIV1984)

We never grow beyond knowing Jesus more deeply. Paul writes, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" (Phil 3:10 NIV1984). In Ephesians he writes, "And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:17–19 NIV1984).

Without this the church can be as busy as ever but, in Kingdom terms, be quite shallow. We have to live in the Message.

2. Next Level Up: Mission

Like the Message, the Mission does not need to be invented. Like the Message, the authority of the Mission rests in the One who gave it. We have a mission because it is the Mission Jesus gave us:

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matt 28:18–20 NIV1984)

This is the Great Commission. Along with the Great Commandment, it supersedes all other identities and tasks and informs everything the church is called to be and do. It is at the heart of the other key expression of the Message and Mission that directs us to build up the body of Christ (Eph 4).

Like the Message, the Mission is unchanging. No person, congregation, or movement established the mission. God established the mission through Christ when he sent his only Son to reach and win the lost. A congregation’s “lived out” mission must *clearly* be to build up the body of Christ, that is, to evangelize and disciple in the spirit of Jesus.

Jesus calls us to make more and better disciples. Our emphasis is often on making more, and we often struggle with how to make them better—but that is the Mission. It has been said that discipleship is the heart of everything because a disciple is one who loves God, loves others, and serves them in the spirit of Jesus.

Therefore, it is necessary to ask, What do disciples look like?

Most often we have a rational, behavioral definition of disciple. A disciple, for example, is one that has a certain set of biblical information and does or does not do certain things. But as many congregations have experienced, people who know the most facts about the Bible and do the “right things” behaviorally are not always the best examples of the God-within life.

Rather than this rational or behavioral model approach, there is a relational component. Within this relational focus, the disciple enjoys a growing intimate relationship with the Lord and a heart for others as well.

A disciple is one who *serves* (ministers) in many ways. The four key serving modalities are:

• **A disciple ministers to the Lord.** “While they were *ministering* to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’” (Acts 13:2 NASB, italics added).

- **By listening**—“She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word” (Luke 10:39 NASB). Mary was sitting at Jesus’ feet “listening.” Where in our churches’ ministry do we train others how to listen? It is hard to listen in a culture that feels so inclined toward doing.
- **With gladness/praise**—“...and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan” (Luke 17:16 NASB). We so easily look at what we don’t have or what we aren’t doing. In Luke 17 the man healed of leprosy is on his knees expressing his gratefulness to Jesus for what he has done. Where do we encourage gratefulness in our ministries?

- **Through yieldedness**—“If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself” (John 7:17 NASB).. Yieldedness comes before we know what it is that God is asking of us. Faith is expressed rather than fear.

• **A disciple ministers the Word.** “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4 NASB). We minister the Word by living it out. We serve people with the truth of the Word. We **may or may not quote the verse**, but we are **being and doing it**. Did we speak with gentle words to the cashier? Are we **experiencing the Word**? How did we **comfort someone** (“mourn with those who mourn”) when they were hurting?

• **A disciple ministers love to others.** “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (Gal 5:13 NASB). We care for others. We have a **short memory** when it comes to remembering how we were wronged. We love the unlovable. This **begins with those nearest us**. We **love when the love is not coming back**. We love with forgiveness. We accept others in their failures. We **help carry the burden** of others. We care for those that are different from us.

• **A disciple ministers the message of reconciliation.** “Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:16–18 NASB). We minister to those outside of Christ. This is evangelism.

3. The Next Level Up: Ministry

This is the level that most are drawn to—after all, aren’t we called to do ministry? Yet it is also at this level, without the two foundational truths of the Great Commandment and Great Commission, that we are most tempted and at risk.

In the 4 M Church model, ministries arise out of the Message and Mission. With this foundation we ask ourselves, “What ministries then should we try to accomplish? What ministry objectives do we intend to accomplish? How is it that we are able to be a Great Commandment–Great Commission church in the location and with the gifted people who serve and worship here?”

SHARE is a ministry. It serves the question, How can we bring about a culture that calls and sustains Great Commandment–Great Commission pastors and leaders? The ministry concept is to create healthy leaders who will do well and finish well in life and in ministry. SHARE is a means to move in that direction.

At the local church level, ministry is about helping disciples to walk in the light (the light of Jesus, the Bible, other believers) so the darkness (discouragement, moral failure, etc.) does not overtake them (see John 12:35). Ministry at the local level is about developing a congregation of persons who are Great Commandment–Great Commission disciples of Jesus Christ.

Many congregations never even get to this level, staying stuck at the Methodological level and never take time to ask, “Why are we doing this?” Methods keep us so busy there is no time to stop and reflect. What we must know deep in our hearts is that our ministries must be driven from what is below. They must be informed by the Message and the Mission. It is not, “You know I think this would be a good idea; it worked at _____.”

Ministries tend to be longer in duration than methods, but they are not sacred and must be effective in accomplishing the Mission and in harmony with the Message—or abandoned.

4. The “Top” Level: Methods

The “top” layer of the 4-M Church is Methods. These are the tangible expressions—*the doings*—of our ministries. And there are many of them. The critical understanding, however, is that methods are deeply informed by what is below—the Message, the Mission, and Ministry. Even when the planning process moves to selecting the methodologies by which our ministries will be carried, the context is the Message and the Mission.

Basically speaking, Methods are how we *do* our ministries. Our ministry may be Christian education, and the ways Christian education takes place in a local church can be quite different. Some of the methodologies that carry on the ministry of Christian education might be small groups, Sunday school classes, club experiences, and mid-week Bible studies. This list could be quite extensive in just one church. But methods can, *do*, change, and *should*—even if the ministry does not.

Methods answer to what is “below.” They do not exist on their own, and they are always open to change if they no longer fulfill what is called forth in the Message, Mission, and Ministries. They may be effective programming but also they may be harmful to persons or contradictory to the Message. They are not sacred. While we are married to the Message and the Mission, we are not married to Ministry and Methods.

Methods can vary greatly with time, culture, preference, setting, the abilities and gifts of the persons involved, etc. They are “tools” of ministry. **We want to continuously live with the Message. We want to continuously live with the Mission.** The Ministries and Methods grow out of them and *never* the other way around.

ASSUMPTION 4: THE CENTRALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

SHARE is foundationally a relational ministry, which is another way of saying that within SHARE leadership development means discipleship development. Relational Connectivity, one of the SHARE hallmarks, is about the Message and the Mission. SHARE is foundationally a relationally focused ministry. At its heart, its purpose is to provide a safe learning environment in which leaders are able to speak openly, freely, and transparently. While there are a variety of tools and practices that characterize the “work” of SHARE, because of this deep commitment to relational connectivity, the leader community is the primary means through which this relational ministry is fulfilled.

The Centrality of Relationships: Relational Leaders
How to become a caring, connected, and effective leader.
How to build a caring, connected, and effective team.

Leaders are given the responsibility to make things happen. They are charged with certain responsibilities that they must take care of. This is a wonderful opportunity, but it also has challenges. Primarily because the opportunities of congregational leaders are likely to be kingdom-sized, they cannot be accomplished solely on their own. Relational leaders—Great Commandment leaders—know they need others.

In SHARE we make a great deal out of *being* as opposed to *doing* because the emphasis in the church is often the opposite: “get it done.” The reality, however, is that sometimes leaders have to do ministry and employ methodologies. In order to achieve that in the context of the 4-M church and the 4-C person, the question is not only a matter of getting it done but of getting it done with others. As Great Commandment leaders in the context of the church, there are additional challenges. We are not working with robots, nor are we working just with people; we are working with fellow disciples who are also called to journey. Ministry cannot simply be about giving orders.

Our fellow disciples have ideas that may be just as good as or better than ours. They also have their personal, family, and life struggles. So how then do we get about what needs to be done?

The Baseball Diamond
(For graphic, see page 62.)

A key paradigm for leadership in the life of the church is called the Baseball Diamond. It is about a process of how we can go about building a caring, connected, and effective team and become a more caring, connected, and effective leader.

This is precisely what Jesus did. In Mark 3:13–18 we have the appointing of the Twelve Apostles by Jesus: “Jesus went up into the hills and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. These are the twelve he appointed...”

Softball or baseball in the United States is a widely known and enjoyed sport. It is a wonderful game. It is fun. It is safe. It is great game.

There are three critical components to the game of baseball:

- **All the bases have to be touched in order.** We cannot go to third base and then run back to home for the score. We have to go to first, first; then to second; and then to third—and then to home. There is no other path to take.
- **In order to score a run, you have to touch all the bases.** We don’t score a run unless we literally touch each base, and we don’t score a run just because we made it to first

base. We don't score a run if we get to first and second. We don't score a run even if we get all the way to third. We have to get to all four bases. We have to touch home.

- **The point is to score as many runs as possible.** Getting all around the bases in order once will not likely guarantee a win. The goal is to get around all of the bases as many times as possible. The more times around, the greater the score and the greater the victory. We want to score as many times as possible.

These common understandings about baseball provide a great metaphor for relational leadership and relational team building. It is a model for the relational and missional priorities of Jesus.

Note that the following contains personal stories from one of the national SHAPE trainers. What stories are part of your life's journeys that would illustrate these biblical truths?

FIRST BASE: We know and care for one another.

The disciples were first called to be with Jesus. There are lots of ways that this can happen that we can get to know and care for others. Here are some examples.

Know about one another's family, interests, strengths, struggles, goals, and dreams. Colossians 4:2 (NIV) states, "Devote yourselves to prayer being watchful and thankful." We can pray so much better when we know someone.

The more specifics we know, the better we can pray and the better we can care.

This kind of thing, by the way, can happen in secular organizations as well. There is a group called McCoy's that carries merchandise like Lowe's and Home Depot. They have stores in Texas and Missouri and perhaps other states as well. They have come to the conclusion that their only sustainable competitive advantage is relationships.

They try to incorporate this kind of knowing and caring throughout their whole organization. I had the opportunity to sit in on some training that they were doing in Austin, Texas. It was amazing to hear the company president share the kinds of things they do and testify to their business success as well.

One of the examples that most stuck out to me involved the company president, a delivery driver, and the store manager. The president just happened to be making a stop at this particular store and asked one of the drivers if he could go along with him. And so they are making several stops at homes that are being built.

Time was getting away from them and the president could see that the driver was beginning to get anxious. Not too long afterwards the cell phone rings. The person on the other end of the conversation was the store manager. He asked the driver how far along he was on his deliveries. The driver told him and the store manager who knew that this was the day that the driver had to be back on time to pick up his son from preschool offered to pick up his son for him. (Now this was a small community where someone else beside the parent can still do this because people know each other.)

The president said that you could just see the relief come over the driver's face. That conversation could have never happened unless the manager was making efforts to know those that work for the store.

In fact, the way that the sales people get to know customers is by simply asking this question if it is at the beginning of the week, "What did you do this weekend?" If it is at the end of the week they ask, "What are you doing this weekend?" These simple questions may lead into other matters. If someone says that we are putting our mother into a nursing home and then they receive a card, it goes a long way. This is about care that results from knowing.

Taking thought of one another: Ask, "How are you really doing." Take initiative. During the current time, as the United States and the rest of the world struggles with a set of economic challenges, many pastors and churches are experiencing some serious personal and family obstacles. Pay attention to the worlds of your pastors so that you can be helpful and compassionate.

Celebrate special days, accomplishments, etc: Birthdays are special accomplishments and worthy of celebration. As a leader, look for things to celebrate in the lives of others. As we know people we know what those things are. A staff member can have the responsibility to let the rest of the team know when someone's birthday has come. It gives everyone a chance to recognize it and not pass over it.

Comfort: "I really regret you've been going through that..." Some people are really good at expressing that kind of thing with such great heart-felt expression, but it can be learned. It may seem uncomfortable at first, but we can improve.

Giving first: Look for ways to give first to each other. You may have done a relational needs inventory prior to coming here, and if not you will experience it sometime. It will help us to learn about what our top relational needs are and what it looks like to meet them.

DERAILERS ON GOING TO FIRST BASE: We can get out before even making it to the first base of knowing and caring. Knowing is not enough: It is not enough to just have information but then not act on it. We are all guilty of that. We hear about what someone is going through but then never follow up on it.

Or we hear and do nothing because it seems like it is not that big of a deal. One trainer personalized this in this manner. Consider your own story:

My son came home a few days ago. He is doing well where is working and his boss, who is over Indiana, wanted her boss to meet Ryan.

He was really pretty excited about that all day and could hardly wait to get home to tell us. When he did, there was hardly any celebration from us. We had some lame kind of "that's nice." We knew it. We did not celebrate with him, and it was noticeable on his face. It was a derailment. We talked about that afterwards.

Not caring in a way meaningful to the other person: The mistake here is that we care for the other person in a way that represents the meeting of our relational needs. What we want is to meet the needs of others in ways meaningful to them.

SECOND BASE: We serve and trust one another.

This is going deeper with those around us. This is what was happening as the apostles spent time with Jesus. He was open and transparent about his life and ministry. We deepen trust by sharing our lives together: We cannot build trust hiding from people. This is something that I have to work on. A friend told me years ago that I hold my cards close to the vest. That is not good. We cannot be just continually sharing with everyone everything that is happening with us. But we need to be open with others.

Serve one another with apologies: “I regret I did that... Forgive me.” We may not feel that it is that big a deal. But the fact is we may have hurt them. We want to humble ourselves and make things right.

Express acceptance and forgiveness of someone who has let you down.

Build a safe place that says, We can be real here and still be cared for.

Sometimes we’re hurting.

Sometimes we are struggling with life issues

Can we be real about these?

Stop Triangulating! This lets people know that you don’t talk critically or negatively about them to others. We want to be trusted to do the right thing with others.

DERAILERS: We can also mess up on the way to 2nd base:

By not letting people know you. Sometimes we think the higher we go in an organization, even if that organization is a local church, the more closed we are. Remember this: Credibility is not based on perfection but on growth.

The inability to receive. So much of our lives in ministry is about giving that it feels very unnatural to receive. Be willing to receive. Here’s one story; present your own:

I was preaching at this church and as part of the sermon introduction was sharing that one of my dreams is to go to Alaska on a fishing trip—hopefully this August.

To my astonishment, a few days later I received a very nice note about my speaking and a \$5 check to help with expenses for the Alaska trip. The reason it was so meaningful to me was because it came from a man probably in his forties. When he was in the service, he got involved in drugs. The consequence of this is that basically he ruined his mind. He is unable to drive. He lives on disability in a small apartment.

But his heart wasn't ruined. He was gracious in his words. And considering the very small amount of income that he has, he was extraordinarily generous. Now I have to admit, not only was I strongly moved by this man's kindness, but my first reaction was to say, "I cannot take this. He needs this." But the more I thought of it, I realized that I would be taking something from him if I returned the \$5. It was hard to receive it.

In fact I have this pattern that I am trying so hard to deal with. But whenever someone offers something to me or offers to help me in some way, my first thought is to think they are being civil and saying the right things but that they really do not mean that; they hope that I will decline the invitation. I am learning to believe that they really do mean it, would not say it otherwise, and it is okay to receive the offer.

THIRD BASE: Here we support and accomplish with one another.
The key words are "with one another."

This is hardest for all of us. We are such an accomplishment-focused culture. We applaud getting it done. There is always a task to be done, and as soon as it is, we move to the next one. We want to jump to third base right away. Let's get to the agenda baby and knock it out.

Remember the order. We always want to go to first base *first* and *then* second base and *then* third base. There is work to be done. It would be unhealthy to remain only at first or second. Jesus sent his disciples out to partner with him in extending the kingdom through their various assignments. There must be a strong missional component to our lives and ministries.

The missional component, however, will be more effective in the end if the relational element is fully embraced.

We begin by giving support to others in accomplishing "their" job even when it is not your job! We want to change from *my* vision to *our* vision. We want to change from *my* team to *our* team.

DERAILERS:

We simply announce vision. I am the leader and here is the plan. We need input from others. Their input will actually create not only ownership but a stronger vision.

We move immediately to third base. We challenge people with the vision of accomplishing great things before knowing and caring for the people.

We want to "get 'r done"—moving to third base right away. In the end, however, we become less effective than we could have been. Jesus' model is best lived out when we go from first to second to third and then home.

HOME BASE: Here is where we are creative and connected.

At home base, we are not just cooperative, we are connected. This kind of team and these kinds of relationships produce attitudes that say, “We’ll do anything for each other.” They will help us accomplish the impossible.

In the experience of mutual connectivity, we make team care a priority. We make a sacrificial mutual commitment to grow; we help one another to keep growing. We involve more and more people in the vision.

Key Concepts

- **Great performance follows great relationships.**
- **Getting to home base will not kill us if we go as a team.** The burnout comes from going it alone for so long that there is nothing left. We can make it if we go as a team.
- **If we cover the bases, we are motivated by care and love and want to go the extra mile.** We are not just “doing the job”; we are accomplishing things out of a reserve that is greater than just sheer “gutting it out.”

ASSUMPTION 5: THE DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABLE HEALTHY MINISTRY

A “good and faithful ministry” is characterized by six hallmarks (spirituality, connectedness, knowledge, leadership, vision, and personal health)⁴ and three inclusive goals (personal, professional, and partnership):

Hallmarks

***Knowledge*—The leader can help congregations think in new ways about spirituality and community.** Healthy leaders seek continuing education opportunities and have access to competent practitioners in ministry and biblical and theological studies. Healthy leaders are willing to stretch and be stretched out of their comfort zones; they care and plan for growth and are lifelong learners.

***Spirituality*—The leader is more God-centered than church-centered or self-centered.** Healthy leaders create appropriate boundaries between work and respite and between family and congregation. They make time to engage in the spiritual disciplines of devotional time, solitude, and personal and family withdrawal, prayer, biblical and theological study, fasting, and rest. Healthy leaders desire to grow as whole persons and pay attention to their spiritual vital signs.

⁴ For more about the Hallmarks, see pages 199-214.

***Connectedness and life events*—The leader’s life touches people and brings them closer to God.** Healthy leaders strive to avoid isolation and are energized for ministry through regular contact with their peers. They and their families are nurtured by biblically based counseling and healthy Christ-centered relationships. Healthy leaders are committed to building relationships and are willing to be mutually accountable to others—specifically within the Christ-centered community of faith.

***Vision and fulfillment*—The leader helps others discern God’s plan for their lives.** Healthy leaders take charge of and assume responsibility for designing and taking part in study, relationships, and activities that sustain and nourish vision. They seek to live out of God’s purpose and are willing to plan for personal growth and development. By maintaining their own journey, they are able to inspire and assist others in vision and its fulfillment.

***Leadership*—The leader is empowered to make an orchestrated impact on the community.** Healthy leaders are able to recognize their strengths and weaknesses as they grow in self-awareness and insight. They then take charge of and assume responsibility for designing and taking part in study, relationships, and activities that sustain and nourish their life and leadership.

***Personal Health*—The leader recognizes the importance of physical and emotional health to an experience of holistic health and wellness.** The leader is able to connect the importance of personal health to the development of health in the previous five areas and develops a plan for diet, sleep, exercise, work and Sabbath rest, and the establishment of margin and boundaries that contribute to an overall healthy lifestyle.

Goals

***Personal Growth*—A healthy leader is one who embraces the six hallmarks in his/her personal growth.** Healthy leaders grow as parents and spouses. They grow as persons quite aside from any professional role. Healthy pastors develop their personal devotional life.

***Professional Growth*—A healthy leader grows as a person, seeking to become a better leader, better manager, and better disciple of Christ.** Healthy leaders grow as they seek to understand their roles and responsibilities as kingdom servants. They grow as a result of accountability relationships.

***Partnership Growth*—A healthy leader is connected with other leaders, grows in understanding the dynamics and values of a healthy Christ-centered community, recognizes individual and corporate responsibility to Christ as head of the church, and works to cooperate fully with God and God’s chosen servants in the fulfillment of the mission of Christ in the world in which they live and serve.**



SHARE: BUILDING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

THE PASTOR AS A DISCIPLER/COACH

A Special Word To Pastors

Pastor, as a SHARE participant and/or coach, you are already aware of the value of the cluster in the building of Christian community. All that you have experienced in SHARE provides the foundation for your work in your local congregation with the leaders who have been selected to work with you in the fulfillment of the mission of Christ in your world. The cluster experience of your local leadership will provide both opportunities and challenges that you did not encounter in your pastor's cluster. Recognize and be sensitive to those differences and stay focused on the primary goal of your SHARE

experience: the building of healthy persons in a healthy, God-centered, missional community. Be aware of the dynamics of your own transparency and vulnerability as you coach/disciple your leaders and make sure that your focus is continually upon the growth and development of your leaders.

The studies and experiences that are part of SHARE are designed to address issues of leader development as well as leadership development. In other words, SHARE is designed to aid in the development of the leader first

as a person in intimate relationship to Christ and then to the development of genuine biblical *koinonia* and leadership skills that can aid in the fulfillment of the mission of Christ in the world today. You, Pastor, as primary discipler and coach for your leadership team, can draw deeply from your SHARE experience in guiding your leaders into a deeper understanding of themselves and a deeper intimacy with God and each other. Take time to review your SHARE Manual to incorporate coaching and cluster protocols when developing a meaningful approach to your SHARE experience.



COACHING: 21ST CENTURY DISCIPLESHIP FOR THE CHURCH

A coach serves a variety of functions—all critical—in the life of a SHARE peer-learning cluster and in the development of the LAMP. The role of the coach cannot be understated. It is the key element in tying all of the various parts, practices, and experiences of SHARE into a coherent, organic, relational opportunity for life and ministry change.

You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and from what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. (2 Tim 2:2 NRSV)

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb 10:23–25 NRSV)



Coaching and *mentoring* are contemporary words describing the ancient and biblical practice of discipleship. On some level, discipleship is present throughout Scripture, for example, Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus and his disciples. Christian discipleship, as recorded in John 1:35–39, started early in Jesus’ ministry—in fact, the day after Jesus was baptized (John 1:35–39). John the Baptist declared that Jesus was the Lamb of God and, nearly immediately, Andrew and a friend followed Jesus. Soon they were telling others about Jesus.

Jesus called his twelve disciples, discipled them, and commissioned them to make disciples:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:18–20 NRSV)

Asking clarifying and challenging questions was one of Jesus’ primary teaching methods. Christian discipleship is more about following than believing, because once a decision for Christ is made, persons become Jesus’ disciples and follow in his steps. Discipleship, in the New Testament, is the most common means for developing leaders, for example, Barnabas and Paul, Paul and Timothy.

In this larger context, then, a Christian coach or mentor is one who works with disciples to help them follow Jesus more closely. A coach will do this in a variety of ways and under a wide set of circumstances. Whether we are talking about understanding God’s call, about becoming a more compassionate parent or spouse, about managing conflict in the local church, about improving teaching or preaching, or about determining where God is calling us next—the coach and mentor help the disciple to walk with greater integrity in the steps of Jesus.

Coaching and mentoring are two methods of discipleship, and while they may be complementary, they are quite different in focus. Nevertheless, it is helpful to think about these two methods on a continuum and not as exclusive terms. Depending on what is needed or what the disciple is asking, there may be times when a person in a coaching relationship would become a mentor and

vice versa. Generally, coaching is more highly relational, requiring a greater degree of transparency and trust, but that is not to say that mentoring is not relational, only but that it usually serves a more specific end.

Yet fundamental to both within the Christian context is the understanding that coaching and mentoring are both three-way relationships between client, coach, and Holy Spirit.

Coaching—a biblical context—coaching *to become* as well as *to do*:

Coaching is a way of improving [a person's] map as the journey continues. It ensures that people have someone to travel alongside them as they discover their destination—someone to help them think through their options and chart their course. Christianity has never been a go-it-alone faith, in spite of our frequent attempts to make it that way. God has called us to collaborative partnerships with other believers for accomplishing what he wants us to do: “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:24–25). God intended that believers join one another in walking down the path of growth. By walking together, we can gain a clearer sense of direction and purpose, seeing pitfalls ahead of time and discovering alternate routes when necessary. We can encourage one another when we lose sight of our destination. We don't have to go it alone....

Coaching can help people take steps that move them toward the completion of the work God has given them to do. That's strategy—that's coaching in action. Coaches are those who recognize that they have the opportunity to participate in God's plans by coming alongside others as they seek to grow and reach their potential.¹

Two Necessary Distinctions

Distinction 1: A coach is not a therapist. SHARE is a ministry initiative designed to strengthen and enhance healthy leaders and their ministries. The original and continuing purpose of SHAPE/SHARE, as expressed in the grant proposal to the Lilly Endowment, is based on the conviction that

a well-lived pastoral life is best perceived as an ongoing journey in which pastors confidently embrace a personal sense of calling, are informed by a personal vision for lifelong ministry, and are affirmed and confirmed by the local congregation and the movement as a whole. Like all journeys, the rhythm of the pastoral journey is uneven, and effective pastors commit to seeking sustenance and support as they address colliding expectations and shifting demands of ministry, strive to

¹ Robert E. Logan and Sherilyn Carlton, *Coaching 101: Discover the Power of Coaching* (Churchsmart Resources, 2003), p. 17–18.

balance self-care with service to the congregation and community, and grow in biblical, personal, spiritual, and theological dimensions.

This perspective is valid for congregational leaders as well. In the framework within which SHARE functions, such biblically informed phrases as “journeying together” and “fellow pilgrims” may be more definitive. Stated another way, the goal of SHARE—beyond service in the local congregation—is to assist the participant in answering the key discipleship question, What is it going to take for Christ to be formed in me?

In the context of the hallmarks and goals of SHARE, we are asking questions like, How is this person relating to Jesus? How is this person relating to the Word? How is this person relating to others? How is this person being formed into the image of Jesus Christ?

Therefore, the role of a coach is not the same as a counselor, nor is it the same as a mentor. The purpose of a cluster is not therapy, nor is it to provide answers and fixes. The outcome of the LAMP is lifelong learning and development within the overriding context of God’s will for the SHARE participant. Because the focus of SHARE is on sustaining health and relational excellence and because all persons are a mix of healthiness and unhealthiness, it follows that coaches will encounter, perhaps even unearth, unhealthiness in otherwise healthy persons. Clearly the focus on healthiness and excellence does not allow a coach to ignore the weaknesses or problems in a person’s life. Some of this unhealthiness may extend beyond the purpose of a cluster and the capacity of a coach. Referral for additional help outside the cluster may be necessary, even as the person remains in the cluster.

