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Sustaining team leadership in recovery at Magnolia Baptist Church in Riverside, California

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

SUSTAINING TEAM LEADERSHIP IN RECOVERY AT
MAGNOLIA AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH IN RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

RICHARD PEREZ

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ABSTRACT

Title: SUSTAINING TEAM LEADERSHIP IN RECOVERY AT MAGNOLIA AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH IN RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

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Year: 2011

Institution: George Fox Evangelical Seminary

The healing process of addiction recovery requires a culture of trust and highly relational leaders. Leaders must understand the meaning of “a safe place” where addicts share common problems, solutions, and lives. A safe place is based on trust that has two basic components: personal humility and professional and confessional will.

This paper’s thesis is that trust is necessary within a recovery ministry leadership team. Extending this foundation into a “circle of friends” is a creative action that can produce safety and serenity. Celebrate Recovery at Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church (CRMABC) was a Christ-centered, twelve step recovery ministry that provided a social structure based on trust. It used Patrick Lencioni’s book, *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, and demonstrated how recovery ministry trust can be sustained and deepened by focusing on humility and professional, confessional will.

Chapter 1 describes MABC’s micro ministry context and the macro cultural context of distrust that impact this paper’s thesis, program intervention, and results. The chapter provides an analysis of recent North American cultural experience including the area of leadership trust. Chapter 2 provides a biblical basis for the paper’s thesis focused on human infirmity and weakness. “A Theology of Weakness” accepts and embraces human brokenness that can help sustain a leadership team’s health and wholeness.

Chapter 3 provides a history of Alcoholics Anonymous as “religionless Christianity” founded in the late 1930s and a history of Celebrate Recovery founded in the early 1990s.

This section describes Celebrate Recovery’s structure and function.

Chapter 4 describes how the Celebrate Recovery intervention was developed, commissioned, established, and operated for four plus years in a minimally supportive Southern Baptist congregation in Riverside, California. The model helped sustain the leadership team in a recovery ministry. Chapter 5 reports the outcomes of the intervention, and chapter 6 concludes the paper.

INTRODUCTION

Three friends met together in the summer of 2004. One was a Christian university campus pastor, the second was an associate pastor of the Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church (MABC), and the third was the author of this paper, a layman. They discussed what they believed was a needed ministry for the MABC congregation, university, and local community. The three friends met, prayed, talked, and sought a way they could serve men who struggled with sexual addiction. They continued to meet, wait, watch, pray, and share experiences, and it became apparent after nine months that a way was opening for a possible recovery ministry.

The campus pastor preached a sermon entitled “There Is Healing in Revealing.” Nine months later the associate pastor preached his first sermon to the congregation and conducted a “One Minute Pulpit Survey” focused on addiction issues. He collected 687 surveys from 1,100 attendees, and 89 people revealed that they “needed help now” with addiction problems. The three friends decided it was time to pursue an addiction recovery ministry at MABC.

The pastor of the congregation approached the author and his wife to lead a Celebrate Recovery ministry based on their previous experience with an eating disorders group in a Celebrate Recovery ministry and their roles as health care professionals. The author’s wife is a registered nurse clinical specialist in rehabilitation and the author is

a registered physical therapist. The pastor said, “We want this to be our ‘intensive care ministry’ to the congregation.”

Within six weeks, the three friends and their wives attended a Celebration Recovery Summit at Saddleback Church and learned the ways and means of the ministry. It became apparent the program required a team to develop, launch, and sustain the ministry. The author, because of his previous experience in full time ministry and the eating disorders group, understood the types of stresses the team would experience that required trust in the midst of distrust-mistrust. By December 2004, the fourth husband-wife team members joined the team and they began the “ninety day ramp up to launch” the ministry.

The author of this paper believes the American culture of power and success exacerbates the leadership burdens, tensions, and pressures in a recovery ministry. North American culture permeates many contemporary congregations, and this culture contrasts with a culture of weakness and trust. The author believes trust building can sustain a recovery ministry that accepts and articulates a theology of human weakness. This fundamental theological anthropology sustains a clinical and ministerial point of departure and intervention in dealing with addiction.

Trust can be formed, shaped, and modeled within the ministry, and it may be transmitted to the host congregation’s leadership and community. This transference may enhance and embolden the congregation and its witness to the world. The leadership team must develop vulnerability based trust within the ministry. This requires that ministry team leaders develop trust and exercise humility based on a theology of weakness, which

in turn develops a praxis that sustains a will to humility through the practice of professing Christ as the Center of life, ministry, and confessing personal weakness.

The author realized through personal experience and a review of survey research that ministerial pressures often cause pastoral burnout. For example, Charles Liu reports that 50% of ministers leave the ministry within the first five years of pastoral practice. Liu reviewed the literature and estimated that 2% to 17% of pastors report symptoms of burnout when assessed by the Maslach Burnout Inventory.¹ A survey of pastors conducted by G. I. Headington asserted that 80% of respondents believed that the ministry had affected their families negatively and 50% dropped out of full time ministry within five years.² In addition, the author contacted a Loma Linda, California, Seventh-day Adventist counseling group that focused on pastors' needs and supported practicing clergy. The author of this paper experienced these pressures personally and left official ministry.

The author sought a shared leadership role with the four-couple team. The group adopted Patrick Lencioni's model described in the book, *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.³ A theology of weakness formed the basis of team community making and trust building. Marva Dawn's two books, *Powers, Weakness and the*

¹ Charles M. Liu, "A Spiritual Model for Recovery of Pastors Suffering Burnout" (DMin diss., Andrews University, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1991), 15.

² G. I. Headington quoted in Kathryn Rhoads Meek et al., "Maintaining Personal Resiliency: Lessons Learned from Evangelical Protestant Clergy," *Psychology and Theology* 31, no. 4 (2003): 339.

³ Patrick Lencioni, *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Field Guide for Leaders, Managers, and Facilitators* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005).

*Tabernacling of God*⁴ and *Joy in Weakness*⁵ proved useful in the development of faith, confidence, belief, and trust for the recovery ministry.

Chapter 1 of this paper describes the erosion of trust in American culture and in the church. North American culture is competitive and focuses on power and success in contrast to the culture of weakness and trust Jesus exemplified. Perhaps many Americans first encounter trust, faith, belief, and fidelity in its negative forms of distrust-mistrust, doubt, unbelief, and infidelity. Jesus calls Christians out of distrust-mistrust into trust.

Chapter 2 describes a theology of weakness as the church's ground of being instead of power and success. This theological anthropology emulates Jesus' incarnational theology that appears foolish to the world (1 Cor. 1:18). This theology of weakness is the power and wisdom of God based on a proper understanding of humanity's depravity before the sovereignty of the bleeding and dying God.

Chapter 3 provides a history of Alcoholics Anonymous as a type of religionless Christianity that developed from a previous era of power that faded in North America with the Great Depression. The chapter describes the founding of Celebrate Recovery as a re-evangelization of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Chapter 4 describes trust building among project participants on the foundation of a theology of weakness that overcomes human dysfunction in highly dysfunctional groups. Vulnerability based trust is introduced as a way to build trust and community in

⁴ Marva Dawn, *Powers, Weakness and the Tabernacling of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001).

⁵ Marva Dawn, *Joy in Weakness* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002).

an addiction ministry leadership team. The Meyers-Briggs Type Inventory, used as a trust building tool, helps build and sustain trust in the team and the ministry.

Chapter 5 reports recovery ministry results over four plus years of service, and chapter 6 presents conclusions and possible future research questions to enhance the sustainability of Celebrate Recovery.

CHAPTER 1
THE MINISTRY CONTEXT

The Challenge: Distrust

A local church sponsors a group of addicts and commissions a leadership team to create and sustain a recovery ministry. The team gathers for conversation, interpersonal support, and leadership training. The recovery ministry leadership team members do not trust each other, and this presents an enormous challenge because the lack of trust threatens the team's cohesion and effectiveness. Patrick Lencioni writes, "Trust is the foundation of real teamwork. And so the first dysfunction [of a team] is a failure on the part of team members to understand and open up to one another."¹ The thesis of this paper is that trust is essential in a recovery ministry leadership team.

Lencioni believes "teams, because they are made up of imperfect human beings, are inherently dysfunctional,"² and he writes, "Great teams do not hold back with one another. They are unafraid to air their dirty laundry. They admit their mistakes, their

¹ Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 43.