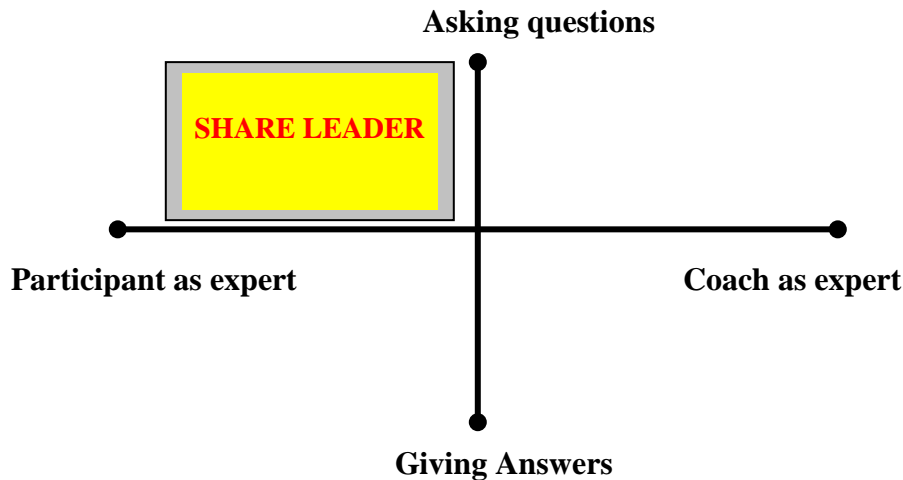
Distinction 2: In SHARE, *coach* is not synonymous with *mentor*. Here are some definitions:

Mentor: A mentor is more about replication than discovery. A mentor is a person who has achieved a degree of expertise/excellence in an area; the mentor is selected by the mentee because of that expertise/excellence so that the mentee might also grow in that particular area. ***A mentor goes ahead and “pours in.”*** Mentoring tends to be more specific, often skill or knowledge oriented, and focused more by the mentee. The topic or question is set by the mentee, but the mentor sets the content and direction. A mentee asks the question, “Please teach me how to do this—or how to do this better?”

Coach: A coach is more interested in invitation and discovery and not in replication. A coach has fewer answers and more questions. The coach is a companion who helps another to grow. ***The coach walks alongside and “draws out.”*** Coaching is more broadly focused—some would say “life” focused. The coach is invited to help another person make major life and work/ministry decisions. Coaching is a relationship with a purpose based on facilitating change. A coachee asks the question, “Would you please help me figure this out?”

Bob Logan puts it this way: [Coaching] “ensures that people have someone to travel alongside them as *they* discover *their* destination—someone to help *them* think through *their* options and chart *their* course” (*emphases added*).

The role of a coach may be best illustrated as occupying the upper left-hand quadrant of the following graph. The coach moves, as appropriate, among the roles of asking questions, facilitating disclosure, and engaging participants as experts.



Coaching and mentoring are two methods of discipleship, and while they may be complementary, they are quite different in focus. Nevertheless, it is helpful to think about these two methods on a continuum and not as exclusive terms. Depending on what is needed or what the disciple is asking, there may be times when a person in a coaching relationship would become a mentor and vice versa. Generally, coaching is more highly relational, requiring a greater degree of transparency and trust, but that is not to say that mentoring is not relational only that it usually serves a more specific end.

LIVING AS THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH

Autonomy, independence, division, complacency, apathy, indifference. Unfortunately, these are words with which we in the life of local congregations are all too familiar, which is strange, considering we are called to be a people after God's own heart; a people firmly devoted to the Lord and living as examples of the power and presence of God in our world. Remember, we are the people of whom Scripture says,

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (John 13:35 NIV)

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. (John 15:12–13 NIV)

I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Eph 2:21–22 NIV)

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.... Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. (Phil 1:27, 2:5 NIV1984)

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who Loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because

God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. (1 John 4: 7–12 NIV)

Very practically, every follower of Jesus Christ should daily ask themselves this question, “Am I lifting up Jesus in my daily conduct—internally and externally—so that the Lord and my world know that I am a faithful, devoted disciple of Christ?” Have you ever thought about your witness to the Lord? In looking at your life on a daily basis, how does God know that you truly love him? And how does your world—both those in the body of Christ and those who do not yet know Jesus as their Savior—know that you are a faithful, devoted disciple of Jesus? Remember, *there is nothing that happens to us in life that gives a right to be ungodly*. Living as the community of faith begins with our personal response to the Lord—our commitment to the faithful pursuit of holiness and unity in every area of life. And when we come together and live that life corporately, we find that Jesus draws people into a fellowship that will faithfully lead new believers, and each other, into the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:13).

As stated in the opening pages of this manual, it is within the context of community that we, as followers of Jesus Christ, experience the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:11–13). In community we know and are known. Scripture affirms numerous times that we need each other in order to know ourselves fully or to know God as fully as we can.

Yes, the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ is this: We need each other.

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:22–23 NIV1984)

Now you [all] are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it. (1 Cor 12:27 NIV)

...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...speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Eph 4:13, 15–16 NIV1984)

The Church of God reformation movement has throughout its history proclaimed the doctrines of holiness and unity as central to its life. While these doctrines have been articulated from the pulpit and in writings over the years, the actual practice of both has been sorely lacking in many respects. We have embraced our autonomy and our independence at the expense of a genuine New Testament practice of both holiness and unity, which are built foundationally upon the holy love that the triune God has entrusted to us. Holiness and unity are relational experiences lived out and practiced in community: as the children of God to the community of faith and as witnesses to an unbelieving world of the power of the gospel to transform life. And when we neglect to ap-

appropriate biblical truths regarding them to daily conduct of our lives, we fail to produce the corporate life of the church God desires for us as his people.

We need each other.

James Bryan Smith, in his book, *The Good and Beautiful Community*, writes:

I need to be reminded that as a follower of Jesus I am peculiar, in the best sense of that word. Peculiar, that is, to the world around me that does not live by the teachings of Jesus. My life is rooted in the eternal strong kingdom of God; the roots of my life are in the future, safe and secure, which gives me strength to live unselfishly, to strive for unity in the midst of diversity, to forgive even when it is not easy, to set my standards high, to live generously, to long to be worshipping in the house of the Lord and to be a witness of new life to a dying world. I need to be reminded and I need a community around me to help me remember who and whose I am, and what that means for my daily life.²

Personal spiritual formation and growth in community are critical to the health and ministry of the local congregation and must not be sacrificed for the sake of the next program that comes along. *Being* is the foundation of kingdom *doing*. *Healthy relationships* are the foundation of *healthy kingdom practices*. *Being the body of Christ fulfilling the mission of Christ in the world* is why the local congregation exists. When that truth becomes the rationale for our life congregationally, we will be on the road to a kingdom transformation that can potentially transform our communities in honor to the Lord.

“More people have been brought into the church by the kindness of real Christian love than by all the theological arguments in the world.”

—William Barclay

² James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Community* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 19.



THE SHARE JOURNEY

THE SHARE PROCESS

Another Word for the Pastor

The pastor as coach provides primary leadership for the SHARE experience in the local congregation. The training and experiences of the SHAPE journey become the foundation of a meaningful SHARE experience. Please rely heavily on your SHAPE journey for direction in presenting SHARE to your congregational leadership team.

Remember this basic rule for your SHARE experience—it is more important to *land* what is presented than to meet a predetermined schedule. This section provides a “roadmap” for leading your team through the basic SHARE curriculum. Following this section you will find a section of materials particularly designed to address a variety of needs that every congregation faces. SHARE can be best experienced when the practices follow this format. Please make sure you have thoroughly covered the previous pages of this manual before you begin to work with your leadership team. As coach, you are the person that will determine the effectiveness of the SHARE journey for your congregation.

Building Community: Know Your Neighbor

Every session of the actual cluster begins with connecting again, catching up on what has been going on since the group was last together, and following up on anything learned in the previous session—prayer concerns, challenges in church and family, etc. The Know Your Neighbor form (KYN) (see p. 59) is always the first step both in training and in coaching a cluster. These are filled out, shared in the group, and collected by the coach. It connects to the “Baseball Diamond” and provides an early stage of learning about who makes up the leadership team.

A key element of this experience is the follow up: either the next day or the next time of the training, the coach should follow up with a tangible response to something indicated on the KYN. For example, if someone says that their favorite snack is nachos and Dr. Pepper, when the group meets again, provide them with their favorite snack—and watch what happens. Another follow up is to send a note, e-mail, or card on their birthday or anniversary. This is a fundamental teaching tool about the importance of knowing each other.

Other check-in questions can include:

- Where did I meet God since we were last together?
- Where has God been at work in your life, your relationships, or work since we were together last?
- Where is God finding great joy in your life?
- How has God spoken/moved/related to one of the hallmarks in your life this month?

Landing the Vision.

In some ways, this is the most important teaching step in SHARE. Careful attention to getting this vision across to your leadership provides the context for understanding everything else that happens in SHARE. Being able to answer the question—*What is SHARE?*—will help to bring focus to everything else. Understanding the purpose of SHARE, as well as its theological and

philosophical underpinnings, is essential for everyone involved in SHARE. This personal sharing, flowing from the pastor's experience in SHAPE, should easily lead into the group understanding:

The 4-C Person

The 4-M Church

Building Healthy Community: Baseball Diamond (Mark 3)

Introducing the Hallmarks

For greater insight into the meaning of the Hallmarks, please take time to read the essays on each of the Hallmarks that are found in the resource section of this manual.

Reflection and learning. Every opportunity must be provided for people to “get it.” Allowing time for persons to reflect upon and think about their experiences will help in the landing of it. Furthermore, all SHARE practices are designed for sharing in the cluster; the pastor/coach needs to experience that from the inside as well.

Please review the information found on pages 43–44 prior to introducing the Hallmarks to the leadership team. Health and continuing growth in life does not happen automatically or without commitment and effort. Nor can we expect health and growth if commitment is to the wrong values and effort is made in the wrong areas. A hunting group once hired a man whom they were told was the best guide in Kenya. But after two days of wandering and finding nothing, they confronted their guide. “We were told you were the best guide in Kenya!” “Yes,” the guide replied, “but I think we are in Uganda.” So we in the church can find our efforts ineffective if we are not properly focused on the elements of health and growth that lead to good and faithful ministry.

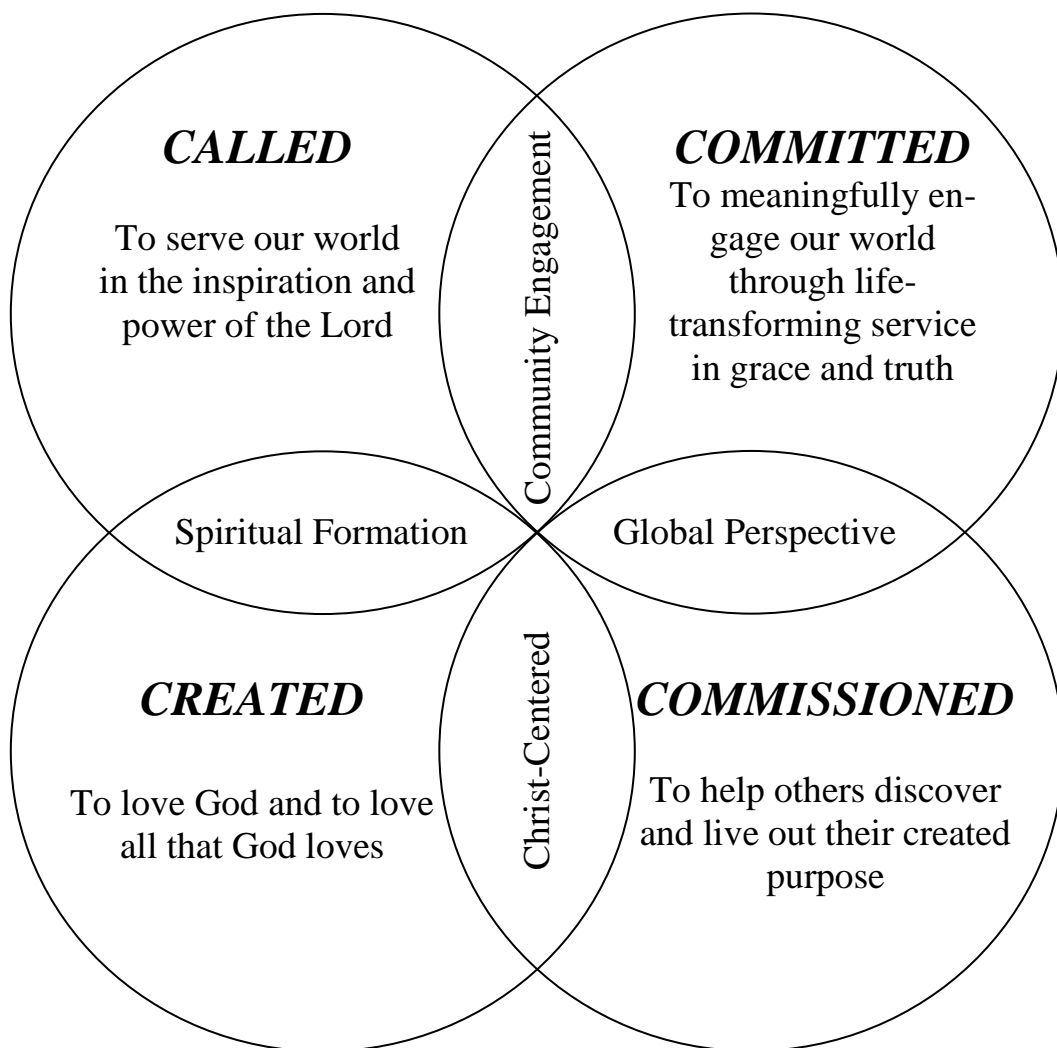
KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR

First and last name	
Spouse or significant other	
Children: names and ages	
Pets	
Favorite drink and snack	
Favorite food and restaurant	
Favorite hobby	
Birthday	
Other key dates	
My favorite all time TV show is:	
If you gave me a plane ticket to go anywhere in the world, I would go to:	
If I could have anyone (living or dead) as a dinner guest, I would invite:	

THE 4-C PERSON

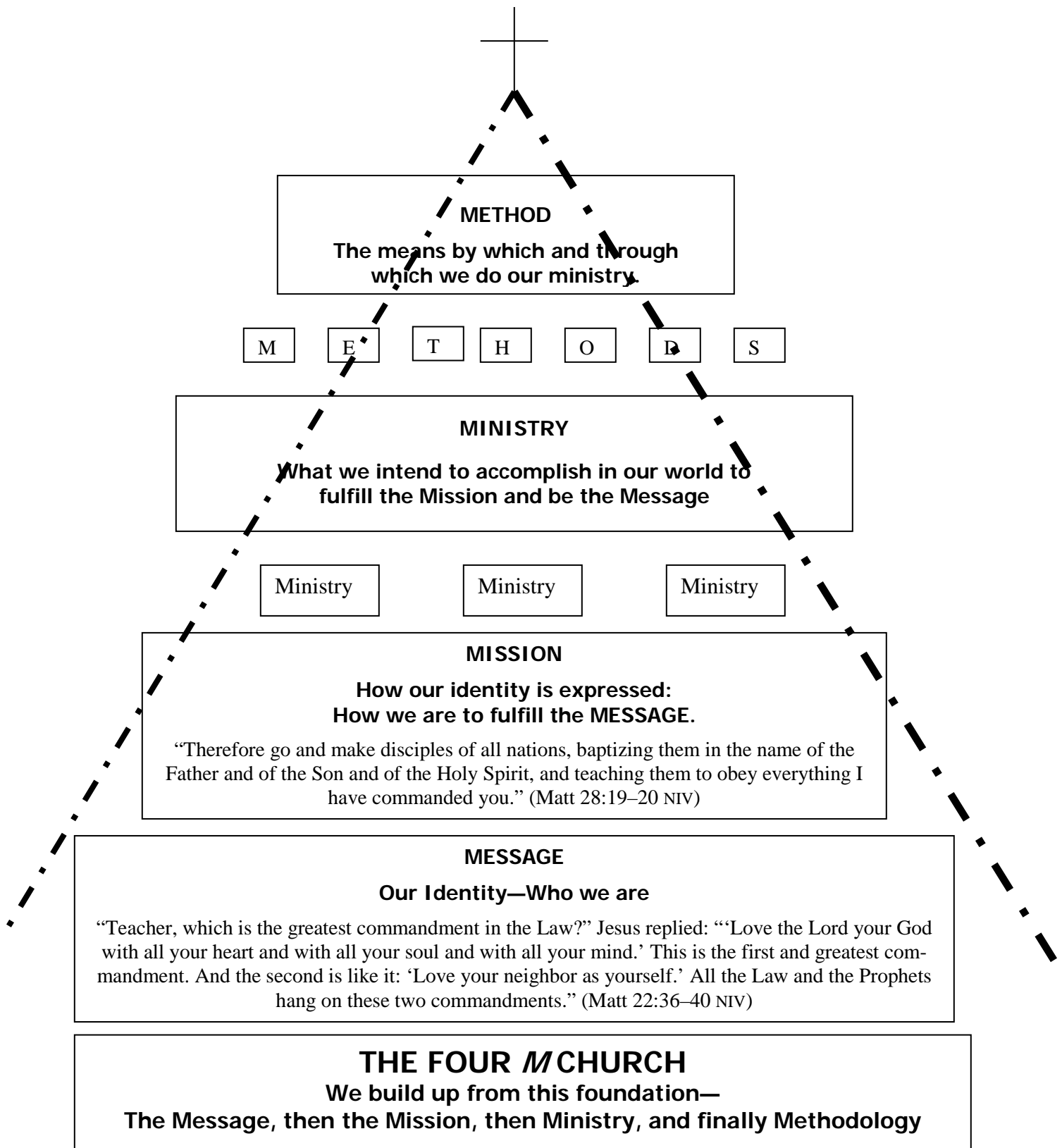
For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

—Colossians 1:16 NIV1984

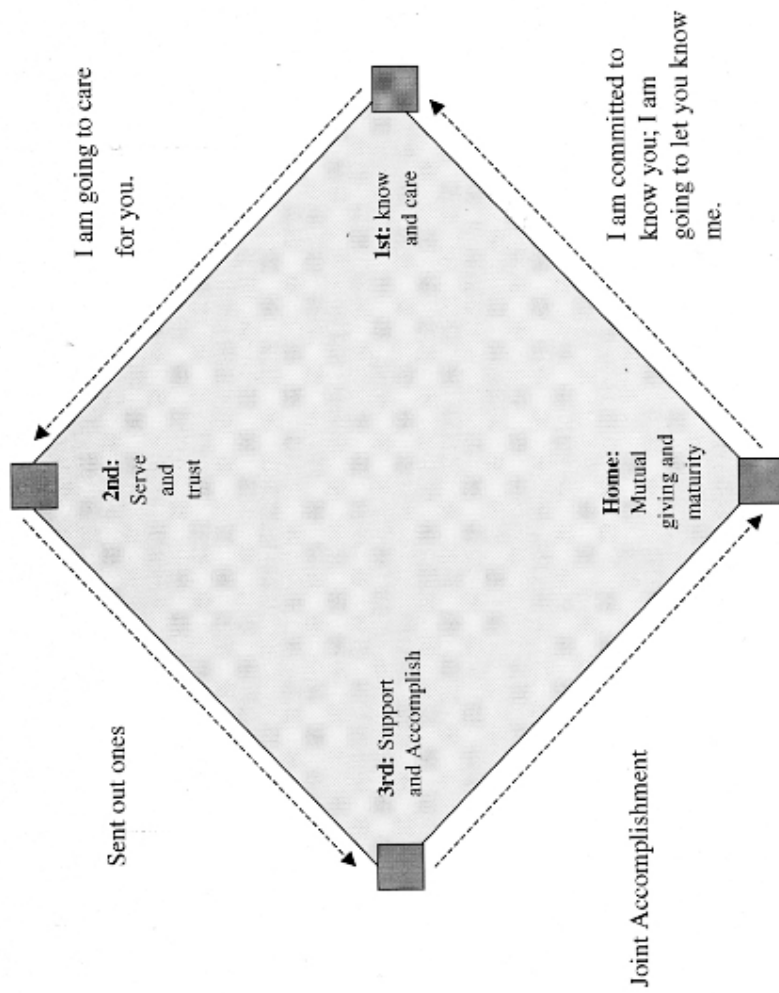


What we bring to the life of the church both personally and corporately can be much more significant to effective ministry than the methods of ministry we embrace. The health of a congregation, or any group, begins with the health of the people who make up that group. A God-centered, healthy view of self significantly impacts the health of the church.

THE 4-M CHURCH



Coaching Model: KNOW ... CARE ... DO (Mark 3)



TOUCH ALL BASES IN ORDER

SHARE HALLMARKS

SPIRITUALITY

The leader is more God-centered than world-centered or self-centered.

KNOWLEDGE

The leader is growing in God awareness, self awareness and world awareness and can help others think in new ways about spirituality, community, and service.

CONNECTEDNESS

The leader's life touches people and brings them closer to one another and to God.

VISION

The leader has a sense of what God is doing in the world and how he/she is to be engaged.

LEADERSHIP

The leader influences others to engage in the activity of God in their world.

PERSONAL HEALTH

The leader recognizes the importance of physical and emotional health to an experience of holistic health and wellness.

BUILDING AN ALTAR OF REMEMBRANCE

A relational activity to create connection, understanding, and gratitude. Joshua 4 is one example of God's emphasis on gratitude—remembering the past as we move to the future. The list of questions can be used in part or in whole as a way to share remembrances with one another and express gratitude for what God has brought us through and blessed us with. It is recommended that you use only one question for this first session. Most often asking persons to remember someone of influence, a particular life verse, or a moment when they experienced Christ has been used in this first setting.

- Ask each coach to reflect on one of the questions and then write their remembrances on stones. (You may choose to gather rocks from the setting you are in, purchase river rock from a local Walmart or craft store, or use paper.)
- Then ask that they each share their remembrance with the rest of the group, reminding the group to share in celebration with them. "Rejoice with those who rejoice."
- SHARE will be an environment in which each person can share remembrances of celebration and work through pain from the past as well. It is important to build the altars so that generations to come will ask, "What do these stones mean?" and we will have the opportunity to share what God has been doing in and through us on the journey.

MY JOURNEY IN LOVE

This activity begins with the premise that we have all been created for the same purpose: *to love God with our entire being and to love all that God loves*. While we may choose to word it differently, at the core, we must affirm conceptually that every person shares this common purpose. But the reality of life is that we have all been effected by experiences that have caused us to see God, ourselves, and our world—both human and nonhuman—through a faulty lens of love. This experience helps us redefine, to the extent necessary, our understanding of who we are in Christ through the experiences that have helped us embrace and exercise the spirit and nature of godly, Christ-centered love in all our relationships.

Through a series of reflections upon your interaction with God's Word and life experiences, the *My Journey in Love* experience leads you to identify areas of growth in your understanding of Divine love and the practice of that love in all our your relationships. Don't be afraid to be transparent with yourself as you contemplate how your life's experiences have shaped your picture and practice of love and be bold in addressing issues of areas of growth in love. Each participant will fill out the "My Journey in Love" page and be ready to share with one another after they have done so.

Healthy Leaders: Empowered by Gratitude

Building an Altar of Remembrance

...take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan from right where the priests stood and to carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight.

—Joshua 4:2–3 NIV1984

God commanded the Israelites to pick up stones from the middle of the Jordan and build an altar. God explained that the altar was to be a testimony to their children and to other nations of the power and faithfulness of God. The altar was built as a memorial, or reminder, of the awesome God they served.

As you reflect on your Life Celebrations, what stones would you pick up to build an altar in honor of God? Allow God's Spirit to forget not the benefits of God (Ps 103:2) as he stirs your heart with gratitude.

Picking Up Stones

1. An encounter with Christ that was life changing
2. A person whom the Lord specially involved in shaping and guiding your life
3. A blessing from Christ that was life changing
4. A scripture that has come alive in your heart to guide and shape your life
5. An opportunity from Christ that was life changing
6. An answered prayer that God used in a special way
7. A loss, disappointment, or tragedy from which God brought forth great purpose and good

MY JOURNEY IN LOVE

As you reflect upon the centrality of love in God's creative and ministry plan, take time to consider and celebrate your own journey in understanding and experiencing God's love in your own life. What factors have played a significant role in your own development?

List scriptures, persons, and events that have helped you understand and experience God's love for yourself.

List scriptures, persons, and events that have helped you understand and experience your love for God.

List scriptures, persons, and events that have helped you understand and experience your love for other persons and for all of God's creation.

Have there ever been times in your life when you questioned God's love for you or your love for yourself? How have you dealt with those times of questioning?

Have there ever been times in your life when you questioned your ability or willingness to love other persons? How have you dealt with those times of questioning?

As you think about your life right now, what steps of growth in love would you like to see occur?

WHICH CHRIST DO I NEED MOST?

What is your view of Jesus Christ? One of my earliest memories of Jesus was the finger-pointing Jesus I encountered in the singing of the children's song about Zacchaeus. When we would come to the place in the song when Jesus invited Zacchaeus to come down from the tree, we would all gleefully point our fingers upward and scoldingly say, "Zacchaeus, you come down!" and end the song clapping our hands. As a child I lived with an understanding of Jesus as a scolding Jesus, waiting to tell me what I had done wrong (which I did quite frequently it seems!). Many have developed pictures of Jesus that seem to fail us or condemn us throughout life. The Jesus who judges, the Jesus who waits for us to fail, the Jesus who is disappointed in us, the Jesus that we can never quite please: These views of Jesus often leave us unhealthy and out-of-balance in our lives. They also rob us of the reality of the God who loves us intimately and who made that love beautifully known through the Son. There is no question that God calls us to responsible, faithful, obedient living, but the foundation of that call is not condemnation but rather grace and love. Within the framework of grace and love, God cheers us on to victorious, holy living. God provides all that we need to dwell within divine love through all of life's events and circumstances. We serve a God who loves us dearly and wants us to succeed!

This experience invites cluster participants to think about Jesus and their relationship with him as evidenced in the image of Christ they most often connect with—and also the image of Jesus they are most in need of.

WHICH CHRIST DO I NEED MOST?

The Discipline of Solitude—the real Christ:

Jesus is excited to share in your love.

- ? The welcoming (accepting) Jesus of Luke 19:5
- ? The encouraging Jesus of Luke 22:32
- ? The compassionate (weeping) Jesus of John 11:35
- ? The embracing Jesus of Matthew 19:15
- ? The lovingly confrontive Jesus of John 18:11
- ? The grace-filled Jesus of Luke 15

Which Jesus am I most in need of at this time in my life?

I'm sometimes hindered in seeing Christ as "excited to love me" because I am:

Reflection and learning

THE PRIORITY OF HEARING GOD BIBLE STUDY

One of the SHARE hallmarks is spirituality. Briefly stated, this hallmark says, “The pastor is more God-centered than church-centered or self-centered.” It becomes easy for many to lose sight of the importance of a personal devotional life—time with the Lord alone—when we become involved in life’s daily routines and in service in the local congregation. While serving others we can easily neglect caring for self. This study asks us to consider what God may be saying to us about the priority of our own spiritual health as spiritual leaders of a congregation.

Process

- Individual work. Provide a copy of the guide for each participant. This is a quiet time for individual reflection and discernment. Provide plenty of time for this process.
- Small group sharing. After the individual work, in small group, guide the cluster through these questions:
 - What is my dominant image of Jesus? Do I see Jesus more as critic or as lover?
 - How might things/activities crowd my relationship with Jesus? What are the dominant distractions in my life?
 - How might following Mary’s example guard against distractions that steal my joy?
- Questions/connection to cluster and LAMP: How does this Bible study connect to your LAMP?

Bible Study: The Priority of Hearing God

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her. (Luke 10:38–42 NRSV)

In this passage, we see a contrast between Martha, a follower of Jesus who truly loved him but made a priority of *activity* for him, and another follower, Mary, who loved Jesus and made a priority of *hearing* from him.

Review the text and consider the following questions, along with the implications the passage might have for your own priorities:

1. What was Mary's posture? What is its significance to the principle of yielding even before you hear?
2. What is Mary's purpose?
3. Which priority does Jesus say is more important: listening to him or doing things for him?
4. What emotions does Martha seem to portray in her words to Jesus?
5. What evidence of self-centeredness, a demanding attitude, and an insistence on divisive comparison do you see in Martha's words and actions?
6. How might things and activities have crowded your own relationships with Jesus?
7. How might following Mary's example with Jesus guard us against the distractions that stole Martha's joy?

Close your study with this prayer:

Lord Jesus, I yield my priorities to you. I know that I need to prioritize hearing from you even *above other necessary* activities. Help me to set aside time regularly to “sit at your feet”—seeking you, listening to you, and hearing from you.

In Jesus’ name,

Amen.

MY LIFE & MINISTRY STATEMENT

Discover Your Focus by Writing out a Personal Life & Ministry Statement

Definition

Your calling in life is what brings purpose and significance to your life. It is the source and focal point of your vitality, your commitment, your passion, and therefore your destiny with God.

Your Life & Ministry Statement is about your life. It is not only about your current ministry or calling. While your current calling is one of the most important aspects of your life, it is not the only. But everything flows from the Life & Ministry Statement of your life.

Understanding your Life & Ministry Statement helps you gain perspective on where you are and where you want to go. Your Life & Ministry Statement can assist you in setting personal and ministry priorities. It can also give you the ability to live your life more intentionally, and it forms a solid point of focus for the development of your Life and Ministry Plan.

The Process

One way to discover or uncover your primary life focus is to follow a multistep process of writing out a Life and Ministry Statement. Your Life & Ministry Statement is already within you. Reflecting on key questions will help you discover what is deep within your heart. The process is more about discovery than creation.

Sometimes this is an easy process; other times it may be difficult and challenging. Remember to be rigorously honest with yourself. This is all about you and the inner desires of your heart, not other people's expectations of you. Lastly, the discovery of your life focus and the creation of a Life and Ministry Statement is not a "one time event." It is not static; it is development. You should review your Mission and Life & Ministry Statement every 3–5 years. It is a process that continues to unfold all our lives.

DISCOVER YOUR FOCUS BY WRITING YOUR LIFE & MINISTRY STATEMENT¹

Our mission is the Great Commission, not something we define on our own. Our challenge is to discover our place and role in the fulfillment of the mission through our own calling and giftedness for ministry: our life focus or primary aim:

- a. List 3 to 5 key Bible verses, stories/events, or biblical principles/commandments that mean a lot to you:

- b. Make a list of 3 to 5 men and/or women that you admire from your life and the Bible. After each name, list the character quality(ies) you admire about that person.

- c. Reflect back on your life. Try to remember those important lessons of life that you learned. Many of these may have come through others or even through difficult times or failures. Write down 3 or 4 of the most important (formative) ones.

¹ Adapted from a model developed by Dr. Al Eells, Leaders That Last. Use with the author's permission.

- d. Have you ever had dreams, plans, and ambitions—especially those that came from childhood or seemed to come from God? Write down any lingering dreams you still have or disappointing ones that you’ve given up on.

- e. Now list what you *don’t* want in life. When finished, circle the top two or three that elicit the most negative emotional response.

- f. List what you *do* want in life. When finished, circle the top two or three items that elicit the most positive emotional response—you want these the most.

- g. Set priorities to what you want in life by listing and prioritizing the top two or three items you circled in “f” above. List them in order of importance, and by each one describe a barrier or limitation you may have to its accomplishment.

- h. Imagine being dead after your eightieth birthday. What epitaph would you want written on your tombstone (avoid “Well done, good and faithful servant”)?

- i. What would you want Jesus to say to you upon encountering him in person?

- j. Now write a draft of your personal Life & Ministry Statement:

- k. Share your draft Life & Ministry Statement with those who know you and value you—including your cluster partners.

- l. Refine your Life & Ministry Statement based on the feedback you received.

Sign and Date your Life & Ministry Statement:

Name _____ Date _____

Revisit your Life & Ministry Statement every three to five years, or whenever significant change occurs in your life, to make sure that you are being a good steward of the life that God has entrusted to you.

LIFE-MAPPING

Once the Journey in Love and Life and Ministry statements are complete, it is time to begin the mapping. Mapping is about self-discovery and personal assessment. It can be both a painful and a joyful process because mapping is about remembering key events and key relationships in your life and work that, for better or worse, play a significant role in your formation as spouse, parent, person, and leader.

Life-Mapping is a means to get a sense of the big picture of one's whole life so that the basis for the life and ministry plan is laid. Life-mapping is "a way of looking at your life by displaying its component parts so that you see key events, patterns, and your potential in a fresh, new way. It involves "storyboarding" your past and your future so that you become an active participant in rewriting your own life story. And its goal is to move you with clarity and conviction to healthy relationships, Christlikeness, and a hope-filled future."²

Storyboard with Sticky Notes

- Each cluster member will need a poster board and a number of sticky notes of each color. (It is not required to use the colors on the following page, but you will need four different colors for each person. Provide a way for them to keep track of what the colors represent.) Ask them to draw a line dividing equally the top from the bottom.
- Walk them through the following questions for each of the first three colors of sticky notes. Each question will have multiple answers, and only one answer goes on each note. They can place the notes on their poster board.

Green Sticky Notes: What are the positive events in your life? What are some key transitions that changed your life in a positive way?

Orange Sticky Notes: What are the negative events in your life? What are some key transitions that changed your life?

Yellow Sticky Notes: Who has influenced you? Who are you influencing (circle these names on your sticky notes)?

- When they have completed green, orange, and yellow notes, ask them to create categories to organize their sticky notes. Some might use chronological stages; some might use "family, school, ministry"; others might come up with other categories. This is for their use, helping them to organize the many notes on their poster board using the top half of the board.
- **Cherry Sticky Notes:** What are the themes that emerge as you consider your "life map"? Once they have created their categories and placed their notes in the appropriate categories, ask them to consider any themes that may have emerged. Use the cherry sticky notes to record these themes. Perhaps in several categories they will see lack of connectedness,

² John Trent, *Life Mapping* (WaterBrook Press), 1998.

loneliness, deep trust, or “celebration.” Any theme that they can identify should be written on a cherry sticky notes and placed in the appropriate area.

- ***Green Sticky Notes:*** What are your strengths, spiritual gifts, personality traits, skills? Ask each person to list his or her strengths on the green sticky notes. These notes will be placed in the categories where they evidenced themselves as well. They may need to duplicate one particular strength on several sticky notes if that strength shows up in several categories.
- ***Orange Sticky Notes:*** What are your limitations? What growth areas do you currently see? Ask each person to list his or her limitations on orange post-it notes. Perhaps they have discovered new areas as they worked through their life-map. These post-its will be placed in the categories where they evidenced themselves as well.

RELATIONAL (INTIMACY) NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Relational Needs Assessment Tool: Provide each cluster participant with the assessment. The following will help to set this in context.

While we all seem to have most of the same intimacy needs, the priority of those needs at particular times of life can be different for each person. Your greatest need may be for *affection*, while your partner's greatest need may be *security*. One child may have an acute need for *comfort*, but another sibling's greatest need may be *encouragement*. *Appreciation* may be at the top of the list for your next-door neighbor, while your tennis buddy may need *approval* more than anything else.

An important aspect of learning to love people is taking the time to know them and to discover what their unique needs are. Perhaps this is what Peter meant when he admonished husbands to “live with your wives in an understanding way” (1 Peter 3:7 NASB). It may also be a part of how a woman “watches over the affairs of her household” (Prov 31:27 NIV). It is, no doubt, part of parents' “unwrapping” gifts that God has given them through children. “Children are a gift from the Lord” (Ps 127:3 NLT).

This questionnaire will help you assess your most important intimacy needs. It will also help you to think about how needs are met. Answer the questions; then use the Interpretation Chart to identify which needs you perceived as most important. (*Incidentally, this is one assessment that is often very beneficial to be used with spouses; it may even be helpful for your family members to complete the questionnaire and discuss the results.*)

RELATIONAL (INTIMACY) NEEDS ASSESSMENT³

This exercise will enable you to better identify the priority of your relational needs.

Instructions

Take time to individually respond to the following statements by placing the appropriate number beside each sentence.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Name: _____ Date: _____

- ___1. It is important that people receive me for who I am, even if I'm a little "different."
- ___2. It is important to me that my world is in order.
- ___3. I sometimes grow tired of trying to do my best.
- ___4. It is significant to me when others ask my opinion.
- ___5. It is important that I receive frequent physical hugs, warm embraces, etc.
- ___6. I feel good when someone takes a special interest in the things that are important to me.
- ___7. It is important for me to know "where I stand" with those who are in authority over me.
- ___8. It is meaningful when someone notices that I need help and then offers to get involved.
- ___9. When I feel overwhelmed, I especially need someone to come alongside me and help.
- ___10. I feel pleased when someone recognizes and shows concern for how I'm feeling emotionally.
- ___11. I like to know that I am significant and valued by others.
- ___12. Generally speaking, I don't like a lot of solitude.
- ___13. I like it when my loved ones say to me, "I love you."
- ___14. I don't like being seen only as a part of a large group; my individuality is important.
- ___15. I am pleased when a friend calls to listen to me and encourage me.
- ___16. It is important to me that people acknowledge me not just for what I do but for who I am.
- ___17. I feel best when my world is orderly and somewhat predictable.
- ___18. When I've worked hard on a project, I am pleased to have people acknowledge my work and express gratitude.
- ___19. I am happy when others who enjoy my company are with me.
- ___20. It is encouraging to me when I realize that others notice my skills and strengths.
- ___21. I sometimes feel overwhelmed and discouraged.
- ___22. It's important to me to be treated with kindness and equality, regardless of my race, gender, looks, and status.
- ___23. To have someone I care about touch me on the arm or shoulder or give me a hug feels good.
- ___24. I enjoy it when someone wants to spend time with just me.
- ___25. It is meaningful when someone I look up to says, "Good job."
- ___26. It is important to me for someone to show concern for me after I've had a hard day.
- ___27. While I may feel confident about what I "do" (my talents, gifts, etc.), I also believe that I need other people's input and help.
- ___28. Written notes and calls expressing sympathy after the death of a loved one, health problems, or

³ Business as Unusual 1 © Copyright Center for Relational Leadership; PO Box 201808, Austin, TX 78720-1808.

other stressful events are (or would be) very meaningful to me.

- ___29. I feel good when someone shows satisfaction with the way I am.
- ___30. I enjoy being spoken well of or affirmed in front of a group of people.
- ___31. I would be described as an “affectionate” person.
- ___32. When a decision is going to affect my life, it is important to me that my input is sought and given serious consideration.
- ___33. I am pleased when someone shows interest in current projects on which I am working.
- ___34. I appreciate trophies, plaques, and special gifts, which are a permanent reminder of something significant that I have done.
- ___35. It is not unusual for me to worry about the future.
- ___36. When I am introduced into a new environment, I typically search for a group of people with whom I can connect.
- ___37. The possibility of major change (moving, new job...etc.) produces anxiety for me.
- ___38. It bothers me when people are prejudiced against others just because they dress or act different.
- ___39. It is necessary for me to be surrounded by friends and loved ones who will be there “through thick and thin.”
- ___40. Receiving written notes and expressions of gratitude particularly please me.
- ___41. To know that someone is thinking of me is very meaningful.
- ___42. People who try to control me or others annoy me.
- ___43. I am pleased by unexpected and spontaneous expressions of care.
- ___44. I feel important when someone looks me in the eye and listens to me without distractions.
- ___45. I am grateful when people commend me for a positive characteristic I exhibit.
- ___46. I don’t like to be alone when experiencing hurt and trouble; it is important for me to have a companion who will be with me.
- ___47. I don’t enjoy working on a project by myself; I prefer to have a “partner” on important projects.
- ___48. It is important for me to know I am “part of the group.”
- ___49. I respond to someone who tries to understand me emotionally and who shows me caring concern.
- ___50. When working on a project, I would rather work with a team of people than by myself.

Identifying Your Top Needs Form

1. Add up your responses to statements:

1 ___
19 ___
36 ___
38 ___
48 ___
Total ___

These responses relate to the need for Acceptance.

2. Add up your responses to statements:

2 ___
17 ___
35 ___
37 ___
39 ___
Total ___

These responses relate to the need for Security.

3. Add up your responses to statements:

11 ___
18 ___
25 ___
34 ___
40 ___
Total ___

These responses relate to the need for Appreciation.

4. Add up your responses to statements:

3 ___
15 ___
21 ___
33 ___
41 ___
Total ___

These responses relate to the need for Encouragement.

5. Add up your responses to statements:

4 ____
14 ____
22 ____
32 ____
42 ____
Total ____

These responses relate to the need for Respect.

6. Add up your responses to statements:

5 ____
13 ____
23 ____
31 ____
43 ____
Total ____

These responses relate to the need for Affection.

7. Add up your responses to statements:

6 ____
12 ____
24 ____
30 ____
44 ____
Total ____

These responses relate to the need for Attention.

8. Add up your responses to statements:

7 ____
16 ____
20 ____
29 ____
45 ____
Total ____

These responses relate to the need for Approval.

9. Add up your responses to statements:

10 ____

26 ____

28 ____

46 ____

49 ____

Total ____

These responses relate to the need for Comfort.

10. Add up your responses to statements:

8 ____

9 ____

27 ____

47 ____

50 ____

Total ____

These responses relate to the need for Support.

1. What were your three highest totals? Which needs do they represent?

2. What were your three lowest totals? Which needs do they represent?

TEN KEY RELATIONAL NEEDS⁴

(Interpretation Tool)

1. **ACCEPTANCE:** Receiving one another willingly and unconditionally, especially when one's behavior has been less than perfect. ("Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" —Romans 15:7, NRSB.)

Looks like: freedom to fail; being given another chance. **Sounds like:** *I know that you want to do better. I'm looking forward to serving together.*

2. **AFFECTION:** Expressing care and closeness through appropriate physical touch; saying, "I love you" or "I care about you." ("Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you" —Romans 16:16, NRSB.)

Looks like: appropriate greetings with friendly smiles, handshakes, and welcoming words; recognition of special days and occasions. **Sounds like:** *You're really special! I love you.*

3. **APPRECIATION:** Expressing thanks, praise, or commendation to one another ("And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful" —Colossians 3:15; "I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you" —1 Corinthians 11:2, NRSB.)

Looks like: certificates, notes, rewards for effort as well as accomplishment; public and private recognition and thanks. **Sounds like:** *You did a great job. Thank you for your thoughtfulness. I appreciate your diligence. I know you are working on that.*

4. **APPROVAL:** Building up and affirming one another; affirming both the fact of and the importance of a relationship. ("Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear" —Ephesians 4:29, NRSB.)

Looks like: You are "bragged on" and built up to others. **Sounds like:** *I'm proud of you! You are a gift from God to us. I'm glad to get to serve with you.*

5. **ATTENTION:** Conveying appropriate interest, concern, and care; taking thought of one another; entering another's world ("But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another" —1 Corinthians 12:24b–25, NRSB.)

Looks like: Individual, undivided listening. Effort to get to know you and your needs. Asking your opinion. Going to breakfast or lunch. **Sounds like:** *Tell me how things are going. I'd like to get to know you better.*

6. **COMFORT:** Responding to a hurting person with words, feelings, and touch; hurting with and for others in the midst of grief or pain ("Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" —Romans 12:15, NRSB; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our afflictions")

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tion, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God” —2 Corinthians 1:3–4, NRSB.)

Looks like: Putting an arm around you when you’re sad. Sitting quietly and just “being there.” Crying with you. **Sounds like:** *I’m sad for you. I’m so sorry that you are going through this. I know you are disappointed. I know it really hurts when....*

7. ENCOURAGEMENT: Urging another to persist and persevere toward a goal; stimulating toward love and good deeds (“Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing” —1 Thessalonians 5:11, NRSB.)

Looks like: A phone call to pray for you on your “big day.” A note expressing belief in you, that you can do it. **Sounds like:** *I know you can do it. Don’t give up. Keep at it. I believe in you!*

8. RESPECT: Valuing and regarding one another highly; treating one another as important; honoring one another (“Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor” —Romans 12:10, NRSB.)

Looks like: Authority appropriate to your responsibility. Freedom to do the job your way. Listening without interrupting. Checking with you before making plans that affect you. Appropriate tone of voice. Confessing wrong to you. **Sounds like:** *I’d like to hear your ideas. What do you prefer? I was wrong; will you forgive me?*

9. SECURITY: Ensuring harmony in relationships; providing freedom from fear or threat of harm (“Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” —Romans 12:16–18, NRSB.)

Looks like: Not threatening you. Not harming you in any way. Setting appropriate limits and reasonably enforcing them. Providing for needs. Not losing temper at you. Being dependable. Keeping promises. Providing training. **Sounds like:** *I’m here for you. We’re going to work this out. I’m going to keep my promise to you.*

10. SUPPORT: Coming alongside and gently helping with a problem or struggle; providing appropriate assistance (“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” —Galatians 6:2, NRSB.)

Looks like: Helping you with a big project. Teaching you how. Doing hard things together. **Sounds like:** *How might I help you? I’ll be glad to help you. Just let me know. How might I assist you?*

Relational (Intimacy) Needs Assessment Discussion: After the assessment and processing is complete, facilitate a discussion about what it means, how does it ring true, what surprises does it contain? What confirmation does it give? How might you use this with staff or committees? If it was used in the family, perhaps some would share about any breakthroughs in communication?

Most groups find this tool and process helpful in knowing and caring for one another. Also highlight the benefit to family relationships, church leadership groups, and other settings. This is another tool to help us know ourselves better and, at times, to give us a language with which to express that knowledge and our needs.

Relational leaders not only know their own needs and the interests, struggles, and joys of their team, they deeply know the needs of others. Philippians 4:19 says, “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” Obviously, the apostle Paul was convinced that we have a “needs-meeting” God—one who possesses both boundless compassion and unlimited resources with which to meet all our needs.

As human beings, we have physical, spiritual, and relational needs. Everyone is acutely aware that we have an ongoing need for physical nourishment. God, in his sovereignty, elected to meet that need through food and water. In addition, we have a persistent need for rest to renew our strength. God chose to meet this need for physical restoration through the process of nightly sleep. We also share certain spiritual needs. Every person has a need for redemption and the forgiveness of sin. We all have a need for the unconditional love of God because there is within each of us a deep longing for fellowship with our Creator. Finally, we were all created with certain relational needs. Each of us has an ongoing need for attention, affection, and security in our relationships. Through spiritual maturation, we learn to humbly admit these needs and exercise faith in God’s provision. In reality, that is how we experience God’s love. We need acceptance, and he gives it (Rom 15:7); we need forgiveness, and he grants it (1 John 1:9); and we need comfort, and he provides it (2 Cor 1:3–4).

But Scripture tells us in Genesis 2 that not only do we need a relationship with God, but we also require relationships with other people so we will not be alone (Gen 2:18). But what is it exactly that we need from each other? The Bible again gives us the answer. Romans 15:7 exhorts us to “accept one another” (NIV); Romans 12:10 urges us to “honor one another” (NIV); and 1 Thessalonians 5:11 tells us to “encourage one another” (NIV). If Scripture tells us to give these things to each other, it stands to reason that we must need them. We must need acceptance, honor, and encouragement.

Discernment: Did God speak to you during or after your Relational Needs Assessment? What did he say?

How will this assessment and discernment be reflected in your LAMP?

THE LIFE AND MINISTRY PLAN (LAMP)

Assessments. At some point in the process of SHARE, all participants will undergo some set of personal assessments. These assessments may vary, but key to the SHARE process are the 16PF, a spiritual gifts inventory, the DiSC, and other measuring devices, such as the *Relational (Intimacy) Needs Assessment*. Each of these assessments tells the participant something about personal strengths and abilities, as well as identifying personal life challenges. As coach, take time to walk through each assessment as the participants consider their goals.

Assessments may vary across regions; some assessments may be specific to a region; some assessments may be specific to a cluster or an individual. In all cases, they are used as one of the bases for developing the LAMP Assessments that have proven helpful include:

- DiSC Profile
- 16PF
- Marital Health and Emotional Health
- Spiritual Gifts Inventory
- Natural Church Development
- Strengths Finder by Gallop
- Leading from Your Strengths
- Relational Needs Questionnaire

In addition, as the LAMP is developed, take full advantage of the information and insights discovered in foundational SHARE experiences: the Hallmarks; Building an Altar of Remembrance; My Journey in Love, Life, and Ministry Statement.

Two guides for LAMP development follow. After review, please use the one that makes the most sense to you and that you can most easily use.

Life and Ministry Plan: Leader's Summary

The LAMP: The LAMP is a planning tool that sets the direction, limits, and means by which the SHAPE/SHARE hallmarks are connected, within which the SHARE goals are measured, and through which growth in Christ is achieved. An acronym, it reflects the inclusive focus of SHARE work: **Life And Ministry Plan**. Through the use of the LAMP, participants will create the means by which they grow. It is intended as a key process in SHARE as well as in the whole life of participants.

A LAMP is a means to sustain a healthy life and pursue excellence in ministry *so that*, first and foremost, individuals and groups can grow as persons and leaders under the lordship of Jesus Christ living out their calling within the context of the congregation that has called them to lead.

Every one of the following SHARE practices is designed to lead into the development of a LAMP.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIFE AND MINISTRY PLAN (LAMP)

The LAMP Defined

“‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV).

In a holistic sense, the LAMP is best explained with an acrostic:

L stands for **Life**. The LAMP is not only about leadership: it is about your being; you are a human *being*, so the LAMP is about you, your family, and your friendships and about your own personal relationship with God and how these come together holistically, healthily, and with a high level of connectivity.

A stands for **And**. This is a key word. Note the words *holistic*, *healthy*, and *connectivity*; note that they show up as part of the definitions for life **and** ministry.

M stands for **Ministry**. The LAMP is not only about your life; it is about your calling and your work; you are a human being *and* a human doing, so the LAMP is also about you as preacher, teacher, pastor, leader, guide, gifted person, prophet, counselor, your calling under God to a particular congregation, and how these come together holistically, healthily, and with a high level of connectivity.

P stands for **Plan**. In other words, we are talking about something that is more than a good idea; we are talking about something that is more than aspirational; we are talking about goals, objectives, assessment, timelines, and accountability.

The defining characteristics of the LAMP process are:

- It is strengths based, future focused, and life and ministry connected.
- It is mission driven.
- It provides a clear picture of an individual's life goals and story.
- It can provide insight, growth, and healing from a biblically positive perspective.
- It grows and develops as the minister grows.

A well-conceived and developed LAMP will help the follower of Christ to:

- Identify and move beyond past hurts.
- Build and follow a positive plan for your future (vision).
- Improve your communication and problem solving.
- Add intimacy as it reduces daily stress.
- Deepen your spiritual life as you move towards Christlikeness.
- Improve your self-knowledge.
- Build and strengthen your relationships.
- Clarify your call and build your personal mission.
- Deepen your walk with God

While the format for the LAMP may change, it will always be organized around the SHARE hallmarks and the SHARE goals.

HALLMARKS: A personal LAMP directs the participant in addressing growth in the hallmark areas indicated through assessment and personal narrative:

- Spirituality
- Connectedness and Life Events
- Knowledge
- Leadership
- Vision
- Personal Health

GOALS: A personal LAMP directs the participant in addressing growth in each hallmark area through one of the overall goals of the SHAPE initiative.

- Sustaining health and relational excellence through **personal health** (e.g., care of self, care of personal and familial relationships, growth as a person, personal spiritual health).
- Sustaining health and relational excellence through **professional experience** (e.g., growing as a leader, administrator, educator, pastor, counselor, visionary, servant).
- Sustaining health and relational excellence through **partnership** (e.g. growth through intentional connectivity with those with whom one serves).

Therefore, one goal may be connected to more than one hallmark. For example, spirituality needs to be addressed in the context of personal health, professional experience, and partner-

ships. Vision and fulfillment, for another example, need to be addressed in the context of personal health, professional experience, and partnerships.

A good LAMP clarifies who, what, where, when, how, and how much?

By developing measurable goals, followed by realistic steps to reach those goals, followed by a timeline, accountability is built in for the coach, the participant, and the cluster.

Goals and objectives set out what is to be accomplished and when it will likely happen. Good goals can be difficult to set because they must be faith-stretching goals without being presumptuous.

Therefore, goals should be SMART—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely (see pages 113–114).

All of this flows out as your LAMP—your personal life and ministry plan—leads you toward the personal realization of the goals of life and ministry that are healthy and whole. The LAMP develops out of a rhythm that can be described in terms of private and communal growth. The LAMP is a living document; it is about finding meaning and purpose and an increasingly congruent perspective—a joining together of life and ministry in a seamless process of growth. It is a *personal* plan. But it is not a *private* plan; therefore, it is also covenantal and collaborative, involving the coach and the participant’s family and congregation. It is also a plan developed in the context of a group of fellow SHAPE participants with whom the participant covenanted to journey.