² *Ibid.*, vii.

weaknesses and their concerns without fear of reprisal.”³ Trust requires a deep, humble acceptance of human weakness, a willingness to unlearn old responses to human behavior, and acceptance of new competencies in dealing with addictive behaviors. Overcoming human mistrust, cultural distrust, and unbelief is a challenge increased by social, political, and financial crises described in this chapter. A recovery ministry must establish trust among leadership team members, but team members live in a distrustful culture and world.

From global distrust to self distrust, individuals often find themselves paralyzed by lack of confidence, self-doubt, distrust, and unbelief. Gordon Brown, past prime minister of the United Kingdom opined, “Our current global credit crisis strikes at the root of the word *credo*—‘I believe.’”⁴ The challenge to trust one another is threatened by disbelief. Lencioni writes,

And that is where the rarity of teamwork comes into play. For all the attention it has received over the years from scholars, coaches, teachers, and the media, teamwork is as elusive as it has ever been within most organizations. . . . But that is not to say that teamwork is doomed; far from it. In fact, building a strong team is both possible and remarkably simple. But it is painfully hard.⁵

³ Ibid., 44.

⁴ Fareed Zakaria, “Interview with Gordon Brown,” CNN, aired Feb. 1, 2009, <https://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/09/02/01/fzgps.01.html> (accessed October 28, 2009).

⁵ Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, viii.

Global, National, and Institutional Distrust

The 2008 global credit crisis and failure of banks to trust one another reflect contemporary societal distrust.⁶ Recent newspaper headlines highlight this distrust⁷:

- “Employees New Motto: Trust No One”
- “Companies Urged to Rebuild Trust”
- “Both Sides Betray the Other’s Trust”
- “29 NYSE Traders Indicted”
- “Ethics Must Be Strengthened to Rebuild People’s Trust”
- “Relationships Fall Apart as Trust Dwindles”
- “Now, Who Do You Trust?”

The crisis of trust touches many institutions, relationships, and personal lives. For example, Stephen Covey reports, “In our own United States . . . a 2005 Harris poll revealed that only 22% of those surveyed tend to trust the media, only 8% trust political parties, only 27% trust the government, and only 12% trust big companies.”⁸ Covey writes,

A recent survey conducted by British sociologist David Halpern reveals that only 34% of Americans believe that other people can be trusted. In Latin America, the number is only 23%, and in Africa, the figure is 18%. Halpern’s research also shows [that] four decades ago in Great Britain, 60% of the population believed

⁶ Stephen M. R. Covey, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), 10.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Harris Interactive, “Fewer American Than Europeans Have Trust in the Media—Press, Radio, and TV,” Harris Poll # 4, January 13, 2005, http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp?PID=534 (accessed October 28, 2009).

other people could be trusted; today it's down to 29%. The “good” news of the study—relatively speaking—is that 68% of Scandinavians (Denmark, Sweden, Norway) and 60% of the people of the Netherlands believe others can be trusted, indicating that there are some higher-trust societies. And Mexico's figure—though a low 31%—is up from 1983's 19%, which indicates that it is possible to increase social trust.⁹

Covey asserts that employees distrust corporate mid-level and senior level institutional management in the 36 to 51% range: “Over the past 12 months, 76% of employees have observed illegal or unethical conduct on the job—conduct which, if exposed, would seriously violate the public trust.”¹⁰ Covey believes secular institutions and corporations fail to engender trust and provide for the common good. Distrust may be pandemic, but trust is essential for sustaining a recovery ministry leadership team. This paper provides a model that deals with this reality.

Relational, Interpersonal, Personal Distrust

Trust at the personal relational level suffers because only “51% percent of [respondents report] confidence in senior management.”¹¹ Covey writes, “Only 36% of employees believe their leaders act with honesty and integrity.”¹² He continues, “The number one reason people leave their jobs is a bad relationship with their boss”¹³ and

⁹ Covey, *The Speed of Trust*, 11.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 12.

“One out of every two marriages ends in divorce.”¹⁴ Covey believes distrust is reflected in graduate school applications:

Consider the percentage of students who acknowledged that they cheated in order to improve their odds of getting into graduate school.

- Liberal arts students—43%
- Education students—52 %
- Medical students—63%
- Law students—63%
- Business students—75%

How does it make you feel to know that there’s more than a 50% chance that the doctor who’s going to perform surgery on you cheated in school. Or a 75% chance that the company you are going to work for is being led by someone who didn’t consider honesty important?¹⁵

Global, national, societal, institutional, governmental, organizational, and corporate distrust create a personal, fundamental issue of trust described in the next section. The issue of distrust is fundamental to this paper.

Self-Distrust, Crisis, and the Church

Covey writes, “Society, organizations, and relationships aside, there’s an even more fundamental and powerful dimension to self trust.”¹⁶ Self-distrust prompts the suspension of trust towards others. “If we can’t trust ourselves, we’ll have a hard time trusting others. This personal incongruence is often the source of our suspicions of others.”¹⁷ People who believe they cannot trust themselves have great difficulty trusting

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 13.

others. This dynamic encourages suspicion of others, and individuals project their distrust into their relationships. They experience a Hobbesian state of nature known as *bellum omnium contra omnes*, the “war of all against all,”¹⁸ and move beyond cynicism into skepticism, self-betrayal, and self-sabotage.

Covey believes Americans experience “a crisis of trust” and quotes Joe Paterno, head football coach at Penn State University, “Whether you’re on a sports team, in an office or a member of a family, if you can’t trust one another there’s going to be trouble.”¹⁹ “While many of us may be fairly resilient, with each new violation of trust or corporate scandal, we tend to recover a little more slowly. We wonder what else is out there and become increasingly suspicious of other people. We begin to project the behavior of the few upon the many, and we are paying for it dearly.”²⁰ These dynamics affect the church, as Les Csorba writes:

Unlike affairs between passionate lovers that drive wedges between families and friends, another kind of affair has instead tarnished the institutions created to honor a fidelity that has been broken. These are the leadership implications of an affair between an unsuspecting church and an enticing world that seduces [the church] with the softness of secularization, the pleasures of consumerism, and the convenience of pragmatism.²¹

¹⁸ Thomas Hobbes, “Section XIII: Of the State of Men without Civill Society” in *De Cive* (1651, repr. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2009), 18, http://books.google.com/books?id=WssPvaw7qEcC&dq=hobbes+de+cive&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=aaYDMwBaw6&sig=Kxz9F89zIvuo0KCnIQLCnwcSZKw&hl=en&ei=XQe5SvSTElwsgOlv4ko&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4#v=onepage&q=war%20of%20all%20against%20all&f=false (accessed October 28, 2009).

¹⁹ Covey, *The Speed of Trust*, 11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

²¹ Les T. Csorba, *Trust: The One Thing That Makes or Breaks a Leader* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 121-122.

Christopher Lasch believes a type of “cultural narcissism” may distort some church leaders.²²

Misconduct by ecclesial and lay church leaders undermines the trust of North American believers. The moral failures in recent years in the North American Catholic Church and “places like Canada, Germany, Ireland and Poland,”²³ and subsequent denials and cover-ups, undermine confidence. For example, the denial and cover up attempt by a former mega-church pastor and president of the North American Evangelical Association and the denial of disciplers who refuse to “to tear off their masks of adequacy and live unmasked”²⁴ “in an ongoing brokenness with joy”²⁵ magnifies these issues. A church conference president said, “Who gets the credit and who gets the blame is the overarching concern.”²⁶ These events and attitudes threaten congregants’ trust and confidence in the church. Csorba writes,

It may seem shocking to those looking in the glass houses that leaders of faith would succumb to worldly temptations and to their own flesh. Depravity in the world at large is one thing, but it is stunning when it is revealed in the church. Leadership ought to be a moral activity, not a function or device for expediency, self-gratification or narcissistic self-love. Just as we saw with corporate and

²² Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: Warner, 1979), 124.

²³ Csorba, *Trust*, 123.

²⁴ John Fischer, *12 Steps for the Recovering Pharisee Like Me: Finding Grace to Live Unmasked* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2000), 11.

²⁵ Larry Crabb, “American Idols,” *Leadership* 25, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 25.

²⁶ Gilbert Anderson, personal communication with author, July 4, 1978. Anderson was a conference president of a North American denomination.

political leaders, there appears to be a sense of entitlement that comes with [an] elevated spiritual position.²⁷

The Ministry Context

This section describes the ministry context of this paper in Riverside, California, Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church (MABC), and California Baptist University (CBU). It also describes the relationship between MABC and CBU and the wider cultural context of distrust.