The cluster—or learning/growth community—is “a group of colleagues who come together in a spirit of mutual respect, authenticity, learning, and shared responsibility to continually explore and articulate an expanding awareness and base of knowledge. The process of learning community includes inquiring about each other’s assumptions, biases, experimenting, risking, and openly assessing the results.”⁵

The learning/growth community, the participant’s cluster, is the primary context within which the LAMP and its fulfillment are actualized. The participant’s “work” is not the only thing that clusters are about; what the participant does in between cluster experiences, the journaling of and reflection on that work, as well as the serendipitous experiences and connections along the way, become the content of the work done collaboratively in cluster.

THE STAGES OF LAMP DEVELOPMENT

1. LAMP STEP ONE: The LAMP begins with a thoughtful review of the whole SHAPE journey to date and includes the assessments, practices, exercises, conversations, and mapping exercises, as well as input from the cluster and coach. The LAMP is developed collaboratively with coach, cluster, spouse/family, and, as appropriate, congregational leaders. Understanding what these assessments are saying to the participant about the participant is central to step one—and the whole LAMP development process.

⁵ Reggie McNeal, *Revolution in Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press), 1998.

2. LAMP STEP TWO: The next step in the development of the **LAMP** will be determining a set of conclusions based on those assessments, the hallmarks and goals, and the self-learning processes. These conclusions are really answers to questions.

One outcome of the assessment is the identification of *strengths*. The coach and cluster help the participant think about such question as, Where are things going well? “What are good habits? Healthy relationships? And so on.

The other outcome of the assessment is *growth areas*. The coach and cluster help the participant think about such questions as, Where am I being pushed? Where am I out of my comfort zone? What saps my strength? What do I not know? And so on.

The coach helps the pastor consider the conclusions that can be drawn from the assessment process, life experience, and ministry needs and goals. From these, an intentional plan is developed that includes:

3. LAMP STEP THREE: Goals, objectives, and timeline. Keeping all your resources in mind—assessments, maps, purpose and mission statements, what areas of concern emerge as significant to your growth and development. Working with the coach and the other cluster participants, each participant should write out one goal for each hallmark that they see as growth areas at this point.

- A **goal** is a broadly stated direction that reflects an area of assessed need for growth.
- An **objective** is the specific measurable action steps you plan to take to accomplish the goal.
- The **timeline** is the estimated time period during which you will undertake to achieve the goal and by which time you will have completed the action steps.

Some aspects of the **LAMP** will be individual—about the individual primarily. Some aspects of the **LAMP** will be corporate—about the cluster and common strengths and needs. But in the context of assessment and hallmarks, the participant will also create his/her own curriculum as a part of the plan—books, group studies, workshops, mentoring experiences, retreats, Galatians 6:6 Intimate Life Marriage Retreats, and on and on.

THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE—

A key qualifier to the process and a means to underscore the “living” nature of a LAMP: The planned curriculum and processes for learning clusters will serve to convene a cluster meeting. Once together, however, learning will occur serendipitously. While it is vital for each cluster to pursue its own journey, it is equally important that each cluster map out a learning path that includes the hallmarks, goals, and core curriculum of SHAPE.

4. LAMP STEP FOUR: Journal. Although not a requirement, it is a good idea to keep a journal—an ongoing narrative of “my work” in SHARE. This is where the participant tells the story of the process—some of what is journaled may result from direction by the coach; other journaling will be private reflections and commentary about the curriculum (both individual and common); some journaling will be about the cluster experience.

Also, other members of the cluster may get involved as they share their own progress, their goals, their learning, and insights. There may also be some mutual accountability matters that emerge within the cluster.

The LAMP never ends. Even as the participant works on developing a LAMP, the process of SHARE continues. A LAMP is always under review. Even the process of developing a LAMP may create new discoveries and learning that will change it.

Sharing of LAMP progress: After work on the LAMP has begun, coaches should regularly check in on progress. Specific and planned times for sharing each other's LAMPs should be built into the process. A LAMP, remember, is personal but not private, and its development and implementation should be shared with the whole cluster—and the cluster should be invited to speak into its development.

Concerns that can always be addressed are: Are goals formulated? Are there ways the cluster can help you in achieving those goals?

L_{ife}

A_{nd}

M_{inistry}

P_{lan}



*“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light
unto my path”*

Psalms 119:105

LEADERS
that LAST
MINISTRIES™

YOUR LAMP

(Life And Ministry Plan)

“But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus...” —Acts 20:24 NASB

The cry of most leaders is to be successful in what God has called them to do. We want to “apprehend that for which we were apprehended.” We want to “finish well” and be assured that we have “served the purposes of God” in our lives and in our generation.

But with so many temptations, distractions, and obstacles, how can any of us be reasonably assured that we are on the right track running the right race? One major way of keeping our heart right, our lives on track, and our focus clear, is to intentionally examine our lives (Pr 26:2) and embrace change.

Completing a Life And Ministry Plan (LAMP) is a tool that can assist one in being focused and intentional in the necessary areas of one’s life. It is a means by which each of us can also “lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Heb 12:1 NKJV).

May this LAMP guide help you sustain excellence in leadership and finish well.

**Rev. Alfred H. Ells, M.C.
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The ‘LAMP’

“And David having served the purposes of God in his generation, fell asleep...” (Acts. 13:36)

- A **tool for change** that encompasses all of one’s life.
- A **roadmap** for your journey to becoming the effective leader you want and God wants.
- A **living and dynamic document**, not an end product.
- The plan belongs **to you**.

The plan will have the following four basic components:

1. An **Information Gathering Step**. An information gathering step usually includes assessment material, feedback, and thought about one’s life and mission.
2. A **Strength and Growth Areas Step**. Strengths and Growth areas are identified and listed along with Opportunities.
3. A **Goals, Actions & Timelines Step**. Converting Growth areas into priorities for change by listing *3 to 5 key goals* that become the current focus for growth, development, and change along with *plans for how to meet the goals*.
4. A **Progress Diary** that records the results of your efforts and the work of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 3:3).

LAMP STEP 1

“The Information Gathering Step”

This initial step is **an information gathering step**. Begin your LAMP by gathering assessment material that is going to help you know yourself and your ministry better. The resultant understanding of your strengths and weaknesses will assist you in discerning God’s focus for your life at this time. You may want to gather some of the following information:

- Copies of current and past mission statements for you, your ministry, family, etc.
- Copies of personal and organizational assessment results, such as Leading from Your Strengths, 16 Personality Factor Assessment, Meyer-Briggs, Natural Church Development, etc.
- LifeMapping™ Results
- Spiritual Gifts Inventories
- Social History or Genogram
- Input from significant others
- Etc.

You will want to review the personal, relational, and professional aspects of your life: One way to do this is to examine your life in the context of the **Six Hallmarks** (see page 110).

1. SPIRITUALITY
2. CONNECTEDNESS
3. KNOWLEDGE
4. VISION
5. LEADERSHIP
6. HEALTH

LAMP STEP 1

“The Information Gathering Step”

Describe what you have done to assess yourself. What assessments have you done or feedback have you solicited in order to appropriately evaluate personal, relational, professional and organization aspects of your life.

KNOW...

Who you are.

What you are called to do.

LAMP STEP 2

“The Strength and Growth Areas Step”

Based upon information gathered through **Step 1** please list your main “strengths” and “growth areas” (weaknesses). Consider at least one strength and growth area for each of the **Five Hallmarks** and indicate the **Hallmark**.

List of Strengths:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

List of Growth Areas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

OPPORTUNITIES

At this time in your life: What opportunities is God offering that would further enable you to complete your God-given mission?

List a few of these opportunities:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

LAMP STEP 3

“Goals, Action Steps and Timelines”

From your growth and strength lists, choose 3 to 5 of the MOST vital areas that you feel God wants you to focus on now.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Prioritize them according to importance:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

On the following pages, establish for each area a GOAL (brainstorm if need be) that capitalizes on your opportunities, utilizes your strengths and will help you grow in Vision, Leadership, Connectedness, Knowledge, Spirituality or Health.

“Example”

Establish for each growth area a GOAL (brainstorm if need be) that capitalizes on your opportunities, utilizes your strengths, and will help you grow and change personally, relationally, professionally, or organizationally.

❖ Strength/Growth Area: Pride

Hallmark: SPIRITUALITY

GOAL : I need to grow in Humility

List steps and people that will help you achieve your goal:

1. Do a Scripture study on Pride and Humility by end of month
2. Ask my wife and friends for examples of my pride by ???
3. Make a list of 5 ways my pride shows by ???
4. Confess my pride to my peer group/mentor/coach by ???
5. Preach on Pride whenever I have the opportunity
6. Pray and repent daily of my pride
7. Look for opportunities to show humility

“Example”

Establish for each growth area a GOAL (brainstorm if need be) that capitalizes on your opportunities, utilizes your strengths, and will help you grow and change personally, relationally, professionally, or organizationally.

❖ Strength/Growth Area: Gift of Writing

Hallmark: VISION

GOAL: I want to write a another book

List steps and people that will help you achieve your goal:

1. Hire a bookkeeper/office manager to manage office
2. Move my office home for more “thinking, writing”
3. Have book introduction and chapter outlines done by Feb
4. Hire editor (Heather?) and submit above to her in Feb
5. Secure Baker or Thomas Nelson by March
6. Ask Bill Turner to write forward
7. Have first draft ready for editing by end of July
8. Send draft to Bill in order to write forward

“Goals, Action Steps and Timelines”

Now List your Goals, Action Steps and Timelines:

❖ Strength/Growth Area: _____

Hallmark: _____

GOAL 1: _____

List steps, people and timelines that will help you achieve your goal:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

❖ **Strength/Growth Area:** _____

Hallmark: _____

GOAL 2: _____

List steps, people and timelines that will help you achieve your goal:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

❖ **Strength/Growth Area:** _____

Hallmark: _____

GOAL 3: _____

List steps and people that will help you achieve your goal:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

❖ **Strength/Growth Area:** _____

Hallmark: _____

GOAL 4: _____

List steps and people that will help you achieve your goal:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

❖ **Strength/Growth Area:** _____

Hallmark: _____

GOAL 5: _____

List steps and people that will help you achieve your goal:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

LAMP STEP 4

“Record the Results of Your Efforts”

Document the ongoing narrative of how well your improvement plan is working.

Journal your:

- Reflections
- Insights
- Difficulties/obstacles
- Achievements
- Progress
- Coach’s input
- Others’ input
- Holy Spirit’s leading
- Etc.

The 6 Hallmarks

Hallmark 1: **LEADERSHIP**—Empowers and influences the congregation for impacting the community positively. The pastor is empowered to make an orchestrated impact on the community

Hallmark 2: **CONNECTEDNESS**—An ongoing connection with ministry peers and appropriate friendships. The pastor's life touches people and brings them closer to God.

Hallmark 3: **SPIRITUALITY**—An ongoing devotional study, Scripture reading, and prayer life that is observed in personal and spiritual growth. The pastor is more God-centered than church-centered.

Hallmark 4: **KNOWLEDGE**—An ongoing biblical and theological study that supports the pastor's ministry and personal growth. The pastor can help congregations think in new ways about spirituality and community.

Hallmark 5: **VISION**—An ongoing discernment of God's plan for his people's lives. The pastor helps others discern God's plan for their lives.

Hallmark 6: **PERSONAL HEALTH**—An ongoing valuing of the importance of physical and emotional wellness. The pastor models physical and emotional health practices that promote well being.

LEADERS THAT LAST

By Alfred H. Ells

Issues Unique to Pastors and Ministry Leaders

Alfred H. Ells is the founder and director of Leaders That Last Ministries™. He is an ordained minister, consultant, and author of several best-selling books and devotionals, including *Leaders That Last: How Covenant Friendships Can Help Pastors Thrive*. Al has founded or assisted in establishing numerous Christ-centered treatment programs for individuals, families, and youth, including **LifeGate** residential treatment center for adolescents and **Remuda Ranch** treatment center for women suffering from anorexia and bulimia.

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Leaders That Last Ministries™ is a not-for-profit organization that equips Christian leaders to finish well, lead with excellence, and fulfill the great commission. We offer specialized services that meet the personal, professional, and organizational needs of Christian leaders. Our services include:

The Leader's Life

- Leadership assessment and coaching
- Succession planning
- Biblically based counseling
- Friendship and accountability groups

The Leader's Organization

- Organizational consultation
- Team building and conflict resolution
- Strategic planning
- Governance training and assessment

The Leader's Training and Education

- *Leaders That Last* seminars, conferences, and luncheons
- Resources
- Speaker's bureau

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CREATING S.M.A.R.T. GOALS¹

Specific • Measurable • Attainable • Results-oriented • Time-bound

Specific: A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal.

To set a specific goal you must answer the six “W” questions:

- Who: Who is involved?
- What: What do I want to accomplish?
- Where: Identify a location.
- When: Establish a time frame.
- Which: Identify requirements and constraints.
- Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

Example: A general goal would be, “Get in shape.” But a specific goal would say, “Join a health club and work out 3 days a week.”

Measurable: Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal.

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as, “How much?” “How many?” “How will I know when it is accomplished?”

Attainable: When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

You can attain most any goal you set when you plan your steps wisely and establish a timeframe that allows you to carry out those steps. Goals that may have seemed far away and out of reach eventually move closer and become attainable, not because your goals shrink, but because you grow and expand to match them. When you list your goals you build your self-image. You see yourself as worthy of these goals, and develop the traits and personality that allow you to possess them.

Results-oriented: To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both willing and able to work. A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be. But be sure that every goal represents substantial progress. A high goal is frequently easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seem easy simply because they were a labor of love.

Your goal is probably realistic if you truly believe that it can be accomplished. Additional ways to know if your goal is realistic is to determine if you have accomplished anything similar in the past or ask yourself what conditions would have to exist to accomplish this goal.

¹ <http://www.topachievement.com/smart.html>

Time-bound: A goal should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it there's no sense of urgency. If you want to lose 10 pounds, when do you want to lose it by? “Someday” won’t work. But if you anchor it within a timeframe, “By May 1,” then you've set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal.

T can also stand for Tangible. A goal is tangible when you can experience it with one of the senses, that is, taste, touch, smell, sight or hearing. When your goal is tangible you have a better chance of making it specific and measurable and thus attainable.



BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST

While the core values, principles, and practices of SHAPE/SHARE are critical to the experiential growth of the people of God, there are a number of other significant issues facing the church today that warrant our attention. The following list of areas in the life of the church are provided to help each pastor/leadership team and their congregation deal with the relevant issues that confront them at any given time in their life's experience. A number of resources are provided for each of the eight areas that have been identified as critical for the health, growth, and mission fulfillment of the local congregation:

Core Values for the Body of Christ

Qualities and Characteristics of a Godly Leader

Personal Growth and Maturity of the Child of God

Dealing Effectively with Change

The Church: the Body of Christ

Managing Conflict

Stress Management

The Lifecycle of a Church

Developing a Mission-Focused Church

These nine areas embrace two essential elements of congregational life that are worthy of our consideration and efforts in growth and development: *The spiritual life of the body of Christ* and *The servant life of the body of Christ*.

Following is the "SHARE Congregational Leadership Assessment." The leadership team should complete this to help determine next steps in growth and development.

THE SHARE CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

On the following pages you will find the SHARE Congregational Leadership Assessment. This instrument will help identify specific areas of opportunity for the growth and development of your leadership team. The areas measured in this assessment are: values, lifecycle of the church, spiritual formation of the leader, dealing effectively with change, conflict resolution, developing a mission-focused church, mission focus, building and effective leadership team, and stress management. When the leadership team is comfortable and confident that the core values and principles of the SHARE journey have been experienced this assessment tool will help determine next steps for growth and development.

As you prepare to administer this assessment, please keep in mind the following:

- Please read and follow all instructions carefully.
- It is best if the assessment is done individually rather than in a group.
- Have participants respond to each statement from their own perspective rather than from a group perspective. This assessment should reflect each individual's perception of the leadership team and congregation.
- This is a subjective assessment that focuses upon the *being* of the leadership team more than the *doing* of tasks; it is an assessment focused on the strength of relationships—the spiritual and relational formation of the leadership team—rather than the performance of roles and responsibilities. Assessments and consultants that can aid in the development of basic skill sets for leadership are suggested in the resource section of this manual.

Following the completion of the assessment a summary of the team's responses is done. As noted, a higher score suggests a greater sense of health. Two score sheets—one for the lay leaders' scores and one for the pastoral staff scores—are provided so that variations in perspectives can be noted. After discussion a plan of action can identify next steps to strengthen the team and provide a stronger foundation for effective ministry. Numerous resources addressing each of these areas can be found on the following pages on this manual.

SHARE CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

The leadership team (Church Board/Council members and pastors) at your church has entered into an experience that the Church of God is calling Sustaining Health And Relational Excellence (SHARE). The purpose of SHARE is to create healthy and Christ-focused relationships among congregational leaders, with the strong belief that the congregation will grow in effective ministry for Christ.

This survey is a tool to help identify the specific experiences in SHARE that are most likely to be beneficial. Using this instrument will help your team identify opportunities for relational growth and point to exercises in SHARE that will be helpful.

Please respond to each question with your first impression. As you respond, understand that when the questions refer to the “leadership team” it is speaking of both the pastoral and elected lay-leadership (Church Board) at your local church.

Place the number corresponding to your response to each question.

1= Disagree Strongly 2= Disagree 3=Uncertain 4= Agree 5= Agree Strongly

- _____ **1.** The leadership team at my church (lay and pastoral) shares the same core values.
- _____ **2.** The leadership of this congregation tends to want to live in the past.
- _____ **3.** It is clear that one of the priorities of our team is to nurture spiritual growth.
- _____ **4.** As a leadership team, we seem to hate to have to change.
- _____ **5.** When there is conflict between members of our team, we find good ways to resolve it.
- _____ **6.** As a team, leadership in this congregation is working together toward the same ends.
- _____ **7.** Our mission is primarily focused on serving the people who already call this their church home.
- _____ **8.** This local church is blessed with strong leadership.
- _____ **9.** Leadership is experiencing a high level of stress related to church situations.
- _____ **10.** The values that guide this congregation are clear to most everyone.
- _____ **11.** We are willing to take risks as they relate to being the church God has called us to be.
- _____ **12.** We rarely talk about “what Christ is doing in our church” when we meet.

1= Disagree Strongly 2= Disagree 3=Uncertain 4= Agree 5= Agree Strongly

- _____ **13.** In recent years we have successfully implemented important changes in the life of our church.
- _____ **14.** The mission of this church is clear to almost everyone.
- _____ **15.** There are times when I really do not want to deal with all the conflict in our congregation.
- _____ **16.** Our mission prioritizes our call to reach out to people who are not presently a part of Christ's church.
- _____ **17.** Lay and pastoral leadership work well together at our church.
- _____ **18.** Our staff is clearly under a lot of stress.
- _____ **19.** We agree on the top priorities for our congregation.
- _____ **20.** This congregation is more concerned about survival, than growth.
- _____ **21.** The focus of our activity is more on the business of the church, not on spiritual growth and accountability.
- _____ **22.** When we need to make a change, the team does a good job of pulling together.
- _____ **23.** Even when we disagree, we remain friends.
- _____ **24.** This church is effectively achieving our mission.
- _____ **25.** Our mission is more inward focused (toward the congregation) in contrast to being outward focused (toward the community and world).
- _____ **26.** There is a difference in direction between pastoral and lay leadership.
- _____ **27.** The pastor (pastoral staff) seems to do a good job managing stress.
- _____ **28.** When it comes to knowing what is most important, we are in agreement.
- _____ **29.** We have a vision for the future that is motivating our actions.
- _____ **30.** After going to church meetings, I feel spiritually energized.
- _____ **31.** If we are going to succeed as a congregation, we will need to change.
- _____ **32.** God needs to teach us how to deal with challenging situations in a healthy way.
- _____ **33.** The cause of Christ is being advanced by the ministry of our church.

1= Disagree Strongly 2= Disagree 3=Uncertain 4= Agree 5= Agree Strongly

- _____ **34.** Our hope is that people who are different from those currently attending here will find this church to be welcoming.
- _____ **35.** Our church leadership struggles to make decisions.
- _____ **36.** As a team, we work together to reduce the level of stress associated with being a part of this congregation.
- _____ **37.** We have shared values that help guide our decision making.
- _____ **38.** There is excitement about the future in our congregation.
- _____ **39.** Our church has clear expectations for the required spiritual qualities of a leader.
- _____ **40.** I am proud of how well we have handled change.
- _____ **41.** When there is conflict, we see confronting it and resolving it as a healthy congregational trait.
- _____ **42.** As a leadership team, we have good ways of knowing whether or not we are achieving our mission.
- _____ **43.** Our congregation is focused on “making more and better disciples of Christ.”
- _____ **44.** Once a decision is made, all the leaders move together to effectively implement the decision.
- _____ **45.** Something needs to be done to reduce the amount of stress experienced by our congregational leaders

SHARE Congregational Leadership Assessment Individual Score Sheet

The SHARE Congregational Leadership Assessment is a tool your congregational leadership team can use to identify opportunities to grow in Christ-centered excellence and relational health. The tool is designed to assess the congregational leadership views on nine indicators.

Pastor or Lay Leader? _____
No names are required

Instructions:

1. Transfer your responses to the question to the blank spaces below for each question number.

IMPORTANT! For the following questions you need to reverse the answer:

#2, #4, #7, #9, #12, #15, #18, #20, #21, #25, #26, #31, #32, #35, #45

—SEE * to indicate questions

On these questions **ONLY: This is essential for the correct calculation.**

1 becomes 5, 2 becomes 4

3 remains 3,

4 becomes 2, 5 becomes 1

2. Add your responses to each column to get your total for each of the nine indicators.
3. Submit your form to the person in your team that is compiling the scores for everyone on the team.
4. The last step is the person compiling the scores to get an average score for the entire group. Take the totals from each person in the group, add them up and then divide them by the number of persons in the team. See example and instructions for how to interpret the nine numbers for the relational health indicators.

Values	Lifecycle	Formation	Change	Conflict	Mission	Focus	Team	Stress
1. _____	2.* _____	3. _____	4.* _____	5. _____	6. _____	7.* _____	8. _____	9.* _____
10. _____	11. _____	12.* _____	13. _____	14. _____	15.* _____	16. _____	17. _____	18.* _____
19. _____	20.* _____	21.* _____	22. _____	23. _____	24. _____	25.* _____	26.* _____	27. _____
28. _____	29. _____	30. _____	31.* _____	32.* _____	33. _____	34. _____	35.* _____	36. _____
37. _____	38. _____	39. _____	40. _____	41. _____	42. _____	43. _____	44. _____	45.* _____
Total _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

SHARE Congregational Leadership Assessment Score Sheet

Relational Health Indicators

The SHARE Congregational Leadership Assessment is designed to provide an indication of relational health strengths and weaknesses, as viewed by members of the pastoral and lay leadership.

There are nine indicators for excellence and relational health and they are:

Values: Is there a clear sense of core values guiding our congregation?

Life Cycle of the Church: What stage of the life cycle is this congregation in? Lower scores suggest a past orientation, and higher scores a future orientation.

Spiritual Formation of the Leader: Is the leadership team growing in faith together?

Dealing Effectively with **Change:** How well does the team respond to the need for change or the reality of change?

Conflict Resolution: How well does the team deal with conflict resolution?

Developing a **Mission**-Focused Church: Do we share the same mission? How are we doing at fulfilling our mission?

Mission Focus: Is the congregation inwardly or outwardly oriented? An outward focus is seen as positive to excellence and relational health.

Effective Leadership **Team:** Are positive leadership attributes displayed? Is the team of leaders working effectively together?

Stress Management: Does the staff manage stress in a healthy manner?

Average scores for each indicator will range from 5 to 25. A score closer to 5 suggests that this indicator is a relative weakness. Indicator scores closer to 25 suggest a relative strength. The numbers are not meant to be compared between congregations.

After calculating the average score among team members for each of the nine indicators, you can discuss whether you agree on the relative strengths and weaknesses. The next step is to come up with action plans to improve the relational health of a particular indicator. The SHARE curriculum and website provide ideas on activities and readings that you can do as a team to grow in relational excellence for each indicator.

SHARE Congregational Leadership Assessment Lay Leader Team Score Sheet

Use this form to get an average score for each of the indicators for your lay leadership team. For each person, 1–14 (add more if needed), place the score for each indicator from the individual sheet on this form. The form will give you an average (mean) score. Note the level of variation in opinion. While an average score may suggest either strength or a weakness, there may be a wide or narrow range of opinions between persons, and that should be noted.

	Values	Lifecycle	Formation	Change	Conflict	Mission	Focus	Team	Stress
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Add each column and divide by the number of persons who have scores submitted.

Total: Scores range from 5 to 25. A higher score suggests a greater sense of health.

Values	Lifecycle	Formation	Change	Conflict	Mission	Focus	Team	Stress
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

SHARE Congregational Leadership Assessment Pastor Score Sheet

Use this form to get an average score for each of the indicators for your pastor or pastoral team.

For each person, place the score for each indicator for the individual sheet on this form. The form will give you an average (mean) score. In many cases, there may only be one score. If there are multiple pastors on staff, note the level of variation in opinion. While an average score may suggest either strength or a weakness, there may be a wide range of opinions between persons and that should be noted.

Average scores for each indicator will range from 5 to 25. A score closer to 5 suggests that this indicator is a relative weakness. Indicator scores closer to 25 suggest a relative strength.

	Values	Lifecycle	Formation	Change	Conflict	Mission	Focus	Team	Stress
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Add each column and divide by the number of persons who have scores submitted.

Total: Scores range from 5 to 25. A higher score suggests a greater sense of health.

Values	Lifecycle	Formation	Change	Conflict	Mission	Focus	Team	Stress
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____



THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST IN SPIRIT

“If we’re going to lead like Jesus, we must allow the dangerous power of love to fill our hearts. Being a Christian leader is dangerous. It means opening our hearts, loving people, sacrificing, and risking great pain. But there is no other way to be a leader. This is the way of Jesus.”

—Kevin Harney, *Leadership from the Inside Out*

“What makes the temptation of power so seemingly irresistible? Maybe it is that power offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love. It seems easier to be God than to love God, easier to control people than to love people, easier to own life than to love life. Jesus asks, “Do you love me?” We ask, “Can we sit at your right hand and your left hand in the Kingdom?” (Matthew 20:21) Ever since the snake said, “The day you eat of this tree your eyes will be open and you will be like gods, knowing good from evil” (Genesis 3: 5), we have been tempted to replace love with power. Jesus lived that temptation in the most agonizing way from the desert to the cross. The long painful history of the church is the history of people ever and again tempted to choose power over love, control over the cross, being a leader over being led. Those who resisted this temptation to the end and thereby give us hope are the true saints. One thing is clear to me: The temptation of power is greatest when intimacy is threatened. Much Christian leadership is exercised by people who do not know how to develop healthy, intimate relationships and have opted for power and control instead....people unable to give and receive love.”

—Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*

How do we measure the integrity of the leader/leadership team? What is it that binds us together as leaders? How can we assure that our leadership leads properly toward the fulfillment of the mission of Christ in our world? These, and other similar questions, are crucial to the success of our kingdom endeavors. Consider these areas in focus:

Core Values

What is *really* important to you, your leadership team, and your congregation? What will you commit to not compromising as you live out your calling? Steven Covey writes:

If you’re going to have integrity...you have to have a core, something to which you must be true. You can’t work from the inside out if you don’t even know what’s inside. So you need to have a center. You need to have identified values. You need to know what you stand for and you need to stand for it, so that others know, too. (The Speed of Trust, p. 69)

Core values are those beliefs and practices that one affirms as nonnegotiable in life, values that will permeate all that we do and say. Every leadership team must embrace the “center” that helps clarify their identity as the people of God and as those empowered to lead in the life of the local congregation.

Qualities and Characteristics of a Godly Leader

What do we, as individuals, bring to the spiritual life of the leadership team? What does the Bible say about the character of Jesus and of the Christian leader? How can we most effectively fulfill the mission of Christ *in the Spirit of Christ*? What can we learn from the followers of Jesus as we seek to be effective kingdom leaders?

Personal Growth and Maturity of the Child of God

Entering corporately into the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13) is not optional for Christian leaders. It is a fulfillment of the prayer of Jesus in John 17 and critical to the fulfillment of Christ's mission in the world today. We are to follow the example of Jesus in growing holistically (Luke 2:52).

As we consider the life of the leader, center your focus on three essential, connected areas of development:

CHARACTER

COMMUNITY

COMPETENCE

As you and the leadership team grow together in these three areas, you grow in your capacity to effectively respond to the call of the Lord; build healthy, God-honoring relationships in the congregation; impact your community compassionately; and serve faithfully as the body of Christ to your world.

As you explore the inner life of the leader in community, use the following experiences and studies along with additional resources recommended to lead your team into a deeper experience of "being the body of Christ" in fellowship and service.

WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS...¹

As leaders in the body of Christ, called by God to serve his church, we affirm the following values—rooted firmly in the Bible, God’s Word to us—as central and essential to the service we will perform together:

~ Our love for God and for one another

Worship—Affirming the sovereignty of God

Respect—Affirming the value/worth of every person

Grace

Compassion

Encouragement—Building one another up in love

~ Integrity in all endeavors

Honesty

Sincerity

Humility

Transparency

Vulnerability—Sharing our life freely so that all move together into the fullness of Christ, into the future with hope

~ The absolute necessity of prayer

Undeniable dependence upon God in all things

An eternal values focus

~ The pursuit of a lifestyle of holiness at all times

Jesus is our example of godliness in the flesh.

Our challenge is to become a faithful disciple—and to help make faithful disciples.

~ The heart of a servant

“It is more blessed to give...!”

The heart of our Savior

In addition to these core values, what other values are important for your leadership team and congregation as you consider the personal and corporate call of God upon your lives? How will you identify and express the values that will guide your congregational life?

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QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF A GODLY LEADER

The Christian Leader in 2 Timothy 2

The Christian Leader is:

Rooted firmly in Jesus

Strong in Spirit and Grace (v 1)

Conscientious in Witness (v 2)

Faithful in Endurance (vv 3–6)

Constant in Dependence (v7)

Focused in Commitment (vv 8–13)

Growing in Christlikeness

Growing in grace (vv 14–19)

Submissive to correction and cleansing (vv 20–21)

Passionate concerning righteousness (vv 22–26)

THE HEART OF A GODLY LEADER

Not:

Ownership

Control

Rights

Indispensible

But:

Obedience

Submission

Responsibilities

Available

BIBLICAL GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH LEADERS²

Leaders in God's church are persons who have experienced and/or practice:

- A personal relationship with Jesus Christ by faith;
- A growing love for God and others that expresses itself in practical ways daily;
- A growing submission to the Word and will of God in daily life;
- Maturity in their relationship with the Lord;
- A growing relationship with Christ through regular worship, Bible study, and prayer;
- An active involvement with the body of Christ for worship, study, service, and fellowship;
- A healthy stewardship of all that has been entrusted to them by God;
- A witness to the body of Christ and to the community at large that is reflective of and consistent with both the ministry of the Holy Spirit in their life and the call of God to the church;
- A lifestyle faithful to the call of God in thought, speech, and deed;
- A life in which the holiness of God is being given opportunity to be expressed; and
- The heart of a servant

When God calls to service, we must serve as representatives of Jesus Christ in the church and in the world who function in the power and grace of our Savior every step of life's way. We are God's people, this is God's church, and we can do no less than live in faithful obedience to the Lord in all things.

Questions for us to consider:

Am I struggling in any of these areas of my life? If so, which ones?

How can we hold one another accountable to a biblical standard of leadership that will honor the Lord and strengthen the ministry of our congregation?

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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP³

Ministry Is:

Doing the work
Serving by doing
Tangible
Task oriented
Focused on immediate needs
Little picture
Playing the game
Power to act
Developing self
Generalized
Hands on

Leadership Is:

Guiding the work
Serving by directing
Visionary
Goal oriented
Focused on long-term needs
Big picture
Coaching the players
Empowering others to act
Developing others
Specialized
Laying hands on

Both are good.
Both are needed.

All leadership is ministry; but not all ministry is leadership.
Both ministry and leadership are learned skills.

—Global LEAD Alliance

THE LEADERSHIP CONNECTION

CHARACTER

COMMUNITY

COMPETENCE

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10 KEYS FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

1. **Maintain trusting caring relationships.** Disconnection from others weakens one's ability to influence others positively.
2. **Maintain integrity at all costs.** Honesty, humility, and trustworthiness are critical to effective leadership.
3. **Always remember that respect is much more powerful than popularity.** Live to please God and not people.
4. **Maintain a proper stewardship of your own life.**
5. **Don't travel alone.** Build an effective team of competent spirit-filled leaders and followers.
6. **Keep your focus.** Don't allow secondary issues to keep you from the primary mission.
7. **Lead from a positive position of vision rather than from a negative position of defense.**
8. **Maintain awareness of cultural and congregational trends.** Ignorance is a primary enemy of effective leadership.
9. **Be willing to let go of ministries and methodologies that have lost their focus and effectiveness.**
10. **Be bold.** Be willing to risk for a kingdom purpose.

CALLED TO BE A DISCIPLE⁴

Discipleship is a life of commitment to Jesus Christ as the Savior and Lord of life, of discipline in the teachings of Christ both in spirit and in deed, and of obedience to divine will and the mission of redemption in the world. Discipleship involves both becoming a disciple and going into the world to make disciples.

- A disciple follows Jesus (Matthew 16:24; Luke 14:26–27, 33).
- A disciple obeys Jesus (John 8:31; John 15:9–17).
- A disciple seeks to be Godly (Matthew 5:6; 1 Timothy 4:7).
- A disciple bears fruit (John 15:8; John 15:17).
- A disciple multiplies: makes disciples who make more disciples (Matthew 28:18–20; 2 Timothy 2: 1–7).

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THE HEART AND SOUL OF TEAMWORK⁵

We are a team: an interdependent leadership group. As such, we must be sensitive to the dynamics of spirit that will increase our effectiveness in the mission Christ seeks to accomplish through us. Consider the following characteristics as essential in our service:

RESPECT

God has called each of us to serve. As team members, we each possess unique gifts that we bring to the whole and unique contributions that honor God as we labor together. We will not all serve in the same way, make decisions in the same way, or lead in the same way. We must respect one another's differences. We must *honor one another's labor*. You have not been called to do someone else's task. You, perhaps, don't know all the facts/resources/dynamics of another person's particular area of ministry or the reasons that a teammate or committee has come to a certain conclusion in regard to a particular ministry. *Trust* one another. When communicating, do so in *kindness* and *grace*.

COOPERATION

Each one of us has a unique contribution to make to our leadership team and congregation. Each one of us has a unique role to play in our ongoing ministry. Yet while each of us serves in our own unique way, we realize we cannot accomplish God's will for our congregation unless we are working together for the common good; for the fulfillment of God's call to us as the body of Christ in this community. We must help one another if we are to be pleasing to God.

COORDINATION

Communicate! Involve as many people of our congregation in ministry as you can. Find those who are willing to serve in the power of the Holy Spirit and give themselves away in a spirit of love. Train them, equip them and then empower them to serve. Work together in your ministry area with a heart and mind for what is going on in other ministry areas. **Pray together.**

COMPETENCE

Grow! Grow in your relationship with the Lord. Grow in an understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and resources present within your area of ministry and in the community. Our personal growth in spirit and in ministry strengthens the whole. Our personal stagnation weakens the whole. Stretch your vision of life and ministry beyond where it currently is. What else could you be doing to enhance and strengthen your ministry? Is there anything you are doing now that has lost its effectiveness and needs to be changed or eliminated? Remain fresh and focused in service to the King!

LOVE

It cannot be overemphasized that unless we maintain a focus of spiritual compassion and overwhelming benevolence toward God and one another, we will fall far short of the glory of God in whatever we attempt. Let love be practically fulfilling every step of the way.

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THE DIFFERENCES WE POSSESS⁶

The differences we possess are many and varied. Among them are:

Personality	Preferences	Experiences	Expectations
	Faith	Communication Style	Spiritual Maturity
Calling	Leadership Style	Spiritual Giftedness	
Talents and Abilities		Thought Processing	Work Style

What other things can you think of that we uniquely bring to our leadership team?

The differences we possess can provide us great strength or great weakness—depending upon our spirit and attitude. God intends our differences to be used for the good of the body of Christ, to lead it to growth and maturity and service. The uniqueness of our lives is to be a beautiful and powerful gift of God to our world. Our individual level of faith, trust, commitment, and self-sacrifice will determine whether our lives help build up or tear down the church.

How should we respond to our differences?

- **Accept one another in our differences.**

Understand that we will think, act, speak, function, and react to life uniquely. Don't expect others to be just like you, and don't build walls of separation when they aren't. Get to know one another beyond the necessity of accomplishing ministry tasks as a team. Take time to do assessments, such as the DiSC or the emotional intelligence inventory, that will help bring understanding to each other as a team.

- **Learn to trust one another.**

Trust is not an automatic element of any group of diverse people. Trust is built when people share their lives with one another, know one another, and care for one another in practical, loving ways. Take time to build the kind of community that generates trust in and out of the leadership setting.

- **Respect the unique contribution that each person has to make.**

- **Affirm strengths.**

- **Protect one another.**

- **Encourage growth where necessary.**

Grow together into the fullness of Christ.

- **Practice and celebrate unity.**

- **Build up one another in love.**

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THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS...⁷

Talk to one another, not about one another.

Leviticus 16:19; Psalm 15; Matthew 18:15–17; Romans 1:28–32; 2 Corinthians 12:19–20

Don't spread gossip and slander. Don't listen to it either! Stop those who want to share it with you and tell them it is wrong. Instead, deal directly with the person involved, and only that person. If you need guidance to make sure your heart is right, share only what is necessary with a confidante and then go to the person involved with a right spirit.

Encourage and build up others, not discourage and tear them down.

Psalm 34:14; Romans 14:19; Ephesians 4:11–13; Hebrews 10:25

We are all imperfect pilgrims who know our weaknesses and needs. We don't need to have them rehearsed: we need help to overcome them. Be a source of healing for one another. Offer solutions in love, not salt for the wound.

Are peacemakers in interpersonal relationships.

Isaiah 32:17; Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18; Romans 14:19; James 3:18

Don't settle for being merely right: add to your "rightness" goodness, kindness, compassion, and grace. Seek to understand one another's emotions and thoughts, and do everything in your power to maintain a healthy relationship with others. Don't depend solely on your own feelings, but realize the diversity of your team and be sensitive to how your actions and words may impact others. Grow in your sensitivity to and compassion for other people, especially those you don't understand or can't relate to easily.

Accept one another in love and seek to grow in unity.

John 13:34–35; John 15:12–17; John 17:20–21

Only God can change a heart. Only openness to God can transform a life. Love one another, accept one another in the Lord, encourage one another to growth and maturity, speak to one another with respect, protect one another from harm. Face the future together, for that is Christ's prayer for his followers.

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HOW IS YOUR VISION?⁸

Understanding how we view life helps us know how we must move forward in life and ministry as leaders in the body of Christ. Think of the attitudes that motivate us:

Tunnel Vision

“There is no other way!”

Backward Vision

“We’ve always done it that way!”

Stagnant Vision

“It’s my way. . .or no way!”

Possibility Vision

“Look at all the ways!”

Sanctified Vision

“Any way. . .as long as it is God’s way!”

Moving from “tunnel vision” to “sanctified vision” is a challenging, yet very rewarding journey. It is a pathway a leader/leadership team ***must*** undertake if life and ministry is to be revitalized. What is necessary to move to a God-honoring sanctified vision?

Humility

We all have a need to grow and mature. Be teachable.

Submission

Submit to God in all things. Self-will must give way to divine will.

Faith

Faith in God that is stronger than fear; stronger than self-will.

Trust

Trust in one another as the people of God. Trust is critical to a sanctified vision.

Obedience

Be the living Word. Don’t just know the Bible; make the teachings of the Gospel alive in daily life.

Love

There is nothing in life that gives us the right to be ungodly. Love is the great commandment upon which all of God-honoring life and ministry depends.

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RECOGNIZING THOUGHT PROCESSING AND COMMUNICATION DIFFERENCES⁹

We all think, process, and communicate differently based upon those differences. What are some of the common types of people?

Some people just want the facts.

Forget the details. These folks just deal with the bottom line. Whether listening or talking don't expect much from bottom-line people.

Some people want every detail.

Don't leave anything out. The smallest detail may have significant consequences, or maybe they are just curious!

Some people just assume you know what they are thinking.

These internally focused people just assume that you are on the same wavelength and know exactly what they think.

Some people are “feelers.”

These people need to move beyond the facts and the plan; they need to emotionally connect with what is being shared.

Some people are spur-of-the-moment processors.

Spur-of-the-moment people seem to have the capacity to draw a conclusion without much thought. They intuitively know what is and what should be.

Some people are long-term processors.

Don't expect an answer right now. Let them think through all the possible meanings and scenarios and outcomes before they come to a decision.

These brief descriptions remind us that the uniqueness each person brings to any given situation requires a sensitivity to the differences present within the group. Knowing and understanding how and why a person communicates and processes the way they do can greatly improve the group's ability to function more effectively. Self-awareness, both personally and corporately, and a teachable spirit enable a group to move beyond the barriers that often keep the group from effective ministry and the fulfillment of the mission of Christ in the world.

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GROWTH AND MATURITY OF THE CHILD OF GOD

THE PATHWAY TO MATURITY¹

Responsibility

The ability to respond appropriately in life's situations

Accountability

The ability to bear the consequences of the responses exercised in life's situations

Stability

The ability to respond appropriately and consistently in life's situations

Right Priority

The ability to establish a proper value system in assessing life's situations

Discipline

The ability to exercise responsibility, accountability, stability, and right priority in life's situations

A Mature Perspective:

Jesus sends us out to be shepherds, and Jesus promises us a life in which we increasingly have to stretch out our hands and be led to places where we would rather not go. He asks us to move from a concern for relevance to a life of prayer, from worries about popularity to communal and mutual ministry, and from a leadership built on power to a leadership in which we critically discern where God is leading us and our people.

—Henry J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*, pp. 71–72

For a powerful, concise perspective on Christian leadership, read Henry Nouwen's book *In the Name of Jesus*.

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PUTTING AWAY ANYTHING THAT HINDERS HEARING²

Convinced that the Good Shepherd is really speaking to us, his sheep, we should now long to be assured that we are hearing him clearly. The true disciple passionately pays any price to hear from God—not out of duty or obligation, but rather out of longing for communion with the Shepherd.

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord” (Isaiah 6:1 NIV). The prophet Isaiah’s dramatic encounter with the Lord brought with it the need to put away his sin. First, he confessed the sin: “‘Woe to me!’ I cried. ‘I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips’” (v 5). Then God cleansed him by sending an angel with a burning coal. The angel touched Isaiah’s mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for” (v 7).

What happened next? Isaiah heard the voice of God saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” Isaiah then yielded, saying, “Here am I. Send me” (v 8)!

Cleansing precedes clarity concerning God’s voice and will. Faithful disciples so long to hear the Lord that they, like Isaiah, seek to put away anything that might hinder hearing him.

Sin

We are urged to rid ourselves “of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent” (James 1:21 NIV), and to rid ourselves of “all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind” (1 Peter 2:1 NIV). Genuine confession of our sins before God brings the certainty of his promised forgiveness and cleansing (1 John 1:9). Putting away sin may also require confessing to those we have wronged (James 5:16).

Unresolved emotions

We need to become free to live and hear God in the present. As our hearts become free from such things as guilt, anger, bitterness, condemnation, and fear, we are better able to experience “the peace of Christ” ruling in our hearts (Col 3:15).

Childish Things

“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me” (1 Cor 13:11 NIV1984).

- Childish justifying must be replaced by personal accountability (Rom 14:12).
- Childish talking too much is to be superseded by increasing listening—first to God, then to others (James 1:19).
- Childish self-preoccupation should give way to living out God’s others-centered love.

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A story from David Ferguson: “On a recent Great Commandments Radio program, my wife Teresa recounted an instance of her own childish self-preoccupation early in our marriage:

One day, after having worked many long days without a break, David expressed a desire for a much-needed day off. “I’m really looking forward to just being able to relax tomorrow,” he said. My response, sadly, was, “I wish I ever got a day off.” I not only hurt David with my comment, but I also revealed how focused on myself I was.

“As Teresa vulnerably shared this testimony with the radio audience, I was reminded of how grateful I am for her maturing in Christ. For many years now, the others-focused love of Christ has prompted her to say, ‘I’m glad you’ll have the time off. You need it.’”

Self-Initiative/Confidence in the Flesh

We must wait patiently for the Spirit’s initiative. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6 NASB).

Self-initiative must be put away in favor of waiting to hear from the Lord: “For you I wait all the day” (Ps 25:5 NASB). Our thoughts and ways must be replaced by his higher ways: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways” (Isaiah 55:8 NIV).

(Coach trainers share personal examples):

- Putting away sin:
- Putting away unresolved emotions:
- Putting away childish things:
- Putting away self-initiative:

AN EXPERIENCE WITH GOD'S WORD

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” —Psalm 139: 23–24

Be still before the Lord and offer the same prayer that David prayed as you seek to put away the things that might hinder you from hearing God:

- *Search me, O Lord, for sins that hinder me from hearing you. Free me from all moral filth, malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. Free me to have a cleansed heart and mind. Speak now, thy servant listens.*

I need to put away _____.

- *Search me, O Lord, for unresolved emotions that keep me from hearing you. Free me from any guilt or condemnation, any anger or bitterness, any fear or anxiety. Free me to live each moment “in the present” with you. Speak now, thy servant listens.*

I need to put away _____.

- *Search me, O Lord, for childish things that distract me from hearing you. Free me from rationalizing my behavior and blaming others, from idle chatter and self-focus. Free me to practice personal responsibility before you and others. Speak now, thy servant listens. (1 Corinthians 13:11)*

I need to put away _____.

- *Search me, O Lord, for areas of self-initiative that prevent me from hearing you. Free me from my thoughts, my ways, my ideas, and my goals. May I instead embrace your thoughts, your ways, your ideas, and your goals? Speak now, thy servant listens.*

I need to put away _____.

Pause and wait before the Lord. Listen as he reveals what needs to be put away.

Now yield to him, even though you may not fully know all that will be necessary:

Lord, I sense the need to put away _____ from my life. Even before fully knowing all that may be required, I yield to you. I long to hear you. Remove this from my life so that I can more freely hear what you reveal to me. Amen.

TO KNOW THE NEEDFUL³

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” —Luke 10:41–42 NIV1984

How can we develop the ability to discern what is truly needful in life?

Prioritize being with Jesus over doing things for Jesus.

The Lord is much more concerned with relationship than performance. Loving relationship is the foundation upon which the most meaningful kingdom service is built.

Faithfully study the Bible.

The best way to grow in discernment is to know the One who has established our values and priorities as Christ followers. To study the Bible, especially the gospel of Jesus Christ, is more than to merely read it; it is to read with the intent that each reading makes some lasting difference in the way we live life.

Develop an intimate prayer life with the Lord.

Prayer has been defined in numerous ways. A most simple and profound way to think of prayer is to define it as a communion with God that leads to submission to God in all of life. “Pray without ceasing!”

Sacrifice self-will for the sake of the call of the Lord.

Seek one thing alone: to honor and please God and accomplish God’s purposes in your world each day. God’s call is to love without limit. Surrender to God’s control.

Open your life to the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would “lead into all truth” and empower and equip Christ followers for optimum experience in the world for the sake of the kingdom. Cooperate fully in that endeavor and the Lord will show you what is truly needful.

Trust in and wait upon the Lord in all things.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.” —Proverbs 3:5–6 NKJV

Too much that occurs in the life of the church to bring disunity and turmoil has nothing to do with the needful of God’s call. It is time to let go of secondary issues that divide God’s people and cling only to that which brings honor and glory to the name of Jesus.

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THE SERVANT LIFE OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

“Missional church: a reproducing community of authentic disciples, being equipped as missionaries sent by God, to live and proclaim His Kingdom in their world.”

—Milfred Minatrea, *Shaped By God’s Heart*

Jesus desires to fulfill his mission in the world through Spirit-filled people united in a common cause and with a common commitment to the salvation of those who do not have a personal relationship with God through faith in Christ, to the discipling of believers, and to health and growth in community as we journey together into the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). In this section, you will find several significant Bible studies relating to the Servant Church and other materials that help us build an effective, love-rooted, mission-focused congregation. Prayerfully consider where your congregation and its leadership are poised in receiving this material. Some material is very basic and can help establish a biblical foundation for developing a mission-focused paradigm, and some can lead to a deeper experience of being focused on fulfilling the mission of Christ in the world and on some of the challenges that every congregation will face as it grows and develops relationally.

In this section we will address issues that relate to:

The Servant Life of the Body of Christ

In the mission-focused church, the organization must always be subservient to the organism; we are the body of Christ to a world in need and must make sure that the fulfillment of the mission is always the driving force in congregational life rather than the perpetuation of the institution we call our local congregation. That is not to say that the maintenance of the local congregation as an institution is not important. Indeed, it is! But it should not be the driving force that dictates activity and consumes energy. The message—love—not the methodology, is the foundation of our life as the people of God.

The Lifecycle of the Church

Life is dynamic, active, and, therefore, in continual flux. Change happens! Understanding the lifecycle of organizations is critical to understanding how we can most effectively keep our congregations healthy and growing and productive in ministry.

Developing a Mission-Focused Church

What is a mission-focused church? What does it look like? How does it function? What are its characteristics, its values, its activities? There are persons who are so accustomed to living in a maintenance-methodology paradigm that the picture of the mission-focused church is quite daunting. Leading your congregation into a mission-focused understanding of their identity and calling is one of the most critical challenges facing the church today.

Dealing Effectively with Change

Change happens. The most important question for us to address in the area of change is, “How can I most effectively manage change for the sake of the kingdom?”

Stress and Conflict Management

We are all too familiar with stressors of life and how easily they can lead to burnout, dropout, depression and anxiety, increased blood pressure and heart issues, broken relationships, and a myriad of other things. Some stress we bring upon ourselves; other stress comes from external influences over which we have no control. Some amount of stress is a natural part of life's journey. How can we most effectively deal with personal and corporate stress?

Use the following lessons and resources as best fits the needs of your congregation at this time. All of these areas, like the hallmarks in personal health, are important to the health of your leadership team and congregation. So you will need to address each of these areas on a regular basis.

THE SERVANT CHURCH: OLD TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVES

Two key Old Testament words related to service or ministry to the Lord:

- I. [*‘abad*] work, serve; and its derivatives [*‘ebed*] slaves, servant; [*‘abad*] work; [*‘abôdâ*] labor, service; [*abuddâ*] service (household servants); [*a’bdut*] servitude, bondage; [*ma’bad*] work.
 - A. Through a joyful and liberated heart (*cf.* Ex 4:23; 7:6; 10:26—where the children of Israel would be set free from captivity to worship).
 - B. With a yielded spirit when addressing God in prayer (*cf.* Ex 4:10; Ps 19:11, 13; 109:28—where Moses and the psalmist used the expression “your servant”).
 - C. By trusting His reassuring promises (*cf.* 3:12—where Moses is being challenged to embrace the word of the Lord).
 - D. By approaching Him with awe and reverence (*cf.* Ps 2:11 and Deut 6:13).
 - E. By total dependence upon Him (*cf.* Deut 10:12).
 - F. By expressing gratitude for His blessings (*cf.* Ps 100:2).
 - G. Through actions of personal responsibility (*cf.* Num 3:7–8; 4:23, 30, 47; 8:11, 19*ff*—where the Levites are placed in charge of dismantling, carrying, and erecting the Tabernacle).
 - H. By having hope in Him during times of suffering (*cf.* Suffering Servant motif in Isaiah, e.g. Is 53).
 - I. By putting away hindrances in relationship to Him (*cf.* 1 Sam 7:3 and 2 Chron 34:33—where Josiah leads Israel to remove hindrances and serve the Lord).
- II. [*sharat*] minister, serve; and its derivative [*sharêl*] service in the Tabernacle.
 - A. Through song, worship, and praise (*cf.* 1 Chron 16:4, 37 for a description of the Levites’ ministry).
 - B. By becoming a person of integrity (*cf.* Ps 101:6).
 - C. By putting off self-reliance and humbly devoting oneself to Him (*cf.* 2 Chron 29:11—where Hezekiah seeks to renew the ancient Mosaic covenant with the Lord and the Levites agree to minister to the Lord by their allotted divisions; see also Is 56:6–8—where foreigners who recognize themselves as lowly servants [*‘ebed*] will minister to the Lord; and Is 61:6—where the whole nation of Israel will serve God as His priests, fulfilling its calling as a “kingdom of priests”).
 - D. Through hearing with a view toward yielding (*cf.* 1 Sam 2:11; 3:1, 10—where God bypassed the established priesthood and disclosed his intentions concerning that same priesthood to young Samuel).
 - E. By being trustworthy with details in an assigned role (*cf.* Ex 28:1, 3, 4, 41; 29:1, 44; 30:30; 31:10; 35:19; 40:13, 15; Lev 7:5; 16:32—where the expression “minister unto Me in the priests’ office” refers to the role of the priests who are to minister in the Tabernacle complex in a variety of ways, i.e. burn incense on the golden altar twice daily, etc).

- F. By remaining faithful to the Lord, even while others may go astray (*cf.* Ezek 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 45:4—where in the time of Israel’s going astray, the descendants of Zadok faithfully maintained the service of the sanctuary, therefore acquiring the right to approach the Lord in His service and stand before Him to offer precious gifts of fat and blood at the altar).

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THE SERVANT CHURCH: NEW TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVES

Three key New Testament words related to service or ministry to the Lord:

1. **Diakoneo**—to render assistance or help by performing certain duties, often of a humble or menial nature; to take care of, by rendering humble service to; to wait on someone at table; to care for, take care of, support.

Diakonia—a procedure for taking care of the needs of people; provision for taking care of, arrangement for support—“ministry, service.” The emphasis here is not just the actual provision for the needs of others but the personal care and attention involved.

Diakonos—a person who renders service. [*huperetes*—a synonym for *diakonos* with the additional meaning of one who is appointed to a particular place or office for service.]

Jesus said that the one who rules should be like “one who serves” (Luke 22:26). The word He uses here is diakonos. It is typically translated “minister, servant, or deacon” but may come from the word diakonis, meaning “in the dust laboring, or running through dust.” Similarly, another writer and church leader suggests that it is derived from the words dia, meaning “through” and konos, meaning “dust, dirt, or earth.” Thus he observes, “...diakonos literally means “through the dust.” (Gunderson, 15)

What a startling word picture! Are we as leaders really willing to “get down in the dust” to serve those we lead? To “get dirty” with our people? (RL, Facilitators Guide, Session 2 Notes.)

2. **Leitourgeo**—To serve with the implication of more formal or regular service.

Leitourgia—An assignment or role in serving—“ministering, service”; a way of serving.

Leitourgos—A person who renders special service.

The great fact about leitourgia is that it has a double background: (i) It describes voluntary service spontaneously shouldered. (ii) It describes that service which the state lays compulsorily upon its citizens. The Christian is the [one] who works for God and [others], first, because he desires to, with his whole heart, and second, because [they are] compelled to, because the love of Christ constrains [them]. (Barclay, New Testament Words, p. 178.)

3. **Douleuo**—to serve, normally in response to the demands or commands of others; to be under the control of some influence and to serve the interests of such—to be a slave to, to be controlled by.

Douleia—subservience, slavery. Often rendered “bondage.” Interestingly, this word is not used in the NT to describe ministry or service of the Lord. In fact, quite the opposite—the bondage or slavery is always to something else: “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery [*douleia*] leading to fear again...” (Rom 8:15). “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery [*douleia*]” (Gal 5:1).

Doulos—one who is a slave in the sense of becoming the property of an owner.

*When Paul speaks of himself as a slave of Jesus Christ or of God in Romans 1:1, Galatians 1:10, Philippians 1:1, and Titus 1:1, the term *doulos* focuses attention primarily upon his belonging to Christ or to God. There are probably also important positive overtones, since in some languages of the ancient Middle East a phrase meaning “slave of the king” or “servant of the king” had become the title of an important person in the government.*

*Thus, the Christian is a slave of Christ, yet free. But “free” to serve as a slave: “Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather serve (*douleuo*) one another...” (Gal 5:13).*

Relational Ministry Implications:

Four dimensions of relational ministry can be discerned, each of which reflect aspects of these key words. Understanding these dimensions moves us toward an understanding, not only of how we personally need to become servants, but also of how our churches can and must become “servant churches”—churches with a servant identity.

Servants Ministering to the Lord

- “Whoever serves [*diakoneo*] me must follow me, and where I am my servant [*diakonos*] will also be. My Father will honor the one who serves [*diakoneo*] me (John 12:26).
- Church at Antioch: “...how they were ministering [*leitourgeo*] to the Lord...” (Acts 13:2 NASB).
- Church at Colossae: “It is the Lord Christ you are serving [*douleuo*]” (Col 3:14).

Servants Ministering the Word

- Apostles were eyewitnesses and “ministers [*huperetes*] of the Word” (Luke 1:2).
- Early church leaders in Jerusalem determined to give their attention to prayer and “the ministry [*diakonia*] of the word” (Acts 6:4).

Servants Ministering Christ’s Love...to Christ’s people

- We are to “...serve [*douleuo*] one another in love” (Gal 5:13).

- Apostles preached Jesus Christ as Lord and “ourselves as your servants” [*doulos*] (2 Cor 4:5).
- Stephanas and his household “...have devoted themselves to the service [*diakonia*] of the saints” (1 Cor 16:15).
- Paul writing about the Epaphroditus who “...almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help [*leitourgia*] you could not give me” (Phil 2:30).
- Corinthians were “...a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry [*diakoneo*—lit. ‘ministered by us’]” (2 Cor 3:3).

Servants Ministering Christ’s love...to those who don’t yet know Him: “Ministers of reconciliation”

“God...reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry [*diakonia*] of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:18).

Additional notes:

Satan has servants also: “...such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen... It is not surprising, then, if his servants [*diakonos*] masquerade as servants [*diakonos*] of righteousness” (2 Cor 11:13, 15).

Christians can also:

- Serve [*douleuo*] our own appetites (Rom 16:17–18) indicated by divisions and obstacles contrary to sound teaching.
- Serve [*douleuo*] money (Matt 6:24).
- Serve [*douleuo*] sin (Rom 6:6).
- Be guilty of “eye-service” [*ophthalmoudoulia*]: to serve with a view to impressing others; to serve in order to call attention to oneself; opposite of serving with a sincere heart and reference for the Lord (Col 3:22).

Jesus observes and notices not just individuals, but also churches:

- To each of the seven churches in Revelation, He says, “I know....” To five He says, “I know your deeds....” To one He says, “I know your afflictions....” To one He says, “I know where you live....”
- Only to the Church at Thyatira does He say, “I know your deeds...your service [*diakonia*] (Rev 2:19).
- “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)
- “I am He who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.” (Rev 2:23)

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THE LIFECYCLE OF THE CHURCH

There are many interpretations and understandings of the birth, life and death of the local congregation. Each phase is describe variably as:

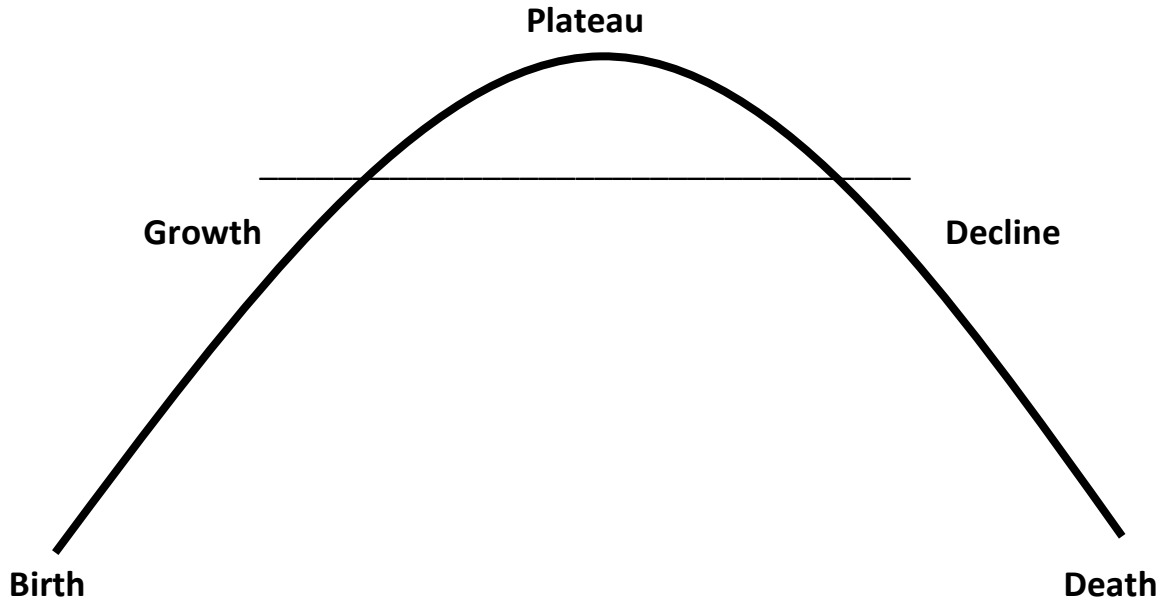
Emerging, Growing, Consolidating, Declining, Dying (McIntosh); Birth, Incline, Plateau, Decline, Death (Priddy); Birth, Growth, Prime, Redevelopment, Aging, Death (Bullard); Birth, Vitality, Equilibrium, Decline, Death (Compton); Initial Structuring, Formal Organization, Maximum Efficiency, Institutionalization, Disintegration (IN Wesleyan Univ.); as well as many other models.

A summary of these various models could be: birth, growth, plateau, decline, death.

Each of these stages are typically defined by a primary focus or foci that determine the nature of congregational life. Understanding these stages is helpful in strategizing for ministry and planning to keep fresh and vital in Kingdom endeavor.

The simple exercise provided on the next page can help you with a preliminary understanding of where you stand in the congregational life cycle. The majority of circled-items in each column will give you a preliminary idea as to whether you are in the “growth,” “plateau,” or “decline” phase of congregational life. This may give you a place to start in your deepening discussion of congregational health and growth. It is possible to keep your congregation alive and healthy if you learn to recognize the characteristics of each of these phases, how to diagnose the issues at play and develop a plan to revitalize your congregational life. The earlier you start the revitalization process when plateau is recognized, the easier it will be to keep healthy and growing congregationally.

There are many excellent consultants and resources available in helping understand life cycle theory and practice. For further clarification and direction in dealing with life cycle issues, please consult the Life Cycle area of the Resource Section of this Manual.



LIFE CYCLE CHARACTERISTICS

In each row across circle the word or phrase that best describes your congregation.

Ministry Passion	Ministry Satisfaction	Ministry Complacency
Gifted Leaders	Capable Managers	Available People
High Risk	Low Risk	No Risk
Future-Oriented	Present-Oriented	Past-Oriented
Build	Maintain	Survive
Invest \$	Sustain \$	Preserve \$
New Leadership	Established Leadership	Entrenched Leadership
“Let’s Do Something New!”	“Keep Doing It” “We’ve Always Done It This Way”	
Vision Driven	Program Driven	Structure Driven
High Faith	Low Faith	No Faith

DEVELOPING A MISSION-FOCUSED CHURCH¹

The Relational Church

One Task!

The mission of the church is to bring all people into a right relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ

Or, to put it another way,

The mission of the body of Christ is to fulfill the mission of Christ in the world today to bring all people into the fullness of Christ.

This involves a whole life experience from pre-belief through spiritual maturity in which we journey together in grace and truth.

Three Arenas!

Worship

Developing an intimate relationship with God that affects every experience of life

Discipleship

Developing intimate relationships with other people—Christ-followers and non-Christ-followers—that honor God in every experience of life and culminate in communal movement into the fullness of Christ

Stewardship

Developing an intimate and mature relationship with self in the proper use of the life God has entrusted individually to each of us

Everything the church does should be connected to this one task and lived out within one or more of these relational areas

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FIVE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF MISSION FULFILLMENT

Accomplishing the mission of the body of Christ will require a wholehearted, concentrated focus upon five essential ministry elements:

Helping lead unbelievers to faith in Christ

Nurturing believers

Connecting

Equipping and empowering

Serving our world

If our ministry programs and methodologies don't reflect these elements, we aren't fulfilling our mission! Where are we strong? Where are we weak? Where must we go from here?

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THE SPIRIT OF A HEALTHY GROWING CHURCH

Love: God, love one another through a healthy self-love. It is difficult to love the world as God loves the world if we haven't begun to love self the way God loves us.

Sanctification: Submission. Obedience. Holiness.

Vision and Passion

Assimilation: Helping people to know God, grow in relationship to God, Grow in relationship to God's people.

Discipleship: Loving and serving our world in the spirit of Jesus Christ; seeing all of life as an opportunity to lead people to a clear understanding of and experience with Jesus.

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THE CHALLENGE AND BLESSING OF MINISTRY ENGAGEMENT

This experience helps us engage our current ministry endeavors from a mission-focused rather than maintenance perspective. One of the greatest challenges of the local congregation is to see beyond itself—beyond the perpetuation of its own agendas and practices—and live out the message and the mission of the church within the context of its world, both local and global. By reflecting upon how ministry methods have fared in the life of your congregation and what steps need to be taken to bring methodological practices in line with the message and mission of the church, this practice, when done regularly, can keep us focused on the “main thing” in our life as the body of Christ: leading as many as we can to a personal relationship with God through faith in Christ and then journeying together into the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4).

The Challenge and Blessing of Ministry Engagement

Celebrate effective ministry programs and events of your life in pastoral service. What has worked well for you in fulfilling the mission of Christ in your world?

What were the positive results of those ministries for the congregation and community?

What are some ministry programs or events that were not very effective or at one time were effective but no longer serve their intended purpose?

What are some of the most difficult aspects of methodological change in the life of the congregation you now serve?

What are the needs you perceive to be present in the life of your community at this time? How have you determined these needs? If you are not aware of your community's needs, how can you effectively engage your community to determine how to identify their needs, minister to their needs, and introduce them to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

How can you more effectively introduce or further develop a missional model of congregational life to the people you now serve?



DEALING EFFECTIVELY WITH CHANGE

Change Happens!

In the world in which we live...

God never changes...

Eternal truth never changes...

But sometimes it seems like everything else is...

Out of control!

“Society reinvents itself every 2.7 years. If the church does not continually reinvent itself, it becomes more and more obsolete.”

—George Barna

The amount of information in the world doubles every 1.8 years.

Change is inevitable; we cannot hold back change any more than we can hold back the setting of the sun. The question is not, “Can I change?” for that is happening right now. The question is, “Can I manage the change of life in a God-honoring way?”

“Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”

—George Bernard Shaw

TYPES OF CHANGE¹

Temporal Change

This is the most common type of change. Situations simply change from time to time.
“Change happens!”



Transitional Change

This is intentional, planned change. Visionary leaders see what is needed and change things to meet the need.

Transformational Change

This is change that adjusts the essential being of persons, places, things; of purpose, direction, motivation of organisms or organizations. Transformational change challenges the essential nature of life so that the cost of change can result in temporary or permanent loss and the result of the change alters the motivation and direction of life and activity.

Thinking of change in another way...

- Change occurs in what we perceive (temporal).
- Change occurs in how we do what we do (transitional).
- Change occurs in who we are and what we do (transformational).

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Change is inevitable. Change is woven into the very fabric of God's creative plan. Change, when orchestrated by God, is good.

Consider:

- If we allow temporal change to order congregational life, we are on a pathway of death.
- If the changing of programs and activities is the only change we experience, our congregations will probably die.
- Transitional change *may* open the door for genuine transformation, but it does not guarantee health, growth, and life.
- The church today is in need of the deepest change possible—the change of hearts and minds and lives and purpose and mission—if we are to regain the passion and power of the Holy Spirit. God is ready to do something new among us . . . are we ready?

CHANGE IN THE BIBLE

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

—Isaiah 43:19 NIV1984

You have heard these things; look at them all. Will you not admit them? “From now on I will tell you of new things, of hidden things unknown to you.”

—Isaiah 48:6 NIV1984

Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

—Lamentations 3:22–23 NIV1984

The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority!”

—Mark 1:27 NIV1984

A new command I give you...

—John 13:34 NIV1984

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

—Romans 12: 2 NIV1984

See also Psalm 33:3; Isaiah 49:6; Jeremiah 31:33; Matthew 18:13; Luke 5:36–39; John 3:7; Romans 6:4; I Corinthians 11:25; II Corinthians 3:18; II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:23; Philippians 3:20–21; James 4:9; Revelation 5:9.

“When you’re through changing, you’re through.”

—Bruce Barton

“I think we are trying to run the space age with horse-and-buggy moral and spiritual equipment.”

—Billy Graham

THE ENEMIES OF CHANGE²

- POWER Struggles
- PERSONAL Preferences
- Preservation of INEFFECTIVE models of ministry
- UNREALISTIC Expectations
- POOR COMMUNICATION
- Weak FAITH

What Makes Change Difficult?

- We allow PERSONAL PREFERENCES to be more important than the needs of the church as a whole.
- We FEAR what we may be required to GIVE up or TAKE up.
- There is a sense of SECURITY that we believe we may lose in the change.
- There is a sense of COMFORT and CONVENIENCE in maintaining the status quo.
- We are sometimes simply too LAZY to pay the price for meaningful change.

“Yesterday’s successes are often the greatest barriers to tomorrow’s successes.”

—Leith Anderson

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PURSUING THE WILL OF GOD

Who Am I?

- Nothing that happens gives us permission to be less than godly in word or deed.
- We must move from a position of personal preference to group health and wellness.
- We must continually remember that the followers of Jesus talk to one another, not about one another.
- We must continually remember that our calling is to encourage and build one another up, not discourage and tear one another down.
- We must continually remember that as children of God we are called to be peacemakers in our interpersonal relationships.
- We must continually remember that the followers of Jesus accept one another in love and seek to grow in unity.

What Is My Purpose?

My purpose in life is to fulfill God's purpose for me. My mission is to fulfill the mission of Christ in the world today. I am part of the body of Christ, and Jesus Christ himself is the head. My purpose is to do the work that Jesus did while here on earth—lead people to faith, healing, wholeness, holiness, selfless service—nothing else matters!

Far too many Christian groups spend more of their time, resources and energy on maintaining their organization rather than fulfilling the mission of Christ in their world. We are not first the _____ (fill in your congregation's name). We are first the body of Christ—the “called out ones” of the eternal kingdom. So, what kind of church body are you?

TRANSFORMATION³

Transformational Actions

- We must move from a foundation of activity based upon maintaining our congregational organization to fulfilling the mission of the body of Christ in the world.
- We must communicate a purpose for change that supports the mission of the body of Christ in the world.
- We must be willing to communicate what is truly important, not what is personally convenient.
- We must be courageous, open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and open to the input of godly people .
- Building healthy relationships within the church is essential to change. Healthy relationships contribute to healthier times of transition.
- We must prioritize and prayerfully plan for change.
- We can accomplish much more for the kingdom of God if we don't care who gets the credit. Do it for God's glory alone!

When fulfilling the mission of God in the world becomes more important than pursuing our own personal agendas, our congregations will begin to experience a new level of unity and love that will bring power and peace to all that we do, including change!

Transformational Truths

- If personal preference is more important than fulfilling the mission of the church, change will be very difficult to accomplish.
- If persons care more about themselves and their personal perspectives than they do the mission of God, nothing short of spiritual revival will bring about change.
- If a group does not see the benefit of change, they will not be likely to embrace the change.

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Leaders,

- We must be available to those we seek to influence and lead.
- We must, at all times, strive to be people of integrity.
- Change leaders must walk with the influencers and opinion leaders of the church.
- Change takes time and the effort of an honest, open, available, committed leader.

“Be the change you
want to see in your
world.”

—M.K. Gandhi



“He who’s not busy being
born is busy dying.”

—Dylan

“We live in a tumultuous time. Change is everywhere, and we are surrounded by circumstances that seem to demand more than we can deliver. We are regularly lured into playing the role of the powerless victim or the passive observer. In such roles, we become detached, and our sense of meaning decays. We look at everything in a superficial way and have little reverence. To choose to play either of these roles is to choose meaninglessness or the slow death of the self. We have always been imbedded in a dilemma. We have always had to agonize over the choice between making deep change or accepting slow death.”

—Robert E. Quinn, in *Deep Change*

“Of course, this is exactly what Jesus invites us to do. On the basis of Jesus’ announcement of the present availability of the Kingdom of God, re-consider your whole way of living...Re-align all the aspects of your life with the reality of the Kingdom.”

—Rob Lord

“Healthy churches grow.

Growing churches change.

Change challenges us.

Challenge forces us to trust God.

Trust leads to obedience.

Obedience makes us healthy.

Healthy churches grow!”

—James Ryle, adapted from a
Promise Keepers Clergy Rally

“The value of a vision is that it encourages you to give up, at any given moment, all that you are in order to receive all that you can become.”

—Author unknown

“In a time of drastic change it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists.”

—Eric Hoffer

“God wants to use you as He used His own Son.”

—Oswald Chambers

ISSUES IN CHANGE⁴

We must communicate a purpose for change that supports the mission of the church.

If personal preference is more important than fulfilling the mission of Christ in the world, congregational change will be very difficult to accomplish.

If people are content with the way things are, they will be very hesitant to change.

Consequently, unless a valid reason—a reason tied to their calling as the people of God—is embraced, people will most likely not be willing to pay the price to see the change occur.

If persons care more about themselves (or their perspective) than they do the mission of God, nothing short of spiritual revival will bring about change.

If the group involved does not see the personal benefit of change, they will not be likely to embrace the change.

Change takes time and effort on the part of an honest, open, available, committed leader/leadership team.

Change must be done strategically: prioritize and plan! Develop an effective plan for the change process.

Change is inevitable. And change is occurring more rapidly now than previously in history.

Building healthy relationships within the church is essential to managing change in a healthy manner.

“Lone Ranger” leaders don’t last very long in times of change. Walk together with the influencers, opinion leaders, and effective workers of the church.

We must move people from a position of personal preference to do what is best for the group, from a personal to a corporate perspective.

We can accomplish a lot more for the kingdom if we don’t care who gets the credit. Do it for God’s glory alone!

Relationships matter!

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CONGREGATIONAL HEALTH, GROWTH, AND RENEWAL

PRAYER GUIDE FOR CONGREGATIONAL HEALTH, GROWTH, AND RENEWAL¹

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. —James 5:16 NIV1984

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

—Ephesians 3:14–21 NIV1984

The revival, renewal, health, and growth of the church comes only by the supernatural moving of the Lord in the midst of a submissive and expectant people. Revival and renewal is a divine work shared with and through God's faithful people. Prayer is the means by which we come into God's presence, make ourselves available to him in faith and respond to him in faithful obedience and service. Prayer by the church for the church is one of the most critical needs of the church today. This guide will help the local congregation focus upon the call of the Lord to his church today to receive the renewal he desires and enter afresh into the kingdom mission in the world. Pray regularly, pray in faith believing, pray expectantly! God is ready to act!

General Guidelines

Prayer, at its heart, is submission to God. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide your times of prayer.

Pray regularly in community with your church family, weekly if possible. One hour spent together in prayer for the church is not too much!

Don't be afraid of times of silence. Allow the Holy Spirit to inspire you in voicing a prayer.

However, don't spend all of your time in silence. We need to agree with one another around the needs of the church.

Don't allow one person to dominate the prayer time; allow time for all who desire to voice a prayer to do so. Don't pray for such a long time that others don't feel that they can pray. You can always pray again later if there is opportunity.

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Don't worry that your prayer is too short. Obedience to the Lord is most important. If the Lord impresses you to pray about something that someone else has already prayed about, obey the Lord and pray.

Make sure that prayer time is not gossip time. If you have a prayer concern, take it to the Lord in prayer and let others agree with you for that need.

Respect those who gather with you in prayer and those for whom you pray. If things are shared in prayer, do not gossip about them outside your prayer time. Take them to the Lord—and leave them there.

If God impresses you to an act of service during your time of prayer, make sure that you obey and follow up after prayer time is over. It may be to witness, to call, to minister to, to encourage, to invite—whatever it is, do it willingly with joy.

Prayer for Revival

Revival can only come to the church that is not content with its current spiritual condition and deeply desires to experience more of the mercy, love and power of God. It comes through a spirit of submission and passion for the Lord in the hearts of individuals and spreads as persons exercise a spirit of humility, repentance, and grace in relation to one another.

Pray for a *hunger and thirst for righteousness* on the part of congregational members. Pray that there will be a *growing desire for God to do something new* in the hearts and lives of believers.

Pray that there will be freedom in worship and class settings for the Holy Spirit to challenge and encourage the church to *repent of all unrighteousness* and seek the Lord at a deeper level of relationship.

Pray for a *fresh faith* and a *growing passion* for the things of the Lord. Pray that the attitudes and words and actions of the congregation will be controlled by the Holy Spirit rather than self-will or the ways of the world.

Pray, “Lord, let a revival begin in me!”

Prayer for the Church

God alone knows the hearts and lives of every person who calls your congregation home. Spend time in prayer for the church family:

Pray for the pastor and the pastor's family. Pray that your pastor will know the power, wisdom, love and courage to lead as God directs.

Pray for every leader of the congregation: board, council, and committee members; ministry leaders; Christian education and discipleship teachers; children and youth workers; men's and women's ministry leaders—all who serve in the ministry life of the congregation.

Pray for the families of the congregation. God does answer prayer. But God also quickens our spirits for ministry when we come to him on behalf of one another. Take time to go through the church directory and pray for each family, perhaps once each month.

Prayer for the Community

Pray for the *unsaved of the community*. Start first with the households of congregational members. Pray earnestly for a moving of the Holy Spirit in the heart of every unbeliever.

Pray for a *growing passion* on the part of every believer to be a *witness* for the Lord. If training is necessary, pray that there will be a willingness to learn how to more effectively witness to the presence, power and love of the Lord available to transform life. If courage is necessary, pray that there will be a fresh move of the Holy Spirit to lead people to a life of obedience to the leading of the Lord.

Pray for other congregations in the community. We need one another to fulfill the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandments. We are here to serve the kingdom mission in the world; all else is subservient to that task.

Pray that you will catch a fresh vision of God's activity in your community and how you should be involved.

Remember that your "community" is as large as your vision of God and his call to your life as a congregation. Be global in availability; be as close as your next-door neighbor in loving service.

BIBLICAL PURPOSE/CHURCH ACTIVITY COMPARISON²

Read the following passages from the New Testament and answer the four questions after they have been read:

Matthew 22:34–40

Matthew 28: 18–20

John 13–16

Acts 1: 8

Acts 2:42–47

Romans 12: 1–21

1 Corinthians 12–13

Galatians 5:16–6:10

Ephesians 4:11–5: 2

Philippians 2: 1–11

1 John 3:16–24

1. What characteristics and qualities of the church are revealed in each passage?
2. What activities of our congregation correspond to each of the characteristics and qualities listed in these passages?
3. What activities of our congregation do not fulfill the biblical purpose of the church stated in these passages?
4. What must we change to bring our congregational life into harmony with these passages?