The City of Riverside, California

Riverside, California, is the largest city in the region known as the “Inland Empire” that includes the western regions of San Bernardino and Riverside counties. It is located sixty miles east of Los Angeles, fifty miles west of Palm Springs, and ninety miles north of San Diego, California. Riverside reports its 2008 population as 296,842 with an annual population growth since 2000 of 2.03 percent.²⁸ Riverside is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States and was listed as one of the “best places to live” by *Money Magazine: Best Places to Live 2006: Riverside, CA snapshot*.²⁹ The city is home to California Baptist University (4,200 students), La Sierra University (3,000

²⁷ Csorba, *Trust*, 126.

²⁸ City of Riverside Development Department Economic Development, “City Facts at a Glance,” <http://www.riversideca.gov/econdev/cityfacts.asp> (accessed October 28, 2009).

²⁹ CNN Money.com, “Money: Best Places to Live 2006,” <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/bplive/2006/snapshots/PL0662000.html> (accessed October 28, 2009).

students), the University of California Riverside (18,000 students), and Riverside Community College (30,000 students).³⁰

The American Community Survey three-year estimates for 2006-2008 reports that the Riverside population is ethnically mixed with a non-Hispanic white population of 37 percent, an Hispanic population of any race of 47 percent, an Asian community of 7 percent, a Pacific Islander population of 0.4 percent, and a black community of 7 percent.³¹ The median household income in the city was \$56,805 in 2006-2008 and \$62,811 for a family.³² About 9.2 percent of families and 13 percent of the population were below the poverty line.³³

The 2006-2008 American Community Survey reports 90,747 occupied, Riverside households of which 38.7 percent included children under eighteen in residence.³⁴ Fifty-one percent of the households included couples living together, 14.4 percent had a female householder with no male present, individuals comprised 21 percent, and 6.2 percent

³⁰ Riverside Community College, "Making College Work for You, <http://www.rcc.edu/district/index.cfm> (accessed August 16, 2010).

³¹ U.S. Census Bureau, "Riverside City, California: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2006-2008," http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2008_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=16000US0662000&-gc_url=&-ds_name=ACS_2008_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en (accessed October 28, 2009).

³² U.S. Census Bureau, "Riverside City, California: Selected Economic Characteristics: 2006-2008," http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US0662000&-qr_name=ACS_2008_3YR_G00_DP3YR3&-gc_url=&-ds_name=&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false (accessed October 28, 2009).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, "Riverside City, California: Selected Social Characteristics in the United States: 2006-2008," http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US0662000&-qr_name=ACS_2008_3YR_G00_DP3YR2&-gc_url=&-ds_name=&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false (accessed October 28, 2009).

included residents sixty-five years of age or older. The average family size was 3.8 persons.³⁵

Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church

Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church (MABC) is located in Riverside, California, and is the ministry context of this paper. The church began through the Southern Baptist Church's response to an increasing population of constituents in the region and the construction of a church related college.

During the 1940s, the California Southern Baptist Convention (CSBC) leadership sought land and or facilities for a small liberal arts college in Riverside. They located and purchased a former tuberculosis sanatorium in 1948-1949, renovated the facility, and launched the school in 1950 as California Baptist College.³⁶ The professors and staff soon envisioned a new church to house the campus' growing needs for a local congregation. They purchased land in 1953-1954 across Magnolia Avenue, and a church structure was built through the offerings and gifts from the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the CSBC, local constituents, and congregants. The establishment of charter membership and the dedication of the church occurred in 1954.

The college and congregation grew over the next twenty years. MABC's youth could pursue higher education at CBC rather than travel to other schools. Many of the church young people found life partners at the college, and this enhanced the local

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ California Baptist University, "About CBU," California Baptist University, <http://www.calbaptist.edu/about/> (accessed October 1, 2009).

congregation's growth. CBC's student population rose to 800 students in the 1960s where it remained through the 1970s, and it increased to 1,100 in the early 1980s. The church's census paralleled the college until the late 1970s when the church grew suddenly in attendance and membership. Church membership rose to 1,500 with 800-900 in attendance on Sundays during this period. The church's census increased in the middle 1980s due to a fifth, post war demographic population wave in southern California and the Inland Empire around Riverside. MABC's membership was 2,000 with 1,100-1,200 in attendance in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The college faltered in the late 1980s through the early 1990s when student enrollment stagnated and fell, and the school suffered because tuition could not support increased operational costs.³⁷ The national SBC assisted in a search for new leadership, and an educational administrator was located and offered the college president position. The SBC also promised financial assistance.³⁸ The president's tenure began in 1994, and he engineered a successful turnaround over the next six years. By 2002, 1,975 students were registered at the renamed California Baptist University (CBU) and enrollment reached 2,300 in 2003 and 2,900 by 2004.³⁹ MABC's membership and attendance numbers increased through the late and early 2000s with 3,000 members and 1,000 to

³⁷ Dialogue with CBU's Karen Bergh, Director of Marketing, and Kent Dacus, Vice President for Student Services, September 2004.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

1,200 in attendance. The close relationship between the church and the university continued.

A Recovery Ministry at Magnolia Baptist

The recovery ministry at MABC is based on the guidelines of the Celebrate Recovery ministry founded by John Baker and Rick Warren at Saddleback Community Church in Lake Forest, California. The principles of operation were taken strictly and directly from the *Celebrate Recovery Leader's Guide*.⁴⁰ The leader's guide is a Purpose Driven Recovery Resource for a recovery program based on the eight principles for recovery from alcoholism, divorce, sexual abuse, codependency, domestic violence, drug addiction, food addiction, and gambling addiction.

The Purpose Driven Recovery model called Celebrate Recovery is a Christ Centered, 12 step recovery ministry developed by John Baker and endorsed by Rick Warren. Baker's re-evangelization of Alcoholics Anonymous and Warren's endorsement including the "Eight Principles" based on the Beatitudes⁴¹ are described in chapter 3 of this paper. The design of this ministry includes the instruction and training of a team of leaders who "have a heart for this type of service."⁴² The responsibility for the ministry's operations, long term sustainment, development of future leaders, and possible duplication of the ministry in other places depends upon the health of the leaders. The

⁴⁰ John Baker, *Celebrate Recovery Leader's Guide*, updated ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴² *Ibid.*

formation and support of the team, which Celebrate Recovery calls the “T.E.A.M.” (an acronym describing four leadership roles), should receive attention from the pastoral staff throughout the ministry’s existence.

Three former pastors identified the Celebrate Recovery ministry as a useful model for a group of fifteen male MABC congregants dealing with the challenges of sexual addiction. Sexual addiction was a problem at MABC among several families reinforced by online pornography that strengthened and increased the sexual addiction issue. Four of the fifteen men were being evicted from their homes when their wives discovered the extent of their husbands’ addictions, and families and children were about to suffer serious pain and injury through separation and divorce.

Church leaders believed “many more are out there” and might benefit if MABC offered the appropriate recovery ministry. Church leaders adopted the Celebrate Recovery program in June 2004, and a leadership team formed between July and December 2004 and prepared to launch the ministry on March 31, 2005. Over two hundred people attended the opening night and over ninety people signed commitments to an “open share group” that allows participants to disclose, hear, accept and honor one another’s pleas for help. Leaders organized gender specific “closed step groups” within four months as the central ministry vehicle, and many powerful stories were reported continuously.

Within the first nine months of service one of the most experienced leaders in the recovery ministry said, “We have a lot of mental illness here.” This prompted involvement by two drug counselors, two marriage and family counselors, the county

emergency treatment center, and the local psychiatric hospital. The recovery ministry team learned its limits and boundaries and conditions such as bipolar depression, depression, dual diagnosis, schizophrenia, psychosis prompted by substance abuse, suicide, overdose, and related physical illnesses.

The thesis of this paper asserts that trust is essential in a recovery ministry leadership team and that a theology of weakness provides a base for trust. Acceptance of weakness allows self-disclosure and promotes a climate of trust based on humility and honest self-revelation. The next chapter describes the biblical basis for a theology of weakness. Chapter 3 presents the history of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and its acceptance of self-disclosure and human weakness: “Hello, my name is [first name only], and I am an alcoholic.” The AA approach and the Beatitudes are foundational for Baker’s Celebrate Recovery Ministry, which MABC adopted for its recovery program.

CHAPTER 2

A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF WEAKNESS AND TRUST

A Theology of Weakness

This chapter demonstrates that a biblical theology of weakness provides a base for building interpersonal trust because the author believes recognition of weakness opens potential for interdependence on others. This supports the thesis that trust is essential in sustaining a recovery ministry leadership team through a theology of weakness.