Spend much time in prayer to help discern God's guidance in this process.

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A CONGREGATIONAL RENEWAL PROCESS³

Steps in the Congregational Process

- Study the **HISTORY** of the Congregation
- Diagnose the **HEALTH** of the Congregation
- Determine the **WILLINGNESS** of the Congregation
- Establish a **PLAN OF ACTION** for the Congregation
- **IMPLEMENT** the Action Plan
- **REVIEW** the Process
- **BEGIN AGAIN**

This process should take a minimum of 18–24 months.

A congregation should continually seek to know and understand itself and work at strengthening its ministry.

History Study

Statistical studies can be accomplished through the *Yearbook of the Church of God* and records maintained by the congregation.

The statistical history of the congregation over a twenty-year period should be initially observed. After the big picture has been obtained, short-term trends (3–5 years) should be noted to determine more clearly the condition of the congregation. This step answers the **WHAT** of the history study.

Significant events (pastoral changes, construction, conflict, etc.), influential persons, and relational dynamics should be noted to determine influences over the history of the congregation. This step begins to answer the **WHY** of the history study and diagnostic process.

Health Diagnosis

First, determine the **METHOD** of diagnosis. There are a variety of diagnostic resources and church-health consultants available. While the “Biblical Purpose—Church Activity Comparison” can be very insightful and beneficial, most congregations will find it important to employ a more objective diagnostic instrument to determine a specific health condition and develop an action plan for renewal and revitalization. The Church of God regional pastor is a good place to begin to explore the variety of resources available. In addition, a list of organizations, diagnostic tools, and consultants is included in the resource section at the back of this manual.

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It is important in the diagnosis stage to consider the life and ministry of the pastor. Factors to be considered here include vision, experience, training, capacity, drive, health, interpersonal relational skills, support base in the congregation, and commitment to a revitalization process. It is here that, unless there is an extremely healthy relational atmosphere in the congregation, an outside coach/consultant becomes very important.

There should also be a diagnosis of the community trends that affect the local congregation. External factors often affect the health of the local congregation more than is realized. Social, economic, and other factors can help the congregations more fully understand the context of its life and ministry.

Congregational Commitment

Very basic questions regarding the congregation's willingness to follow through with a revitalization process must be answered before an action plan is developed. These questions include:

- Are we willing to change?
- Are we willing to accept our diagnosis and work at renewal?
- Are we willing to let go of outdated or ineffective programs?
- Are we committed to work at renewal?

Unless there is a willingness on the part of the congregation, especially its leadership, to persevere in the process, renewal will probably not occur.

There must be an understanding on the part of the congregation that renewal is first and foremost a spiritual experience, not a program-enhancing or organizational restructuring exercise. Unless spiritual revival occurs, any external changes that occur will have only minimal or short-lived effect on the overall health of the congregation.

Commitment must occur at several points along the renewal journey: to enter into the diagnostic process, when the diagnosis is complete and a plan of action is to be developed, and when the plan is complete and ready for implementation. Expect people to enter at each level: not all persons buy into change at the same time.

Establish a Plan of Action

A comprehensive plan of action must be developed that includes a statement of core values, a vision/ministry statement that helps describe the purpose of the life of the congregation at the present time, plans to address issues revealed in the diagnosis stage, ministry tasks that focus upon the mission of the church (the fulfillment of the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandments), assignment of responsibilities and reporting/supervision procedures, concrete measurable goals, empowerment of leadership to guide the process, an evaluation process, and a plan for long-range follow-up.

A timeline should be established that ensures the process will move forward in a timely, effective manner.

Be open to the utilization of resource materials and persons who can aid in the process. Don't travel alone on the journey!

Implement Action Plan

Do it! After thought and strategy and scheduling and programming has taken place, make sure the plan is actually carried out! Many congregations are plateaued and declining and disconnected from the kingdom mission, not because they don't have a mission statement or a plan of ministry, but because they simply have never gotten around to doing what needs to be done in the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Commitment to the implementation of the plan should be for a twelve-month period in order to allow the plan to develop and mature.

Review the Process

Review the process at regular intervals throughout the process. What is working? What isn't working? What needs to be adjusted, discarded, celebrated? Who followed through? Who didn't follow through? Is the congregation healthier now than before the process began? What are the measurable/observable indicators of greater health? Analyze the rationale behind the process's success or failure.

How has the process affected the congregation relationally: in relationship to God, to each other in the church and to those outside the community of faith, and to self as each person responds holistically as a steward of the kingdom?

Have issues revealed in the diagnostic process been addressed and has health and growth occurred?

What needs to be done next? Have the needs of the community changed?

Prepare to begin another diagnostic experience.

Begin Again

Each successive diagnostic plan should be built upon the previous experience and generate an ongoing stimulus for greater health that leads to a more effective mission fulfillment.



STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress is a normal part of life's journey. And a healthy amount of stress can lead to greater effectiveness and productivity in life and ministry. However, too much stress can lead to distress, which contributes to a number of physical, emotional and psychological issues as well diminished capacity in work and recreation. This section will help identify the potential for distress in life and provide suggestions for dealing effectively with stress.

MEASURE YOUR STRESS LEVEL

The scale below assigns a numerical value for each stressor. A score in excess of 300 indicates a fairly high stress level and is perhaps indicative of further personal consideration of lifestyle changes. Tally your score based upon the last six months.

EVENT	STRESS IMPACT	SCORE
Spouse dies	100	_____
Divorce	73	_____
Separation in marriage.....	65	_____
Jail term	63	_____
Close family member dies	63	_____
Personal injury or illness	53	_____
Marriage	50	_____
Job termination	47	_____
Reconciliation of marriage	45	_____
Retirement	45	_____
Family member health status change.....	44	_____
Pregnancy	40	_____
Sex difficulties.....	39	_____
New family member added.....	39	_____
Readjustment at business.....	39	_____
Financial status change.....	38	_____
Close friend dies	37	_____
Change in career	36	_____
Change in frequency of arguments with spouse	35	_____
High mortgage	31	_____
Mortgage of loan been foreclosed	30	_____
Work responsibilities changed.....	29	_____
Daughter or son left home	29	_____
In-law troubles.....	29	_____
Outstanding personal achievement	28	_____
Spouse begins or stops work	26	_____
Begin or end school	26	_____
Living conditions change	25	_____
Personal habits revised	24	_____
Boss trouble.....	23	_____
Work hours or conditions change	20	_____
Residence change	20	_____
School change.....	20	_____
Change in recreation.....	19	_____
Change in church activities.....	19	_____
Change in social activities	18	_____
Small mortgage or loan	17	_____
Change in sleeping habits	16	_____
Number of family get-togethers changed	15	_____
Eating habits changed.....	15	_____
Vacation	13	_____
Christmas.....	12	_____
Minor violations of the law	11	_____
	TOTAL	_____

SOME CAUSES OF STRESS¹

There is such a thing as healthy stress: life lived in anticipation and hope that keeps us alert and focused. But healthy stress can easily become distress if we are not good stewards of life. What can lead us to distress?

Fear

Fear is one of the most basic human emotions, and one that potentially can lead from healthy stress to distress

Conflict

Unhealthy conflict management practices often lead to distress.

Frustration

Life doesn't go as expected; we face obstacles we didn't anticipate; the task is more difficult than imagined. Each of these open the door to distress.

Seeing Failure as Our Enemy

Failure does not need to be our enemy. We can learn tremendous lessons and grow through failure in ways that ongoing success will not permit.

Worry Over the Future

A close ally of fear, worry causes us to look at obstacles rather than solutions; we give in to a false anticipation that freezes us in regard to the future. Faith, on the other hand, frees us to trust in the Lord and move with wisdom and confidence.

Not Letting Go of the Past

Living in past successes or failures robs us of the potential of today.

Unforgiving Spirit

An unforgiving spirit can lead to envy, jealousy, anger, bitterness, and depression—all triggers for distress.

Poor Time Management

We can bring distress upon ourselves by not being good stewards of our time: scheduling too many activities; the inability to say no; not setting aside time for Sabbath and physical and emotional renewal.

Satan's Attacks

Satan's tactics are cunning and his tools are too numerous to list. When we give in to the temptations of Satan, we walk through doors that inevitably lead to distress.

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DEALING EFFECTIVELY WITH STRESS²

What practical steps can we take to reduce the amount of distress in life?

Spend Time with God Regularly

Prayer, meditation, Bible and devotional reading, the observance of Sabbath, and time to enjoy the beauty of creation all help keep life properly focused. A growing faith leads to deeper experiences of peace and joy.

Love Well

Self-absorption is unhealthy for a variety of reasons. Get over yourself and learn to see and love your world in the inspiration and power of the Spirit of God. Practice a genuine concern for others.

Grow Up Spiritually

Abolish the “works of the flesh” from your life; cultivate the “fruit of the Spirit.”

Develop Emotional Maturity

The abundant life (John 10:10; Eph 4:13) is both a spiritual and emotional experience. Find emotional wholeness.

Manage Your Schedule Wisely

Learn to balance work, rest, and exercise.

Eat Properly

A well-balanced diet contributes to greater health and aids in combatting distress.

Get an Adequate Amount of Sleep

Fatigue diminishes our ability to deal with life in a healthy way.

Keep Your Mind Active—Keep Learning

Lifelong learners are healthier, happier people.

Practice Good Stewardship in Financial Matters

The misuse of money and possessions can easily lead to distress. Wisdom in material matters reduces stress.

Some stress we bring upon ourselves. Other stress comes from sources outside our control. Healthy stress can easily give way to unhealthy distress at any given moment. These disciplines can help us maintain a healthy, God-honoring lifestyle.

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A BIBLICAL MODEL FOR DEALING WITH STRESS: DANIEL

Dr. Gary R. Collins

Daniel took care of his body: proper nourishment, proper rest, proper work habits. (Daniel 1: 1–16)

Daniel was well-informed: he used his mind. He practiced healthy mental exercise; he strove for mental excellence. (Daniel 1:17)

Daniel was sensitive to people. (Daniel 2:24)

- We are all different.
- We are all important.
- We are all loved by God.

Daniel was a humble person. (Daniel 2:26–28)

Daniel strove for excellence. (Daniel 6: 1–3)

Daniel was a person of prayer. (Daniel 6:10)

Daniel was a person of faith.

Some stress we bring upon ourselves. Other stress comes from things over which we have no control. Either way, Daniel's example can help us discover ways to cope with stress. Are you trusting the Lord and his guidance the way you should?

A BIBLICAL MODEL FOR DEALING WITH STRESS: JAMES³

Lloyd J. Ogilvie

1. James 1: 2–8. Think about stress as a source of joy!

- The five C's of stress: change, conflict, criticism, concerns, crises.
- Patience is essential.
- Double-mindedness is detrimental.
- Let Christ dwell in and control your mind.

2. James 1:19–20. Learn to develop a Christ-anointed thinking process to filter out what is unworthy of developing an agitated reaction in our nervous system and blood.

- “Implanted Word.” The Word of God must be ingrained in our minds by the Spirit of Christ.
- Christ's love enables us to channel that emotional reaction that can be expressed as destructive anger into creative, constructive change instead.

3. James 1:22–25. Eagerly receive and obey the Word of God.

- The fear of failure keeps us locked into repeated failures.
- In Christ we are free to serve without the fear of failure, realizing our service is in response to the Word of God, not man. The stress of failure is then a spiritual concern, not a relational one.

4. James 3. Sanctify your tongue.

- The Lord can control our tongue when we give him our heart.

5. James 4: 1–10. Guard yourself against envy and jealousy.

- Envy is a lack of self-appreciation, which is a failure to understand and accept how much Christ loves and cherishes us.
- When he takes up residence in us, our desire is to be the person he means us to be.

6. James 4:13–17. Be fully dependent upon God's will for your life.

- Burnout is really caused by taking on too much for the wrong reasons.
- There is always enough time and available spiritual power to do what God wants us to do.
- Four keys to keeping life aflame: energy, enjoyment, enthusiasm, excitement.
- The conversion of the will is vital to a liberating experience of grace. The surrender of the will is essential to having our nervous system function properly. Otherwise we will have a battle of the will with God that puts our minds and bodies into stress spasms.
- People do not burn out from doing too much of what they delight in doing.

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7. James 5: 1–6. Avoid the misuse of money and possessions.

- Remain aware that all we are and have belongs to the Lord.
- Keep in mind that a radical commitment of all we are and have breaks the stress syndrome.
- Ask for guidance on how to earn, save and spend according to the Lord's plan.
- Remember that an attitude of gratitude is expressed in giving with freedom and joy.
- Ask the Lord to guide you into opportunities to share in which he provides the additional resources to follow through.

8. James 5: 7–12. Develop and attitude of patience.

- Commit your concerns to the Lord—we ultimately are not in control, anyhow.
- The energies that would have been misused in fitful stress are used to affirm the people and situations we have committed to the Lord in expectant faith.
- Our mind's memory bank must be reprogrammed to free us from the stress that impatience with life produces.

9. James 5:13. Relax! Exercise the disciplines of prayer and meditation.

- Daily meditation makes possible the actual change of our mental attitudes as well as our bodily response.
- Exercise forgiveness—of others and yourself.
- Praise the Lord!

10. James 5:14–20. Stress is not a sin; it is a psychosomatic syndrome which may be incited by our refusal to allow the Lord to take charge of our thinking, attitudes and temperament. The deeper independence is the sin.

- The most destructive stress is that which comes from feeling that there is no solution, no action to be taken, no hope left.
- Lean upon other trustworthy, loving, nonjudgmental Christians to help you in times of stress.



ESSAYS AND RESOURCES

Included in this resource section are a number of essays concerning aspects of the SHARE journey. The essays provide further insight into concepts presented in this manual. Additional resources are suggested in the section following those essays. Take advantage of these resources as best serves your needs at any given time in your congregational life.

HALLMARK: LEADERSHIP¹

**"The pastor is empowered to make
an orchestrated impact on the community."**

Leadership and *leader development* are common phrases in today's society. There is no shortage of theories, tips, and suggestions on how to lead in a variety of contexts in our world. Those phrases are also common within many faith communities, including the Church of God. We recognize the need to continue to develop leaders to further the ministry of the church.

The key question, however, is, What kind of leaders are we hoping to develop?

"The pastor is empowered to make an orchestrated impact on the community." Another way of saying this is that a healthy Christian leader is a kingdom-centered disciple of Christ.

The kingdom is the arena of God's rule over everything—in and through us. It is broader than ourselves, broader than our local church, broader than our movement, and broader than our nation. The kingdom is God's rule "on earth as it is in heaven."

In other words, a leader in the context of the rule of God, as understood and practiced in the Christian faith, is first and last a disciple of Jesus Christ. A disciple is one who lives the Great Commandment to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" and "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37, 39 NIV1984). Jesus proclaimed, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (v 40, NRSV). On these two commandments depend all of the Christian scriptures. On these two commandments depend all of what it means to live a faithful life as a kingdom-centered disciple of Christ.

Another way of saying this is that leaders are disciples who passionately love God and sacrificially serve others.

Kingdom discipleship requires an intimate knowledge of being loved by God, loving God, loving self, and loving others. These realizations are often exercised through *servanthood*, *stewardship*, *a love of truth*, *commitment to community*, and continuing the journey through discipling others.

- **Servanthood**—We love God, others, and ourselves through service. Scripture states, "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:26 NIV1984). Wherever Jesus went, he served others. He actively identified and lovingly and humbly met human need. He remembered and helped others remember that we are all persons both of dust and of great worth. Kingdom-centered disciples of Christ

¹ All Hallmark essays, except "Vision," and "Personal Health," were written by Ann Brandon and first published in *Communion*.

serve God and others. Leaders do not seek or flaunt authority, but actively identify and lovingly and humbly meet needs.

- **Stewardship**—We also love God, others, and ourselves through using our resources wisely and respectfully. Leaders recognize that, “the earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” (Psalm 24:1 NIV1984). Kingdom-centered disciples are, therefore, responsible to treat all of Creation with respect. Leaders recognize that they have been given certain material and spiritual gifts, and as such, they are responsible for caring for and using them to encourage the church and further the kingdom. Leaders also recognize that they must be good stewards of those they lead and those they lead with. Caring for those who make up our communities is a part of being a good steward and a healthy leader.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it (Ephesians 4:1–7 NIV1984).

Leaders live within that grace by being who God has called and gifted them to be and by helping others in the same manner.

- **Love of truth**—A third way we love God, others, and ourselves is by being people who tell and receive the truth. Leaders recognize that truth is progressive, experiential, and defends itself. More than defending their own ideas and experiences at all costs, leaders are interested in hearing a multiplicity of voices and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, discerning the voice of truth among them.

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. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work... Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body” (Ephesians 4:14–16, 25 NIV1984).

Two other results occur when leaders become kingdom-centered disciples of Christ. They find themselves *trusted and empowered by the community*, and they carry on the *journey of discipleship by discipling others*.

- **Trusted and empowered by the community**. When a community witnesses the presence of the Holy Spirit within a leader and experiences that leader’s love for God, for herself or himself, and for them, the community will likely trust themselves and the ministry of the church to that leader. Kingdom-centered disciples of Christ are not

“lone rangers” but recognize that their wholeness and holiness are dependent upon their connection to the community, both in accountability and leadership. Leaders recognize their need for connectivity, to care for those whom they are connected to, as well as to receive trust and empowerment from the community in return.

- **Welcoming discipler.** A piece of the path of leadership as kingdom-centered disciples of Christ is discipling others on the journey.

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18–20 NIV1984).

It is through the practice of discipling others that leader development continues.

Healthy leaders are kingdom-centered disciples of Christ who take seriously a lifestyle of servanthood, stewardship, love of truth, devotion to community, and discipling others. Leaders cannot, however, stay healthy without continuing to develop their character as well.

In many respects, each of the SHAPE hallmarks is connected to and defines the leader-disciple. They are characteristics of a healthy pastor; they are also important for the health of leaders in general.

These five hallmarks are best understood in terms of practices and commitments.

Knowledge: Leaders are committed lifelong learners, teachers, and scholars. Leaders must seek continuing education opportunities and have access to competent practitioners of leadership as well as biblical and theological studies. Renewed confidence and newly developed skills assist leaders in becoming more effective communicators and agents of healthy change.

Spirituality: Leaders are committed to significance in Christ rather than success in the eyes of humankind. Leaders create appropriate boundaries between work and respite. They make time to engage in the spiritual disciplines of devotional time, solitude and personal withdrawal, prayer, biblical and theological study, fasting, and rest.

Connectedness: Leaders strive to avoid isolation and are energized for ministry through regular contact with their peers in conversation and accountability. Biblically based counseling and life coaching nurture them throughout the journey. They are intimately engaged with their families.

Vision: Leaders take charge of and assume responsibility for designing and taking part in study, relationships, and activities that sustain and nourish their vision.

Leadership: Leaders seek strong mentor relationships and guidance in assessing and developing their assets. The leader is empowered to make an “orchestrated impact on the community.” Leaders commit to mentoring others in the journey.

Leader development is an ongoing journey toward all that God creates, calls, and gifts us to be. That journey deepens and grows as environments are created that nourish and renew the call to leadership, calling leaders to be strong and hearty, bearing the fruit of his love and work among them. In this environment, leaders can become like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season without fail (Psalm 1:3).

HALLMARK: CONNECTEDNESS

The pastor's life touches the people and brings them closer to God.

Two heads are better than one.

We all need somebody to lean on.

It is not good for man to be alone.

I love you, you love me, we're a happy family.

From Scripture to popular songs, from theme songs to purple dinosaurs, the message seems clear: we need each other. In this culture of individualism and self-sufficiency, we find that scriptural truth to be more and more difficult. One of the core values—hallmarks—of the SHAPE ministry initiative is connectedness. Connectedness is defined as pastors striving to avoid isolation and being energized for ministry through regular contact with their peers. The pastor's life touches people and brings them closer to God. Recently, regional SHAPE cohort groups have been forming, and connectedness is one of the beautiful benefits of these groups. Pastors have come together and experienced safe vulnerability, peers who understand, and support and comfort for the ministry journey. Comments like "I've been needing this," "I've never experienced anything like this," and "I don't feel as alone anymore" are common among these groups.

You may not be involved in SHAPE, but you can nurture connectedness in your own life. What might that look like? Connectedness begins with an understanding of ourselves and who God created us to be. That can be achieved through prayer, Bible study, assessment tools (DiSC, *Discover Your Gifts*, Myers-Briggs, and many others), and conversations with those around us. As we journey together in this learning process, we also need to build intentional relationships. Perhaps there are retired ministers in our communities and pastors of other churches who, like us, would welcome an opportunity to sit with peers, sharing, celebrating, and supporting. Does a spirit of competition make that difficult? Does it involve risk? Do we need to commit to confidentiality? Does it take effort? Yes, yes, yes, and YES! But the resounding YES! to the question "Does it strengthen me and my ministry?" makes it all worthwhile.

Dr. David Ferguson, of Intimate Life Ministries, states that "when a growing sense of aloneness is present, people are much more vulnerable to compromise." Connectedness creates a strength and a hedge of protection around us in times of stress and temptation. Throughout Scripture, God reminds us that we need one another to accomplish God's will, to nurture our faith, and to bring others into relationship with God.

When we are touched by others, we are better able to touch the people in our congregation and bring them closer to God. The church in Acts witnessed wonders and miraculous

signs, people being added to the faith daily, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. That success hinges on what is recorded in Acts 2:42–47: the church fellowshiped, breaking bread together in the church and in their homes. They were together. Their connectedness brought others into life-changing knowledge of a God who so coveted relationship with them that he sent his one and only Son to dwell among them.

Be encouraged! You are not alone. God is with you, and there are also brothers and sisters around you, ready to be connected and to journey alongside you!

Some scriptures for reflection

Genesis 2:18

Ecclesiastes 4:9

Luke 22:32

Acts 2:42

Romans 12:15

1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11;

Hebrews 3:13

James 5:16

HALLMARK: SPIRITUALITY

"The pastor is more God-centered than church-centered."

In a previous issue (COMMUNION, January/February 2004), we discussed connectedness: the pastor's life touches people and brings them closer to God. Our relationships with other people are critical to our growth as Christians, to our demonstration of God's love for the world, and to the growth of God's kingdom. But how do pastors continue to connect with others in deep, meaningful ways when it seems that sermon preparation, building maintenance, hospital calls, and meetings are overwhelming them? How do pastors grow excellent ministry when it seems that they are always giving away?

Spring is my window to the answer. The grass, the perennials, and the trees use winter to store up for the new growth of spring. They take the time to let the moisture run deep to the roots, nourishing themselves for their own growth as well as new sprouts. Amid the doing of ministry, are we taking time to be God's children? Spirituality—the pastor is more God-centered than church-centered—is no easy discipline in our program- and product-driven culture. But, as Eugene Peterson states, "there are no shortcuts to becoming the persons we're created to be" (*Christian Century*, November 29, 2003, p. 21).

What might spirituality look like? Spirituality is ultimately a deep conviction that it is not about me; it is about God in me, with me, and through me. That conviction might come through devotional study; Scripture reading and study; spiritual retreats; family time; a day off, a Sabbath, every week; and other practices that challenge and encourage spiritual growth.

Spirituality creates healthy boundaries between work and respite and between family and congregation. Pastors engaged in their own spiritual formation will make time to engage in the spiritual disciplines of devotional time, solitude, personal and family withdrawal, prayer, biblical and theological study, fasting, and rest. Healthy pastors desire to grow as whole persons and tend to pay attention to their spiritual vital signs.

The God who called and calls you to minister among God's children is the very same God who delights in you (Isaiah 42:1) and anticipates you sitting at his feet to learn of him and be transformed more and more into his likeness.

Some scriptures and resources for reflection:

- James 1:4, John 15:4
 - Marjorie Thompson. *Soul Feast*. Westminster John Knox, 1965
- Countless books have been written on Christian spirituality from a theological, intellectual, and historical perspective. All of them have strengths that deepen our appreciation of spirituality. Spirituality, however, is to be lived and practiced in the lives of believers. *Soul Feast* invites the reader to enter the spiritual through the practice of the spiritual dis-

ciplines. It is through these disciplines that we can live out a spiritual life. This is a balanced text that thoroughly integrates theory and practice, with a greater emphasis on the latter.

- John Trent. *Life-Mapping*. Bantam Books, 1998

(Note: This book is out of print but can be found through online sources.)

Life-Mapping is a powerful tool that will help readers leave behind the things that have held them back in life; establish clear, realistic goals; and take positive, concrete steps to live the kind of life they have always wanted to live. John Trent has developed a powerful tool that will help you map out a course for your life. This fresh way of looking at your life involves taking a review of the events and patterns in your past in order to develop a storyboard of where you have been, where you are, and where you are heading. You will learn to overcome the roadblocks that have detoured you from deeper relationships, sidetracked your professional career, stunted your spiritual growth, and destroyed your self-confidence. It is packed with practical, usable tools and thought-provoking study questions that will help you apply what you have learned.

- Parker Palmer. *Let Your Life Speak*. Jossey Bass, 1999

The old Quaker adage “Let your life speak” spoke to Palmer when he was in his early thirties. It summoned him to a higher purpose. So he decided that he would live a nobler life. “I lined up the most elevated ideals I could find and set out to achieve them,” he writes. Thirty years later, Palmer understands that learning to let his life speak means “living the life that wants to live in me.” It involves creating the kind of trusting conditions that allow a soul to speak its truth. It also means tuning out the noisy preconceptions about what a vocation should be to better hear the call of our souls. There are no how-to formulas in this unpretentious and well-written book, just wisdom from an elder willing to share his mistakes and stories as he learned to live a life worth speaking about.

HALLMARK: KNOWLEDGE

"The pastor can help congregations think in new ways about spirituality and community."

Have you ever read one of the versions of *Everything I Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*? It's an amusing piece that carries some weighty thoughts as well. If you have not read it, I would recommend the read. There are so many relationship and life skills that we learn as young children.

I would hate to think, however, that I stopped learning in kindergarten, wouldn't you? As I watch the kindergartners around me, I see a reckless abandon in their trust, something I learned to be very valuable in my relationship with God but not so valuable in my relationship with abusive and egocentric boys at age sixteen, or with the market-driven consumerism of my culture.

There is a long list of qualities that are valuable, but they have to be balanced with some maturity and deeper understanding. So I'm glad I gained more understanding as I grew and matured. Scripture, in fact, encourages us to continue the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge. Second Peter 1:5–9 implores us to add knowledge to the qualities we seek, thus becoming effective and productive in the knowledge of our Lord.