Peter Drucker writes in *The Effective Executive*, “It is the task of leadership teams to enhance strengths and make weaknesses irrelevant.”¹ This seems contrary to Paul’s statement about Christ: “For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God” (2 Cor. 13:4a). Paul also asserts that believers “are weak in him, but in dealing with you we shall live with him in the power of God” (2 Cor. 13:4b). A theology of weakness transforms weakness into potential power, and Paul reflects this when he describes the resurrection of the saints: “So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power” (1 Cor. 15:42-43).

The great paradox is that power is found in weakness and weakness opens potential for interpersonal trust: “But many that are first will be last, and the last shall be

¹ Peter Drucker, *The Effective Executive* (Oxford, UK: Linacre House, 2007), 41.

first” (Matt. 19:30). A framework for understanding biblical human weakness is based on Paul Tournier’s recognition of the individual “person that I am and the person I can become.”² All persons have potential and that potential can be realized through weakness, as Paul writes: “For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor. 12:10b).

Power Issues

A theology of power dominates the present era, and a theology of weakness has been eclipsed and denied by the church in North America.³ A theology of weakness may be unattractive or noncompetitive in Western culture, and it may be neglected in North America. The history of the church includes some elements preoccupied with a power theology while other branches maintained a theology of weakness.⁴ Luther referred to power theology as a “theology of glory” due to the church’s disproportionate attention to issues beyond the cross.⁵ Dylan Potter writes in his unpublished doctoral dissertation: “Those who adopt a power theology suggest faith without strength is not worthwhile.”⁶

He continues,

This dichotomy between power and weakness intermittently rears its head throughout the history of the church: from monasticism to inquisition, iconography to iconoclasm, pietism to quietism. The early Christian disputes between the Antiochene and Alexandrian schools during the Patristic Age were in

² Paul Tournier, *The Meaning of Persons* (Catchogue, NY: Harper Collins, 1957), 13.

³ Dylan Potter, “Power and Weakness: A Brief Comment on Angels,” *The Journey of Life Blog*, entry posted December 4, 2007, <http://jq-potter-journeyoflife.blogspot.com/2007/12power-and-weakness-briefcomment-on.html> (accessed September 23, 2009).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

relation to the difference between a theology of power and a theology of weakness. The Alexandrians emphasized the power of Jesus' divinity; the Antiochenes stressed a theology of limitation found in the humanity of Jesus.⁷

A theology of weakness is a theology of the cross built on the incarnation, humanity, vulnerability, or weakness of Jesus. A theology of glory is a theology from above, and it is eminent, transcendent, and delivered authoritatively from on high. A theology of weakness is from below, immanent, and mediated from within culture and context.⁸

Potter writes, "Weakness or cruciform theology insists that the spotlight ought to be thrown upon the landmarks of a low anthropology and a high Christology."⁹ Power theology promotes largess, triumphalism, and alienation, but Christ triumphed in weakness, rejection, and death. Paul writes, "For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10). A theology of weakness provides the biblical and theological foundation for building trust among recovery team members because admission of weakness requires trust in those who hear the confession.

Potter believes much of contemporary "[e]vangelical witness tends to focus on power Christianity. Our language is rife with the subject of miracles, salvation, the life to come, and victory over everything from singleness to Satan."¹⁰ Potter continues,

Mainline liberal Christianity, in contrast, tends to identify more closely with a theology of weakness by caring for the downtrodden and marginalized,

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

sympathizing with the ostracized, but often expresses this activity in a theologically, practical and pathological rehashing of social justice issues. Fuzziness aside, their kindness in response to the face of human need reveals that natural theology is not something that can only be understood from the inanimate sectors of the cosmos and creation, but that it may be better understood by a healthy focus on the human species.¹¹

The author of this paper believes the theology of weakness creates an environment for the growth of trust because those who admit their weakness may be open to reliance on others.

The power of Christianity is the crucified and risen Jesus who is “the Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne” (Rev. 5:6a). He is God in flesh, and strength comes through Christ’s weakness and ultimate triumph. The Scriptures describe Jesus as the lamb led to slaughter (Isa. 53:7, Acts 8:32-35), but through weakness he received the power, authority, and capacity to transform humanity through redemption. Out of his weakness came strength, and his weakness was authentic because he had no safe place to lay his head (Matt. 8:20).

Jesus’ throne is the ultimate safe place in a rebellious world, but Christians walk in the valley of death’s shadow in the meantime (Ps. 23:4). This paper’s thesis is built on the assumption that the ultimate safe space is with Jesus. A recovery ministry seeks a safe place for addicts, and this is possible only when recovery team members are sustained by the Spirit and trust each other. Trust is possible when team members acknowledge their human weakness, brokenness, infirmity, and believe that strength resides in the worthy Lamb who was slain (Rev. 5:12). Trust requires acceptance of weakness. Paul writes,

¹¹ Ibid.

“For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Cor. 1:25). This strength in weakness sustains the human soul.

Christians and the Cultural Context

The church is called to resist and renounce the world’s culture and to “be in the world but not of the world” (John 17:16). The church is embedded in the culture of the world as salt and light, as a preservative and enlightening force (Matt. 5:13-16). The Christian community includes individuals, congregations, fellowship groups, ministry teams, and “those who love one another” (John 13:34).

Marva Dawn writes that churches “following the methods of the culture around them [act] as fallen powers when they forget the cross at their center, [and they should recover a] theology of weakness.”¹² She adds, “Our churches operate as fallen powers when the gospel is no longer a stumbling block, when the ‘foolishness’ and ‘weakness’ of God outlined in I Corinthians 1-2 are discarded in favor of status, position, wealth, popularity, acceptability to the modern or postmodern minds or power.”¹³

Church leadership can follow Jesus’ biblical commands through the Holy Spirit and remain loyal and faithful to his call. Abuse of power is anti-Christian, and the strength of the church is in weakness: “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that you have love for one another” (John 13:34). H. Richard Niebuhr writes, “Actions contrary to Christ’s commands are negative and may produce violence, [and]

¹² Dawn, *Powers, Weakness and the Tabernacling of God*, 73.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 91.

confidence, faith, trust, belief, and fidelity are betrayed through distrust, unbelief, and infidelity.”¹⁴

Trust is created or restored when believers confess their weakness as the writer of 1 John declares: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Life in holy community is sustained through participants’ confession of error, and they find strength through acknowledged weakness and self-disclosure. The author of this paper believes a ministry recovery team can be energized and preserved when participants share a mutual vision of vulnerability based trust and then develop and share that trust. Cultivating and building trust is a fundamental duty of a recovery team’s leadership, and it is essential in sustaining a recovery ministry.

Trust is often the first victim of humanity’s actions, and the betrayal of trust reduces the church’s impact among holy and civic communities. The author believes lack of trust produces distrust, unbelief, and infidelity and contributes to the demoralization of the North American church and culture. God is the creator and sustainer of the universe and is completely “other,”¹⁵ “hidden,”¹⁶ and yet “knowable in Jesus Christ.”¹⁷ The “God

¹⁴ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Faith on Earth: An Inquiry into the Structure of Human Faith* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1989), 64.

¹⁵ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* vol. 1, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1961), 1.

¹⁶ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* vol. 2/1, 193, quoted in W. Travis McMaken, “Karl Barth on the Knowledge of God,” *Der Evangelische Theologe*, <http://derevth.blogspot.com/search?q=barth+hiddenness+of+god> (accessed March 21, 2010).

¹⁷ Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God*, trans. C. D. Deans (Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1960), 37-65.

of history”¹⁸ gave new meaning to time, space, and the “end for which God created the world.”¹⁹ As a result, humanity in weakness can “trust in a personal [and] even caring God.”²⁰

God exercised power on behalf of his people. Jesus came into the world in the flesh and deepened and added meaning to humanity, and he conquered through weakness and death as part of God’s plan (Matt. 27:42). Irenaeus wrote, “The glory of God is a human being, fully human and fully alive,”²¹ but whose power was not of this world (John 17:14). God forged a profound link between God’s sovereign power and humanity’s weakness from the Exodus to the ascension when Jesus said: “I go to my Father and your Father” (John 20:17). Jesus’ saved a broken humanity that was in desperate need, weak, infirmed, and dying. Humanity’s weakness gave way to God’s saving power (John 3:16), and Christians can trust God and God’s power. Weakness gave way to trust through God’s power and initiative.

¹⁸ Paul Tillich, “The God of History,” *Christianity and Crisis*, June 1, 1944, <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=384> (accessed October 12, 2009).

¹⁹ Jonathan Edwards, “The End for Which God Created the World,” The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, <http://edwards.yale.edu/research/majorworks/the-end-for-which-god-created-the-world/> (accessed October 12, 2009).

²⁰ George Mueller, *Trusting in God for Five Million Dollars: Personal Methods and Experiences of the Rev. George Mueller, As Recorded in His Diary in His Own Words* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1984), ii.

²¹ John Powell, *Fully Human, Fully Alive: A New Life through a New Vision*, rev. ed. (Allen, TX: Resources for Christian Living, 1996).

Weakness as a Pauline Concept

Paul uses the word *asthenia* six times in 2 Corinthians 11:30-13:11. Three times he boasts of his weakness (2 Cor. 11:30, 12:5, and 12:9), and once he refers to his experience of contentment in times of weakness, mistreatment, abuse, and persecution (2 Cor. 12:10). Dawn writes, “The reason that such rejoicing is possible is declared in 13:4 where Paul proclaims this great fact of the gospel: that in His weakness Christ was crucified, but that, by means of God’s power, He continues to live.”²²

Dawn has a particular interpretation that focuses on the use of the word *teleo* instead of *teleioo* as it is used in the Greek text in 2 Cor. 12:9.²³ She refers to an early personal experience in the 1970s when she discovered a peculiar interpretation of a verb in a Bible commentary written by R. C. H. Lenski. She writes, “Lenski had suggested that the verb *teleo* in 2 Cor. 12:9 had been mistranslated.”²⁴ Instead of the Lord saying, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness,” Lenski proposed that it should be rendered: “for the power is brought to its finish in weakness.”²⁵

Dawn relates that her own exegetical studies convinced her that Lenski was correct in his insight but wrong in the way he applies it: “because he continues to think of ‘power’ in terms of the Lord’s. (The Greek text of I Corinthians 1:29 contains no pronoun

²² Dawn, *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacling of God*, 37.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 36.

²⁵ Ibid., 37.

in connection with *he dunamis*, “the power.”²⁶ Her contention is that the proper use is a reference to Paul’s power as his own personal strength or capacity. This provides for a substantial shift in theology, and her insight offers a key in understanding the dynamics possibly intended by Paul. The Greek text of 2 Corinthians 12: 9 contains no pronoun in connection with “*he dunamis*, ‘the power.’”²⁷ “Interpreting the power as Paul’s rather than the Lord’s”²⁸ leads to different theological conclusions when it comes to powers and the manner in which they are best understood and engaged.

Using several related word studies, Dawn explored the distinction she discovered between the two verbs *teleo* and *teleioo*: “the former meaning primarily ‘to end, finish,’ and the latter involving a wide range of connotations, including ‘to perfect, to make genuine, to complete, to succeed fully, to initiate, to make happen, to become.’”²⁹ The verb *teleo* seems to be more limited in its semantic range than the verb *teleioo*.

²⁶ Ibid, 38.

²⁷ Ralph Martin, *2 Corinthians*, World Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), quoted by Dawn, *Powers, Weakness and the Tabernacling of God*, 38. Dawn includes the following notes and references: ‘Martin translates *teleioo* as ‘fulfilled’ but adds the pronoun my to signify the Lord’s power (418-422). Ernest Best, *Second Corinthians: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, Interpretation Series (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1987) translates the phrase ‘my power is made perfect in weakness’ (120). Frederick W. Danker, *II Corinthians*, The Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989) states, ‘The words *made perfect* render the verb form *teletai*, which expresses completion: ‘is carried out’ (195). Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians: Translated, with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 530-310 acknowledges that *teleo* used in 2 Corinthians 12:9 is usually rendered ‘is brought to completion’ or ‘to its goal,’ but he asserts that here the usage is different. He remarks that the power could be God’s or Christ’s, but he never envisions that it could mean Paul’s, so he translates the verb ‘is made fully present.’ Barnet believes that verse 9 in 2 Corinthians 12 is the climax to the entire epistle; however, he follows the usual translation of the verb and adds ‘Christ’s’ in brackets. Paul Barnet, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 572,” quoted in Dawn, *Powers, Weakness and the Tabernacling of God*, 38.

²⁸ Dawn, *Powers, Weakness and the Tabernacling of God*, 38.

²⁹ Dawn adds this note: “See Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A Nida, eds., *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 1 and 2 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988).

Dawn writes, “Out of twenty eight instances in the New Testament, twenty-five times *teleioo* is translated with verbs signifying some sort of finishing or ending or accomplishing”³⁰ Of the three other applications, two refer to the payment of taxes (Matt. 17:24, Rom. 13:6) and the third refers to 2 Corinthians 12:9 often translated as “to make perfect.” Dawn asserts,

It is my contention that this instance should not be excepted. Rather, the verb *teleo* here should be given the usual rendering (as in twenty-five other uses), “to finish.” Such a rephrasing would allow us to develop more clearly an understanding of the concept of God’s power at work in human weakness.³¹

“God is at work” in a broken humanity that has come to its end. This end, as it appears in the New Testament and especially in the writings of Paul, is perceived by Paul as the condition necessary (*status quo ante*) for God’s work to begin. Human weakness appears to be the point of contact between God and humans in the redemptive work of Jesus.

Paul wrote,

If it is necessary to continue boasting, I will boast of those things which show my weaknesses. . . . Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given me, a messenger of Satan to knock me about, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord concerning this, that it might depart from me, but He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is brought to its end in weakness.” All the more gladly, then, I will boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ [not mine!] may tabernacle upon me. Therefore, I take delight in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions

This lexicon’s approach and methodology uses insights of modern linguistics, and its definitions are based upon the distinctive features of meaning of a particular term in comparison with, and in contrast to, other related words in the same semantic domain. Definitions from this lexicon are indicated in this paper with the number of the semantic field and the particular number of the word cited, e.g., the nuances given above for *teleioo* are SD 88.38, 73.7, 68.22, 68.31, 53.50, 13.126, and 13.18, respectively.” Dawn, *Weakness and the Tabernacling of God*, 38.

³⁰ Dawn, *Powers, Weakness and the Tabernacling of God*, 39.

³¹ *Ibid.*

and calamities for the sake of Christ, for when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor. 11:30, 12:7-10)

Paul “boasts” in weakness and delights “in weaknesses, insults, necessities, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ.” It appears that the limit of human capacity and endurance opens opportunity for redemption, which is ultimate strength through weakness. Human extremity is God’s opportunity. God’s grace provides access to power through weakness because God says, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

Perhaps Paul saw his own life reflected in the gospel narrative about Jesus’ weakness. Paul was convinced of his own weakness as “chief of sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15) and may have believed Jesus’ weakness was Paul’s weakness, and Paul’s weakness was Jesus’ weakness. Through shared weakness, “they formed a bond because identification of self with Jesus is a believer’s core experience.”³² Christ gave himself up to death through asthenia (weakness), emptied himself, and became obedient to death (Phil 2:5-10), but Paul’s weakness became power through trust in Christ, his sacrifice, and God’s grace (Rom. 11:6). Dawn writes, “Such a totality of weakness, of perfect submission to the will of the Father (as frequently recorded in the Gospel of John) makes possible the perfection, the completion of the act of union in the ultimate weakness of death, by God’s tabernacling in the world through Christ.”³³ Admission of weakness requires trust.

³² Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 101-103.

³³ Dawn, *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacling of God*, 37.

The next chapter presents Alcoholic Anonymous' history, philosophy, and program as a secular theology of weakness and trust exemplified by the statement: "Hello, my name is [first name only], and I am an alcoholic." It also describes the theological foundation of the Celebrate Recovery program developed by John Baker. This is in support of this paper's thesis that trust based on a theology of weakness is essential in a recovery ministry team.

CHAPTER 3
A HISTORY OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
AND CELEBRATE RECOVERY

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

The major Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) document was written between 1934 and 1938, published as *Alcoholic Anonymous*, and known as The Big Book 1939.¹ This document and the AA philosophy are part of the theoretical underpinning for MABC’s recovery ministry. AA’s twelve steps emphasize trust, although the word is not explicit in the twelve steps. For example, step two describes how AA adherents “came to believe a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” Trust is implicit in the belief in an unseen power and its ability to restore addicts to health.

AA’s twelve steps are:

1. We admitted we were powerless and that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a conscious decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood him*.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all our defects of character.
7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

¹ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed. (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 2001).

10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.²

These twelve steps developed from multiple sources and coalesced in the lives of Robert Smith, Frank Buchman, and Bill Wilson between 1894 and 1939 as described below in this paper. Over a twenty-five year period they discussed alcoholism, their personal experiences, and formed local groups. Wilson's life experience and associations with Smith and Buchman influenced Wilson greatly, and he wrote what became known as *The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*.