One of the five hallmarks of a healthy pastor that SHAPE sets forth is knowledge. Knowledge, by definition, means: "The pastor helps congregations think in new ways about spirituality and community. Pastors seek continuing education opportunities and have access to competent practitioners in ministry and biblical and theological studies. Renewed confidence and newly developed skills assist pastors in becoming more effective communicators and agents of healthy change."

SHAPE participants are pursuing the hallmark of knowledge through group book study, continuing education, and mentoring relationships. Any pastor can invest in adding knowledge! Pick up one of those recommended books and commit to a weekly study, check your local library or community center for continuing education offerings, or ask your church to help you enroll in a college course. You will benefit with a greater sense of fulfillment, growth, and knowledge; your congregation will benefit with a renewed pastor, new thinking about spirituality and community, and a sense of excitement about continued growth.

"My [child], if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." (Proverbs 2:1–5 NIV1984)

Some suggested resources:

- Moore, Steve. *The Dream Cycle*. Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2004.
- Trent, John. *Leading from Your Strengths*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2004.
- Rendle, Gil and Alice Mann. *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 2003.
- Wilkes, Paul and Marty Minchin, eds. *Best Practices from America's Best Churches*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003.

HALLMARK: VISION²

"The pastor helps others discern God's plan for his people's lives."

Vision has become a rather popular word over the last couple of decades. It is one of those concepts that we kind of know what it means, but we kind of aren't sure. Defining it and pursuing it can be like trying to nail Jell-o™ to the wall. Various authors define it somewhat differently. Some say vision involves the big picture, and some say it is very specific and focused. I suppose it is probably both.

- Burt Nanus³ defines vision as "a realistic, credible, attractive future."
- George Barna⁴ defines it as "a clear mental image of a preferable future."
- Aubrey Malphurs⁵ defines it as "a clear and challenging picture of the future."
- In his book titled *Visioneering*, Andy Stanley⁶ doesn't even try to define it. He just talks about pursuing it.

Vision Is God-Given

The Bible doesn't try to define it either. Only the King James Version uses the word, in one passage: "Without a vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). The passage actually talks about God's laws. The idea is that if God does not give guidance to people in how they should live, chaos reigns. The Contemporary English Version captures this idea when it translates the verse as "Without guidance from God, law and order disappear."

While I'm not so sure that the biblical writer was referring to vision as we tend to think of it, I do not think that vision as a desirable or preferable future is missing from that verse. Think about it: without a revealed word from God—which is God's guidance—our lives are chaotic and directionless. Vision is a revealed word from God, isn't it? It is God-given direction for our lives.

Paul informs us in Ephesians 2:10 (NIV1984) that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

These good works which we are created to do can be specific acts or can be the more general pursuit of a vision. As God's workmanship, he has given each of us a unique design, which includes spiritual gifts, natural talents, passion, personality or temperament, life experiences, leadership style, etc. That means that your unique design perfectly equips you for the vision he has for you.

² Written by Doug Talley, Florida Ministries of the Church of God

³ Burt Nanus, *Visionary Leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 8.

⁴ George Barna, *Without a Vision the People Perish* (Barna Research, 1991), 29.

⁵ Aubrey Malphurs, *Developing a Vision for Ministry* (Grand Rapids: MI: Baker Books, 1999), 31.

⁶ Andy Stanley, *Visioneering* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers 1999).

God has not designed you to be Bill Hybels, Rick Warren, or Daniel Warner. Neither has he designed you to fulfill the vision that he has, or had, for their lives. He doesn't want you to evaluate your worth in comparison to any of them or anyone else. God has uniquely designed you for the vision that he has for your life.

Vision Involves Surrender

People who do not live for Christ are free to dream up their own vision. However, those of us who have given our hearts and lives to Jesus Christ have given up that right. Surrendering to Christ as Savior also means surrendering to him as Lord. As Lord, he reveals his word—his direction, his vision—to us and calls us to surrender to it.

Consider these four examples from the Bible:

- God spoke to **Moses** through a burning bush (Exodus 3) in order to reveal his vision for Moses' life. The vision was to lead God's people out of Egypt to the Promised Land. Moses gave God reasons why he was not the man for the job, but God basically overruled his excuses. God made it clear to Moses that the pursuit of vision was not about Moses' ability but God's. To pursue the vision, Moses had to reach the point of surrender, and he did. He has become known as one of the greatest leaders of all time, yet he felt so inadequate.

- **Isaiah** had an incredible encounter with God. After seeing God, he immediately volunteered for service. Before God even gave him a vision, he had already surrendered to it. Fascinating. God gave Moses the vision, and then Moses struggled to reach the point of surrender. Isaiah eagerly surrendered, and then God gave the vision.

- People had various visions for **Jesus** to pursue, but he was clear about the one that God had given him. He seems to have surrendered to it at various times. As a child, he was surrendering to it when his parents couldn't find him after they headed home from Jerusalem; he was in the temple talking about God. In the wilderness after his baptism, he surrendered to the vision. In the garden of Gethsemane, he surrendered to the vision. The vision didn't change, but the demands of surrender grew more intense as God's vision for his life neared completion. Jesus renewed his surrender to the vision at critical times in his life.

- On the road to Damascus, **Paul's** God-given vision accompanied his loss of physical vision. Paul was a bit stubborn, so God approached him in a way that would get his attention. He was given a life vision, which seems to have unfolded over time. His surrender preceded his awareness of the vision.

For those of us who follow Christ, vision involves surrender. It is not up to us to design the vision. That is God's responsibility. Ours is to embrace it, recognizing that it is custom fit to how God has designed each of us.

Vision Is Both Personal and Corporate

Vision has both personal and corporate components. The personal component concerns itself directly with the individual leader's unique design. It harkens back to Ephesians 2:10 and the fact that each pastor is God's workmanship.

In the Church of God, we talk about God calling us to the ministry. That sense of call is of critical importance. Without it, we will not last. Even with it, lasting can be a challenge.

Not only does God call us to the ministry, but he also gives us personal vision for ministry. This personal vision stirs passion within us and captures our hearts. It produces emotion. The vision motivates us. It gets us going and keeps us going. It drives us through the mundane times by keeping us focused on what we are ultimately pursuing. The vision gives us direction. It helps us prioritize our values, commitments, and time. It keeps us from getting distracted by other good things which aren't part of the vision that God has given us. The vision provides purpose. It gives us a lasting reason to do what we are doing, to make the necessary sacrifices, and to keep surrendering.

A pastor with a personal God-given vision significantly affects the corporate vision of the church that he or she pastors. As I observe effective churches, I notice that the church's corporate vision usually grows out of the pastor's personal vision. This is especially the case in church plants and turn-around churches. When a pastor's personal vision intersects with a church's corporate vision, incredible things happen and great things are done for God's kingdom. However, when the pastor's personal vision and the church's corporate vision are not aligned, chaos and conflict usually reign.

When the pastor's personal vision aligns with the church's corporate vision, the likelihood of burnout is reduced, the pastor's effectiveness is increased, and the pastor's sense of fulfillment is increased. Not only is there personal benefit for the pastor, but also for the church. This vision intersection helps sustain unity and infuses life into the church.

When a pastor's personal vision and a church's corporate vision intersect, godly energy is released. People who are part of that church are able to own the larger vision and discover their personal vision. When all three intersect (the pastor's vision, the church's vision, and each congregant's vision), there is no limit to what God can accomplish. As vision travels from the heart of God to the heart of the pastor and leaders and then to the heart of the people, a dynamic is released that changes people's lives.

Vision Must Ultimately Be Missional

God doesn't give visions just so people can feel good about themselves. He doesn't give visions just so we have something to do. The visions that he gives are not disconnected or

independent of each other. The visions that God gives are interconnected because they are all missional in nature.

For the church, being missional means winning people to a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. This involves two components: winning people and life change. These are two sides of the same coin, not two unrelated functions.

Being missional involves looking outward, being relevant, reaching out, being intentional, being strategic, and seeing how your vision fits into God's bigger picture.

God intends for the visions he gives to fit together so that his ultimate vision (the Great Commission) can be realized. This means that your personal vision and your church's corporate vision are not an end in themselves. They are components of a much larger vision which is in the heart of God and which is rooted in his missional nature. Ultimately, they point towards the culmination of redemptive history.

Moses' vision was to lead God's people out of captivity in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. God's purpose in calling the Hebrews to himself was to show himself to the world through them. Forming a nation in the Promised Land was not all of the vision. The larger vision was much more missional than that. The larger vision was redemptive. God wanted the whole world to live in relationship with him so that each person (both Jew and Gentile) would reflect his likeness.

Nehemiah's vision was to rebuild the walls and gates of Jerusalem, but God's larger vision was much more missional than that. The Israelites constantly had trouble seeing the bigger picture that God had in mind. They thought they were chosen because they were more special or holier than other people groups. Actually, they were mercifully chosen to reveal God to the world so that all people would know him.

Paul's ministry involved a lot of things—teaching, preaching, planting churches, developing leaders, and assisting the poor. But at the core of his vision was preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. “But even before I was born, God had chosen me. He was kind and had decided to show me his Son, so that I would announce his message to the Gentiles (Galatians 1:15–16 CEV). “They realized that God had sent me with the good news for Gentiles, and that he had sent Peter with the same message for Jews” (Galatians 2:7 CEV).

Paul had a keen understanding of the bigger vision toward which God was working. It was to win people to a life-changing relationship with himself through his Son. Paul's personal vision centered on the Gentiles, but that did not stop him from winning Jews. He saw everything he did through the larger vision lens of pursuing the Great Commission.

In order for vision to be missional, it must connect to the Great Commission—to winning people to a life-changing relationship with God through Jesus Christ. That is the big picture vision that drives God.

Jesus had a compelling sense of God's vision for his life. He summed it up at the end of the story involving Zacchaeus when he said, "The Son of Man came to look for and to save people who are lost" (Luke 19:10 CEV).

Though Jesus performed miracles, healed people, comforted people, and challenged people's misconceptions about God, the vision that drove his life was to look for and save lost people. He understood his vision so well that he was able to disregard the popular expectations people had for the Messiah and go all the way to the cross, thus making salvation and life change possible.

Have you ever been trotline fishing? You make a trotline by tying short sections of fishing line to a larger rope every couple of feet. You tie a hook to each of those smaller lines and bait it. Then you extend the trotline across a river and secure each end to a tree. As the current moves fish down the river, they see the bait, go for it, and get hooked. Several hours later when you pull the line up, you will have caught a variety of fish.

Jesus' mission of seeking and saving the lost is the trotline to which all other visions must be connected. It is the missional vision that drives God's heart. If you disconnect your vision or the local church's vision from the larger vision, it simply floats downstream and becomes an end in itself. But if your vision is connected to God's larger vision of winning people to a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ, then God's kingdom expands and God is glorified.

Some people seem to be extraordinarily visionary, people such as Walt Disney, Bill Gates, Rick Warren, and Bill Hybels. Most people are not that visionary. Yet all people need a vision to give their lives direction. Fortunately, God has a vision for each of our lives. As we spend time listening to him, he willingly communicates that vision to us.

God's vision for your life involves your surrender, is both personal and corporate in nature, and is missional. May God capture your heart with his vision for your life and ministry.

Doug Talley

HALLMARK: PERSONAL HEALTH

The pastor recognizes the importance of personal physical and emotional health to an experience of holistic personal health and wellness.

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. —3 John 2 NIV1984

In writing to his friend Gaius, John reminds us of the reality that our physical emotional health is important to our personal health and ministry effectiveness. The Bible is rich with teachings and metaphors regarding the health of body as well as the soul. Yet the truth facing us today is that many pastors struggle to maintain a proper care of self—body and emotions—amid the pressures of life and ministry. A sense of divine urgency for the task, unrealistic demands placed upon the pastor (either from without or within), the fast-paced nature of our culture with its technical advances, and many other factors tend to draw us away from the fact that our own personal health contributes significantly to the effectiveness of our ministry and our intimacy with God. Statistics among pastors in regard to heart disease, high blood pressure, stress-related illnesses, depression, obesity, burnout, divorce, and poor emotional health are staggering. Life expectancy has fallen among clergy.

Tom Hopkins writes, “To be deemed healthy, a person must display balance in the areas of mind, body and spirit. We know that a successful life is comprised of finding balance physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.”

Balance. That is a greater challenge than most of us are willing to admit. What must be considered in developing a balanced approach to life?

—A healthy work ethic. Work is an integral part of life. Yet we must realize that such labor is just a part of life, not the defining factor of life.

—Rest and Recreation. Work must be properly balanced with rest and recreation. Adequate sleep and activity apart from the demands of our work life must be a priority.

—Exercise. At least 20–30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise 4–5 times each week is suggested.

—Proper nutrition. Our hectic pace of living can rob us of taking time to eat a proper diet of healthy foods.

—The establishment of proper and clear boundaries in life.

—Journeying with others in life. Family, friends, mentors, accountability partners in a supportive, encouraging community contribute meaningfully to personal health.

Paul Dreger

CREATED TO BE⁷

As we think about what it means to be the church our minds usually race first to buildings, programs, or organizational structures. Pastors may think of sermons to prepare, budgets to develop, visits to make, lessons to write, agendas to follow, expectations to live up to. It is possible that our kingdom service is little more than servitude to the expedient rather than obedience to the Spirit of God. Unquestionably we are called to action for the sake of the kingdom (Matthew 7:21 and Ephesians 2:10 immediately come to mind). Yet our first calling is not to *doing* something for the Lord but *being* in intimate relationship with the Lord through faith in Jesus Christ. When we begin to think relationally about the kingdom, we think first of who we are, not what we do. And there we come face-to-face with the power of the kingdom. We were created by God and for God.

For by him all things were created. . . all things were created by him and for him.
—Colossians 1:16 NIV1984

. . . created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
—Ephesians 4:24 NIV1984

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
—Genesis 1:27 NIV1984

We were created to be in intimate relationship with our Creator and Sustainer. Our value and worth is not determined by our position or power or performance. The One who created us loves us dearly and has provided all that we need to live in that divine intimacy. From the opening pages of Scripture we are confronted with the loving God who makes and gives and sustains, who is deeply involved in creation. Time after time we are reminded that it is God who makes of kingdom people much more than they could ever make of themselves. (See Gen 2:7–8; 12:2; 32:9; 48:14; Deut 9:14; Isa 49:6; Matt 4:19, where God says in a variety of settings: “I will make you...”.) Paul reminds us that those who are to lead the church do so not by their own choosing but by the creative gifting of God: *It was he who gave some to be...* (Eph 4:11). Our giftedness for life and ministry is not first about a role or position or activity, but rather about an intimate relationship with the Giver and with those others whom the Lord has given to *be*.

In Exodus 3, Moses is confronted by the life-giving, life-sustaining God who calls us to *be*. In verse 14, after exhausting his reasons for not taking up God’s mission to the Hebrews, Moses asks for that clarifying, identifying declaration of God’s being that would convince the Hebrews that he had been sent by their God. God’s reply was simple: “Tell them I AM has sent me to you.” Could it be that there is something inherently profound and powerful in that response that is valid for we who have been created in divine image? When we move toward the attitude and spirit that enables us to declare with confidence the “I Am” of our own being—not encumbered by the weights of competition and comparison—we begin to build a strong foundation of a healthy relational life with God, self,

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and others. It is a foundation, not of power, but of love. It is the foundation that enables us to declare along with Paul, “I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation...” (Phil 4:12 NIV1984). The personal “I Am” of human experience enables us to declare with confidence:

I am: Created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27)
Fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14)
Loved by God (John 3:16)
Capable of loving all that God loves (I John 4:19)
Gifted and empowered to give myself away to my world in the name of
Jesus (Ephesians 4:11)

I am able to become all God desires me to be!

Such a spirit enables us to live in a freedom that God alone can provide:

Freedom to be: With the Father
Submitted to Divine Lordship: “God alone”
Unshackled from the chains of comparison and competition
Filled with peace, joy, love, hope
A vessel of divine love

...The person God created me to be

As we think about the life of the local congregation, we must always remember that most often conflict arises not as the result of broken methods but broken relationships. What we bring to the table spiritually as leaders has far more to do with the success of the ministry of the church than the programs and methods we embrace. That is not to downplay the value and importance of effective and productive methodologies. But the spirit in which any method is embraced will ultimately determine its effectiveness. The foundation of true holiness and unity in the body of Christ is love, and that love becomes part of the local congregation through the lives of its people. We must never underestimate or neglect the power of love in the life of the church. Love is the factor that can make or break the methods we choose to embrace as we serve our world in the name of Jesus. To serve in the name of Jesus, we can do no less than build upon the foundation of love. Anything else will fall short of the work the Lord desires to do in us and through us (Eph 3:20).

THE BODY OF CHRIST REVISITED⁸

Think with me for a few minutes regarding the nature of the church. That is most certainly something we have done countless times before. But there is always value in thinking openly about who we are to be as Christ-followers. There are many metaphors that seek to identify the reality of who we are as Christ-followers, both in Scripture and in the concepts we have embraced in light of the gospel message. Some are true to the gospel message; some are not. Some focus on aspects of our life as the people of God yet miss the totality of the New Testament picture of who we are as the people of God.

From all the scriptural pictures we have been given, the concept of the “body of Christ” most vividly captures for me who we are to be as the people of God. It is the phrase that for me best exemplifies the New Testament picture of who we are to be and what we are to do. But even then we need some explanation. Consider with me for a few minutes a picture of life—our lives individually or the life of the local congregation—as a car. This metaphor allows us to think in new ways about who we are and what life is all about. In this metaphor, I can envision a car that is reflective of the life to which we are called as Christ-followers, a perspective supported solidly by Scripture and a pretty accurate picture of what it means to be the body of Christ.

This car has a drivetrain. The drivetrain is composed of the engine, transmission, wheels and accompanying parts. It is what makes the car go. In our metaphor of life, the drivetrain is *love*. There is a strong gospel foundation for love being the motivating force of our life. Just check out Matthew 22:34–40 and John 13–17. Jesus entrusted us with not just a message of love but with *being* love to our world, to believers and unbelievers, to the lovely and the unlovely, to insiders and outsiders, to our friends and to our enemies. Love is the power and driving force of life. Love provides us with identity and purpose and direction for all of life. It is time for the church to discover and embrace a love that is rooted in the holiness of God and not in the fickleness of humanity.

If love is the engine, then the body of the car—exterior and interior—is our *witness*: our responsibility to exhibit love wherever we go, the act of “being the body of Christ fulfilling the mission of Christ in the world.” *Mission, missions, and missional* are words we use to describe what we do. Witness is *who we are*. In Acts 1: 8 Jesus said, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (NIV1984). WE ARE WITNESSES TO JESUS! Where? Anywhere and everywhere! When? All the time! Fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20) is a matter of witnessing to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus in all of life. The Great Commission is not an add-on to life; it is the lifestyle of Christ-followers. We enter into relationships with every other person in our world, no matter how intimate or fleeting, with the intent of being a channel of love and with the thought that this moment should provide an open door for introducing that person to Jesus. We *are* witnesses, and just as in Scripture, the critical question is, are we false witnesses or true witnesses to the life-transforming power of Jesus.

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So the entire car, the heart and soul of life—love and witness—is highly relational and truly essential if my car is to fulfill its intended purpose. I once had a friend who was rebuilding a car. It was a sleek late-1960s-model Dodge Charger. It was painted a metallic purple and was one sharp-looking car. But I laughed out loud when I raised the hood and found that the car had no engine. No matter how good it looked, it wasn't going anywhere. I have seen other cars that have working engines but are sitting on blocks in the front yards of houses. Likewise, those cars are going nowhere. In all these cases, the cars are not fulfilling their intended purpose. And so in the life of the church, if we aren't deeply engaged in the Great Commission and living life in compliance with the Great Commandments, we are not fulfilling our divinely intended purpose, no matter how we look, how busy we are or how successful we are by the non-biblical standards we have embraced.

There is another aspect of the life of the car. It is intended to have passengers. The names of the passengers in our metaphor are Worship, Discipleship, and Stewardship. Please don't think programmatically about those names because this life to which we are called is undeniably one of intimate relationships. For too long we have made our life together programmatic rather than relational. And that perspective has kept many from fulfilling our intended purpose as the people of God.

Think about *worship*. When we mention that word, most people think about what happens at a particular location at a particular time. For many congregations, the Sunday morning worship is the most important program on its schedule, and most of the church's efforts go into those several hours we gather for classes and a worship experience. That is not what worship is really all about! Worship is all about our relationship of love for and submission to God. While gathering for corporate worship is encouraged in Scripture and valuable for us, genuine worship has far more to do with how we live outside the sanctuary than we often admit. Yet the truth is that many who enter the sanctuary of a local congregation often miss the joy of bringing honor, glory and praise to God. And when we acknowledge that God is much more concerned with our relationship outside the one or two hours per week we spend in corporate worship and study experiences, we must admit we have missed the heart of worship in more ways than one. To truly worship is to seek to honor and glorify God in all of life's activities—wherever we are, whomever we are with. That kind of intimate relationship cannot be compartmentalized or relegated to a couple hours one day a week. For the true Christ-follower, every moment is a sacred moment of God-honoring living. This intimate relationship with God impacts every moment of life. To worship is to make even secular settings holy and God-honoring as the Lord lives and works in us and through us.

Stewardship. Again, we have programmatically reduced stewardship to acts of giving or service when in reality it has far deeper implications for us. At its heart, stewardship has to do with the proper use of my life in totality. It is about how I am using this life that God has entrusted to me. God is the owner; I am the caretaker. God is the master; I am the servant. Stewardship is about how I expend my life in every way—spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and relationally. If we were to engage in holistic stewardship, it would lead us to the kind of transformation of which Paul speaks in Romans 12: 1–2. But many

of us settle for changing things outwardly rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us inwardly. As I have stated many times, most congregational conflicts come about, not as the result of broken programs but because of broken relationships. And many broken relationships are the result of persons not exercising a proper stewardship of their own life in the power of the Holy Spirit. My relationship with self must be as sanctified as my relationship with God.

Then there is the passenger we call *discipleship*. Discipleship covers every other relationship we have in life. Yet, again, we seldom understand it that way. Discipleship has become a course that we take on Thursday evening or Monday morning where we read some books, fill in some blanks, and receive a certificate that proclaims triumphantly that we have completed the course. Somehow I don't think that is what Jesus had in mind when he issued the proclamation (see Matthew 28:18–20). Discipleship is about a wholehearted commitment to Jesus that permeates every aspect of life and leads us to help impart that same passion and commitment to those within our sphere of influence. And our role in the life of discipleship cannot be compartmentalized. We must stop thinking about evangelism and discipleship as two separate tasks: just as human life is one continuous experience from conception to birth to death, so discipleship is the experience that begins with the first nudge of the Holy Spirit to the new birth to our call to our eternal home—discipleship. The proclamation of the good news of Jesus is simply part of the discipleship journey.

A disciple of Jesus is one who shares Jesus in whatever way possible. Sometimes it is in planting a gospel seed and an awakening to the need of a personal relationship with Jesus. Other times it is nurturing and watering a seed that has been previously planted. Sometimes we are privileged to help another confess faith in Jesus Christ. Always we should be on a journey with other Christ-followers who are maturing into the fullness of Christ. Every relationship we have—with Christ-followers and non-Christ-followers—should be approached with the attitude that we are Christ's ambassadors and every relationship is an opportunity to represent him accurately, even if it only be through a smile or word or act of kindness.

Love, Witness, Worship, Discipleship, Stewardship: these are five words that, embraced holistically, encompass the gospel of Jesus Christ and provide us with the content of the life that brings honor and glory to the Lord in all things. It is an understanding of our life in Christ that emphasizes properly the relational foundation of life and understands that the living out of our faith should never abandon that foundation in any way. Nothing that happens to us in life gives us the right to be ungodly, to abandon love or misrepresent Christ, in relationship to God, self and all others.

Our car: one vehicle powered and moved by love and witness; one passenger compartment filled with the vitality of love-motivated, witness-laden relationships with God, self, and everyone else in my life. WOW! That is a vision that stretches me way beyond most of my experience in the life of local congregations.

It is a biblical perspective.

It is a gospel perspective.

It is a holistic perspective that does not leave out any aspect of our calling as Christ-followers.

We cannot neglect the holistic picture of life in Christ that the New Testament provides us. If we were to measure our life personally or congregationally by these five relationally rooted experiences, would God find us faithful?

POWERFUL COACHING QUESTIONS⁹

RELATE

- How are you doing?
- Where are you now?
- How can I be praying for you?
- What do you want to address next?
- How can we work together?

REFLECT

- What can we celebrate?
- What's really important?
- What obstacles are you facing?
- Where do you want to go?
- How committed are you?

REFOCUS

- What do you want to accomplish?
- What are possible ways to get there?
- Which path will you choose?
- What will you do (who, what, when, where, how)?
- How will you measure your progress?

RESOURCE

- What resources will you need to accomplish your goals?
- What resources do you already have?
- What resources are you missing?
- Where will you find the resources you need?
- What can I do to support you?

REVIEW

- What's working?
- What's not working?
- What are you learning?
- What needs to change?
- What else needs to be done?
- What further training would be helpful?
- What's next

⁹ Logan, Robert E. and Sherilyn Carlton. *Coaching 101, Discover the Power of Coaching*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 2003, 119-120.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CONSULTANTS

Regional Pastors: 2014 Church of God Ministries Yearbook, page 52.

Alfred Ells: Leaders That Last, www.Leadersthatlast.org

David Ferguson: Intimate Life Ministries, www.greatcommandment.net

Milfred Minatrea: Facebook or missionalchurchcenter.blogspot.com

Ken Priddy: www.kenpriddy.com

Greg Wiens: Healthy Growing Churches, www.gregwiens.com

ORGANIZATIONS

CoachNet: A collaboration and multiplication organization that comes along side to help multiply the things done for God's kingdom. www.coachnet.org

Church Health Assessment Tool (CHAT): A tool that focuses on the strengths of a congregation. www.healthychurch.net

ChurchSmart Resources (Natural Church Development): Congregational health and assessment. www.churchsmart.com

Healthy Growing Churches: Developing passionate leaders for missional churches. www.healthygrowingchurches.com

Intimate Life Ministries: Committed to providing printed resources and relationship training for its network of partners. www.greatcommandment.net

IntegrateEI: Integrating emotional intelligence with Leadership. www.INTEGRATEEI.COM

Leaders the Last: Equipping pastors and leaders. www.leadersthatlast.org

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