Bob Smith and the Akron Group

Dick B. writes, "AA's original spiritual program of recovery developed primarily from Dr. Bob's biblical ideas and his religious affiliations and training"³ as a youth, young adult, and physician. Early in Bob's life, the "United Christian Endeavor" movement spread throughout New England and Bob became thoroughly familiar with the Bible as an active "Endeavorer." Christian Endeavor grew quickly across the United States and published literature from Christian leaders such as Dwight L. Moody, F. B. Meyer, Amos Wells, and Charles Sheldon.⁴

² Ibid.

³ Dick B. "AA Timeline (1925-1955)—AA's Varied Roots and Offshoots," 2005, paragraph 4 under "A New and Fresh Timeline Approach," <http://aa-history.com/dickb16.html> (accessed March 15, 2010). Alcoholics Anonymous members use only first names and last initials to preserve anonymity.

⁴ Ibid., paragraph 6 under "A Review of Events Involving Spiritual Origin Number One."

The “Akron Movement” introduced an evangelical emphasis in the early years of AA, and the Christian conversion of several key people and the “re-discovery of the Bible” affected the Akron leadership profoundly.⁵ The “miraculous recovery from alcoholism [of some of these key people] offered proof that help for the alcoholic was available through turning to God, changing one’s life, and devoting one’s efforts to God’s will and purposes.”⁶ This quote emphasizes trust as a central AA concept because help depended upon “turning to God” and commitment to unseen beliefs such as “God’s will and purposes.”

This “solution” became widely publicized when the Firestone family invited Oxford Group founder Frank N. D. Buchman and his entourage to visit Akron in 1933.⁷ A “tiny ‘clandestine lodge’ formed in Akron that consisted of several Oxford Group people willing to help drunks.”⁸ This group held meetings, deepened its relationship with Bob, and persuaded him to “return to his religious roots through the study of the Bible, immense reading of the Christian and Oxford Group literature, and church attendance.”⁹

Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group

Some writers identify the beginnings of the AA movement with Rowland Hazard’s visit with Carl Jung in Switzerland in 1931. Bill Wilson wrote to Jung in 1961:

⁵ Ibid., paragraph 7.

⁶ Ibid., paragraph 1 under “The Akron Events from 1931 to 1935 and What They Contributed.”

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

“The conversations between you [and Rowland . . . became] the first link in the chain of events that led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous.”¹⁰ Earnest Kurtz traces the influence to “A First Century Christian Fellowship founded by Buchman in 1908.”¹¹ Buchman reached university student leaders from a local YMCA successfully, and this caused him to deepen his pursuit of cultural leaders and moralistic Christian literature. Some of this literature countered the liberal protestant influence of the times that some believed caused the moral decline of American life, but Buchman’s “declared aim was to change leaders and to create the leadership that will alter present conditions.”¹²

The primary book for the founding of Buchman’s “Moral Rearmament Movement” was *Soul Surgery* published by H. A. Walter in 1919 in collaboration with Buchman and Buchman’s mentor, Henry B. Wright of Yale. Dick B. writes, “That soul-surgery book described in detail a method of personal evangelism involving what Buchman had named the ‘Five C’s’—Confidence, Confession, Conviction, Conversion and Conservation (the latter . . . called ‘Continuance’).”¹³

Buchman’s thesis was that sin, understood as an estrangement from God, was humanity’s basic problem and must be “cut out” by “soul surgery.” “The Five C process was soon accompanied by the other facets of Buchman’s program and was intended to

¹⁰ Earnest Kurtz, *Not God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), 8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹² Robert Banks and Bernice Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 114.

¹³ Dick B., “AA Timeline (1925-1955)—AA’s Varied Roots and Offshoots,” paragraph 1 under “A Review of Events Involving Spiritual Origin Number Two.”

produce a moral or spiritual awakening which many Oxford Group people simply called ‘change’ and not ‘conversion.’”¹⁴ Buchman and his followers did not emphasize help for alcoholics. Buchman intended to change the world through an “action process” that would create “life change” among cultural leaders and through them a “world change”:

[T]his life-changing was sought through gaining the confidence of an inquirer (seeker), having that person inventory his “immoral” behavior, and inducing him to confess it to another and become “convicted” of his sins. First he was to surrender his life to God and attempt to live by four moral standards of Christ. Then he was to sally forth and make restitution for wrongs done; continue his quest for an understanding of, and relationship with God through Bible study, prayer, seeking God’s guidance, and right living; and then carry the message to another so that the awakening process and the evangelism process could again begin by being passed on to the neophyte. Having himself gone through the process the new person was considered “converted” or “changed” or brought to a “spiritual experience and a moral awakening.”¹⁵

Bill Wilson’s Experience with Alcohol and the Oxford Group’s Influence

The “action process” described above constituted the heart of the program Bill Wilson codified into *The Big Book*. Wilson clarified his reasoning, sources, purpose, and ultimate end of the twelve-step process. Wilson declared himself a “conservative atheist,” which his wife confirmed, but he experienced a life change when he encountered the Oxford Group after years of alcoholism.

The years 1934 to 1937 deepened his encounter with the Oxford Group. Wilson never belonged to a church or read the Bible, but he and his wife attended Oxford Group meetings and Oxford Group “Houseparties.” He befriended Sam Shoemaker who led

¹⁴ Ibid., paragraph 2 under “A Review of Events Involving Spiritual Origin Number Two.”

¹⁵ Ibid.

“house party meetings” and became a designer of the AA movement. Over time, Wilson became involved in leadership in some of the Oxford Group “team events.”¹⁶

Wilson helped alcoholics: “He sought them at Towns Hospital, Calvary Rescue Mission and in Oxford Group meetings.”¹⁷ Within his first sixty days of sobriety, he received a letter of commendation from Sam Shoemaker for his work with an alcoholic chemistry professor. Wilson became known as a “zealous message carrier” for the Oxford Group ideas: “But he seemed to lack the ability to bring about conversions and sobriety as other ‘Oxford Groupers’ had done.”¹⁸

No person Bill and Lois Wilson brought to their home achieved sobriety. He was an effective message carrier, but lacked effective results until the end of his Oxford Group membership in August 1937.¹⁹ Dick B. comments, “Bill was carrying a religious message about conversions encumbered by a background of atheism, exposure to Swedenborgianism, lack of religious training, lack of Bible study, lack of church participation, and an openly expressed hostility toward Christianity.”²⁰

¹⁶ Ibid., paragraph 1 under subsection “Bill’s Oxford Group Experiences from 1934 to 1937 and Their Impact.”

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., paragraph 2 under subsection “Bill’s Oxford Group Experiences from 1934 to 1937 and Their Impact.”

Bill Wilson met Bob Smith on Mother's Day in 1935, and "when Bill met Bob a completely new approach to the cure of alcoholism began."²¹ Smith contributed the Christian Endeavor tradition's rich background, his biblical understanding, knowledge of Christian and other religious literature, and his experience in the Oxford Group. Wilson brought the Oxford Group's witnessing zeal and an intense desire to help other alcoholics. Wilson's zeal and desire impressed Smith and became key components in their joint endeavors.

Dick B writes, "From the union of AA's two founders [Wilson and Smith] emerged a new and very soon successful approach to curing alcoholism. It would focus on the power of God, build on basic spiritual ideas of the Bible, adopt some life-changing techniques of the Oxford Group, and concentrate only on curing alcoholics by working with and caring for them."²² This was something entirely new and revolutionary because medicine and religion did not help the two AA movement founders. These streams of influence and the founders' zeal to and help alcoholics converged into the AA program.

The Akron Pioneers and the Twelve Steps

The "Akron Pioneers" brought together the two streams of basic Bible ideas and the principles and practices of the Oxford Group.²³ The Pioneers insisted on a belief in

²¹ Ibid., paragraph 1 under "Examining the Completely New Spiritual Direction and Program That Emerged from the Meeting of Bill W. and Dr. Bob in Akron."

²² Ibid., paragraph 5 under "Examining the Completely New Spiritual Direction and Program That Emerged from the Meeting of Bill W. and Dr. Bob in Akron."

²³ Ibid., paragraph 1 under "What the Akron Pioneers Adopted in the Development Period 1935-1937."

God, an implicit trust in God's intervention in human life, acceptance of Christ, study of the Bible, prayer, seeking God's Guidance, fellowship, and witness. Dick B. writes, "Christian Endeavor's ideas that emphasized love and service as described in the gospels and the letters by Paul and James also made a significant contribution to the work and experience of the Akron pioneers."²⁴

The Pioneers also adopted the basic Oxford Group principles and practices: "Until Bill wrote his Big Book and Steps, it cannot be said that the AA program was an Oxford Group program, certainly not in Akron."²⁵ The Akron AA Pioneers supported biblical principles and conversion, and adopted a "pick and choose" attitude towards the Oxford Group ideas:

Surrender fitted with the Akron idea of conversion. Self-examination, confession, and conviction were biblical ideas that also served to challenge moral misbehavior. Restitution was biblical and was a large factor in the Oxford Group practices. Quiet time as such was not only biblical, but it had emerged from the same evangelistic sources that fed the YMCA, Christian Endeavor, and the Oxford Group.²⁶

By 1935, a corpus of literature and practices became the "way" of the pioneer AA group in Akron, Ohio: "Yet until Bill Wilson wrote his Twelve Steps, the Oxford Group impact was not predominant in Akron. The Bible was!"²⁷

²⁴ Dick B, "Alcoholic's Anonymous History: Alcoholics Anonymous Its Christian Endeavor Roots, and AA Co-founder Dr. Bob," May 21, 2008, paragraph 1 under "The Christian Endeavor/AA Emphasis on Love and Service," http://www.dickb.com/Christian_endeavor.shtml (accessed March 15, 2010).

²⁵ Dick B, "AA Timeline (1925-1955)—AA's Varied Roots and Offshoots," paragraph 1 under "A Review of Events Involving Spiritual Origin Number Two." paragraph 1 under "The Basic Oxford Group Principles and Practices the Pioneers Used."

²⁶ Ibid., paragraph 4 under "The Basic Oxford Group Principles and Practices the Pioneers Used."

²⁷ Ibid.

The four years from 1934/5 to 1938/9 were the critical formative years of what finally became “Alcoholics Anonymous,” and the foundational principles caused foment and required energy expenditure. The AA leadership adopted principles, practices, and a body of literature to support the movement’s foundational principles and practices. The Akron pioneers were spiritually and religiously engaged at the beginning and remained so throughout the early history of the movement that formed Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Akron Five Point Pioneer Program

The Akron pioneers adopted core spiritual practices in 1935 to 1937, but they were not known as the twelve steps that Bill wrote about in 1938. The Akron pioneers had a complex and even clinical point of view:

In summary, these were their tactics: (1) Seeking out alcoholics to help. (2) Hospitalizing most of them. (3) Visiting them in the hospital with victory stories. (4) Having Dr. Bob test their belief in God and willingness to pray before they were discharged. (5) Urging them to study the Bible, pray, and help others without charge. (6) Insisting upon individual and group quiet times with God. (7) Attending a weekly Oxford Group meeting. (8) Holding morning Bible study, prayer, guidance, and teaching sessions with Dr. Bob’s wife every day. (9) Reading and using devotionals like the Upper Room and other Christian books such as the Greatest Thing in the World, being circulated by Dr. Bob. (10) Engaging in a “real” surrender where they asked God to take alcohol out of their lives and to help them live by Christian principles. They were, in the manner of James 5:16, led by about three elders who prayed with them in private. (11) Commencing almost at once to visit and seek out other alcoholics needing help. (12) In many cases, living in the homes of the pioneers such as Dr. Bob and his wife, Wally G. and his wife Tom L. and his wife, and others. (13) Attending a church of their choice.²⁸

²⁸ Ibid., paragraph 1 under “What the Pioneers in Akron Adopted in the Development Period 1935-1937.”

The influence of the Oxford group on the formation of AA at this crucial point appears somewhat in the Oxford movement's ideas: "The Oxford Group's ideas were incorporated primarily in private meetings with Dr. Bob where the elimination of bad moral behavior was sought, living by the four absolute standards of Jesus was urged, and restitution was discussed."²⁹ Through the formational process of becoming a pioneer AA fellowship, the Akron fellowship formed "the original, simple 5 point spiritual recovery program."³⁰ Frank Amos, John D. Rockefeller's foundation agent, reported this five-point spiritual recovery program with the mention of two additional "optional" points.³¹ The five point Akron pioneer program required "the alcoholic to quit drinking forever, to rely on God for help, to clean up his life, to maintain daily contact with and understanding of God, and fortify his resistance by helping other alcoholics."³² The two additional points, considered optional by the strongly Christian Akron pioneers, included: "deepen the

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., paragraph 2.

³¹ Frank Amos reports: "(1) [Abstinence] An alcoholic must realize that he is an alcoholic, incurable from the medical viewpoint, and that he must never drink anything with alcohol in it. (2) [Surrender] He must surrender himself absolutely to God, realizing that in himself there is no hope. (3) [Eliminating sins—including the sin of drunkenness] Not only must he want to stop drinking permanently, he must remove from his life other sins such as hatred, adultery, and others which frequently accompany alcoholism, unless he will do this absolutely, Smith and his associates refuse to work with him. (4) [Daily Quiet Time] He must have devotions every morning—a "quiet time" of prayer, and some reading of the Bible, and other religious literature. Unless this is faithfully followed there is grave danger of backsliding. (5) [Helping other alcoholics] He must be willing to help other alcoholics get straightened out. This throws up a protective barrier and strengthens his own will power and convictions." Ibid., paragraph 1 under "The Original, Simple, 5 Point Spiritual Recovery Program of AA As Reported by AA Trustee-to-Be Frank Amos to Rockefeller, with Mention of Two Additional, Optional Points. Their Impact. And the Program Bill Wilson Was to Place in Book Form in 1938."

³² Ibid., paragraph 2 under "The Original, Simple, 5 Point Spiritual Recovery Program of AA As Reported by AA Trustee-to-Be Frank Amos to Rockefeller, with Mention of Two Additional, Optional Points. Their Impact. And the Program Bill Wilson Was to Place in Book Form in 1938."

social and religious or spiritual contract and bond with recovering alcoholics, and create or deepen the social contract and bond with the church.”³³ Wilson writes, “This was the program that had produced cures by Divine help that medicine had been unable to produce. It was the essence of the program that had enabled the first forty pioneers to achieve sobriety. It was the essence of the program that AA’s voted, with a split vote, to authorize Wilson to place in book form.”³⁴

Religionless Christianity

The New York Pioneers (Oxford Group) and Akron Pioneers (Biblicist-Revivalist) formed a fellowship, although the New York group had a less religious but profoundly spiritual and moral tone. The two groups formed the fellowship that assisted Bill Wilson when he wrote *The Big Book*: “When the vote was taken to authorize a text, the Akron group had no text. It had no steps. Its literature, however, was the coming together of five literary streams. Dr. Bob and his Akron pioneers emphasized the basic ideas contained in the Bible’s books of James, Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, and 1 Corinthians 13.”³⁵

³³ “(6) [Social and religious fellowship with cured alcoholics] It is important, but not vital, that he meet frequently with other reformed alcoholics and form both a social and religious comradeship. (7) [Religious affiliation] Important but not vital, that he attend some religious service at least once weekly.” Ibid., paragraph 3 under “The Original, Simple, 5 Point Spiritual Recovery Program of AA As Reported by AA Trustee-to-Be Frank Amos to Rockefeller, with Mention of Two Additional, Optional Points. Their Impact. And the Program Bill Wilson Was to Place in Book Form in 1938.”

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ The five literary streams include, “(1) The Bible. (2) The daily devotionals such as *The Upper Room*, *My Utmost for His Highest*, and *The Runner’s Bible*. (3) The popular Christian literature of the day such as; *The Greatest Thing in the World* by Henry Drummond; *The Sermon on the Mount* by Emmet Fox; *Love: The Law of Life* by Toyohiko Kagawa; *In His Steps* by Charles Sheldon; and others by Glen Clark, E. Stanly Jones, Harry Emerson Fosdick and Oswald Chambers. (4) The major, popular Oxford Group

The New York scene was somewhat different when Wilson returned in the summer of 1938. He became involved with the Oxford Group, but “few that had gotten sober in New York.”³⁶ There were three or four other major players in the New York group who “had gotten sober” along with Bill and Lois Wilson.

After Bill and Lois left the Oxford Group in August 1937, Bill developed a close relationship with Sam Shoemaker, an Episcopal priest. According to Dick B., Wilson said Sam Shoemaker and Julia Harris, a minister’s wife, “had great influence on his ideas.”³⁷ “Lois Wilson has written that there was an agreement to ‘universalize’ (understood as the reverse of *evangelize*) the program that was being written since not all drunks were Christian, writes Mel B., [who was] unable to document the statement other than the reporting of the statement as a claim made by Lois.”³⁸

Mel B. writes, “Clear today is the fact that the ‘New Thought Movement’ writings like those of Emmet Fox had intruded on Wilson’s thinking.”³⁹ Other non-Christian ideas such as “New Age language, talk of cosmic consciousness, a fourth dimension of

literature such as *Soul Surgery* by Howard Walter; *Realizing Religion* by Samuel Shoemaker; *Children of the Second Birth* by Samuel Shoemaker; *Life Changers* by Harold Begbie, *For Sinners Only* by A. J. Russell, and *The Guidance of God* by Eleanor Napier Ford. (5) The foundational psychological work by Professor William James at Harvard—*Varieties of Religious Experience*.” Dick B. “AA Timeline (1925-1955)—AA’s Varied Roots and Offshoots,” 2005, paragraph 1-2 under “The Entirely Different Program That Bill Wilson Fashioned in His Writing of the Big Book and the Twelve Steps—Written in 1938, Published in Early 1939,” <http://dickb-blog.com/dickb16.html> (accessed September 23, 2009).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, paragraph 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, paragraph 4.

³⁸ Mel B., *My Search for Bill W.* (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 2000), 19.

³⁹ Mel B., *New Wine: The Spiritual Roots of the 12 Step Miracle* (City Center, MN: Hazelden Foundation, 1991), 101.

existence, Universal Mind, higher powers, and the like”⁴⁰ had an influence. This “may have been the product of New Thought influences originating in the literature of William James, Ralph Waldo Trine, and Emmet Fox.”⁴¹ It also may be the result of Wilson’s “interest in the subject matter of two books he mentioned to Mel. B.: *Cosmic Consciousness* by Richard Maurice Bucke and *Heaven and Hell* by Aldous Huxley.”⁴²

The “conversion” prescription by Carl Jung and the disease concept of William Silkworth also influenced Wilson. He wove the New York influences into The Big Book including the twelve steps: “He kept his peace with Akron by submitting drafts as he went along, and the drafts went unchallenged. Then, unknown to most people even to this day, Wilson asked Reverend Sam Shoemaker to write the 12 steps, but Shoemaker declined urging that Bill should write them, which he did.”⁴³

The final draft of AA’s The Big Book was published in 1939 and had six major parts that emphasized trust in a spiritual experience and belief in God:

- (1) A primary and instructional focus on the life of Bill Wilson an ordinary man with a common problem, alcoholism, and without a common solution.
- (2) Bill’s thesis that a spiritual experience was necessary to recovery, the common solution.
- (3) A chapter on the ups and downs of an alcoholic life as a “hopeless condition” a “pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization.”
- (4) A concept designed to “ooze and ease” the alcoholic and addict into a program on the supposition that they would one day “come to believe” in God.
- (5) The codification of the Oxford

⁴⁰ Dick B., *Henrietta Seiberling: Ohio’s Lady with a Cause* (Kihei, HI: Paradise Research, 2004), 9.

⁴¹ Mel B., *New Wine*, 101-102.

⁴² Mel B., *My Search for Bill W.*, 24.

⁴³ Dick B. “AA Timeline (1925-1955)—AA’s Varied Roots and Offshoots,” 2005, paragraph 5 under “The Entirely Different Program That Bill Wilson Fashioned in His Writing of the Big Book and the Twelve Steps—Written in 1938, Published in Early 1939,” <http://dickb-blog.com/dickb16.html> (accessed September 23, 2009).

Group's life changing techniques. (6) The many personal stories, including those of Dr. Bob.⁴⁴

“[T]he Big Book program was not the Akron program. It was not the Oxford Group program. . . . It was no longer a Christian program. It became a “Twelve Step” program.”⁴⁵ It was something new but included trust in a higher power and other spiritual, intangible qualities: “There have been those who draw a similarity with [Ignatius of] Loyola's exercises or [John] Wesley's spirituality.”⁴⁶ The AA approach involves admission by alcoholics of their alcoholism, and meeting speakers begin with the admission: “My name is [first name and last initial only], and I am an alcoholic.” This admission parallels a theology of weakness because both begin in humility and confession of insufficiency. The admission helps create a sense of trust because participants admit their common plight or weakness.

As already noted, in *The Big Book* Wilson discusses trust in AA's second step without explicit use of the term: “We came to *believe* that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” An “unmanageable” life is the focus of steps one and two, and the way to restore order is through belief in a higher power. This concept is elaborated in Al-Anon's literature that includes twelve traditions: “For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, paragraph 7.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, paragraph 8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, A statement made by Father Ed Dowling, Bill Wilson's spiritual guide.

leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.”⁴⁷ An implicit belief and trust toward a “loving God” is foundational in all AA groups.

The appeal to a higher Power’s authority and the spiritual world is confirmed in the statement: “We came to believe.” One of the better known pieces of art from the earliest of AA events pictures Wilson and Smith bending over the hospital bed of Ebbe Thatcher with the caption, “We came to believe.”⁴⁸ Belief requires trust. In *Came to Believe*, an anonymous contributor writes,

Yes, I began with blind faith, but the proof of truth is that it works. I believed those who had said that they suffered from alcoholism, but through AA, were now enjoying sobriety. So the truth was there for me to see. But shortly, I knew the truth for my own experience. I was not only released from the compulsion to drink, I was guided toward a compulsion to live!⁴⁹

Trust is implied in the AA literature and is a fundamental component in this non-denominational, trust-based movement and community: “Because our lives have become unmanageable [Step One], we have come to believe, . . . that a Power greater than ourselves, could restore us to sanity [Step Two].”⁵⁰

The Celebrate Recovery (CR) 12 Steps and its experience of faith and trust is a Christian adaptation of AA’s Twelve Steps. A footnote in the updated *Celebrate Recovery: Leader’s Guide* states,

⁴⁷ Al Anon Family Group, *Al Anon’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (Virginia Beach, VA: Al Anon Family Group Headquarters, 1981), 15.

⁴⁸ A lithograph of this picture hangs in the Alcoholics Anonymous Store in Riverside, California, first viewed by the author in November, 2008.

⁴⁹ “The Opening to the Spiritual World,” in *Came to Believe* (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1973), 3.

⁵⁰ Baker, *Celebrate Recovery*, 10.

Throughout this material, you will notice several references to the Christ-centered 12 steps. Our prayer is that Celebrate Recovery will create a bridge to the millions of people familiar with the secular 12 Steps (I acknowledge the use of some material from the 12 Suggested Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous) and in so doing introduce them to the one and only true Higher Power, Jesus Christ. Once they begin that relationship, asking Christ into their hearts as Lord and Savior, true healing and recovery can begin.⁵¹

This trust goes beyond an affirmation of doctrine to a relationship based on trust. H.

Richard Niebuhr writes,

Of course they [believers] believe these statements [scripture writers' statements] and many more besides, but their trust is not in the writer's of the Scriptures and their loyalty is not to their holy words. Their faith is not the belief that once upon a time Jesus Christ existed. Their faith is in Jesus Christ and they treasure Scriptures because they tell of Christ, not vice versa. Jesus Christ as the *Christ of faith* is the focusing point of the company of believers.⁵²

Niebuhr concludes, "He [the Jesus Christ of faith] meets us, we meet him, not as perceived but as one to whom the eyes of others are directed, not as an idea in our minds but as a person who accompanies in unseen presence those who believe in him, who are loyal to him, and who trust him."⁵³

The twelve steps movement of CR and its trust in "Jesus Christ as the Higher Power" re-evangelizes recovery and moves away from AA's twelve steps, and AA's trust in a universalizing, non-specific Higher Power is viewed as a "bridge to the millions of people who are familiar with the secular 12 steps."⁵⁴ Jesus Christ becomes the object of

⁵¹ Ibid., 11.

⁵² Niebuhr, *Faith on Earth*, 91.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Baker, *Celebrate Recovery*, 11.

believers' subjective trust as they focus their trust in him, and Niebuhr's position articulates this Christianized trust.

The Celebrate Recovery Movement

John Baker began a new movement designed to re-evangelize the twelve steps at Saddleback Church in Orange County, California, in 1991. The rediscovery of biblical theology and acceptance of a theology of weakness in CR offers much to recovery leadership development and training. Baker's approach provides a conceptual and operational base for a recovery ministry at MABC.

The first three steps of the AA program establish vulnerability as the foundation for recovery, and the CR Christ centered-recovery process utilizes the first three steps. The confession of powerlessness is the first admission of vulnerability as weakness, brokenness, and infirmity. The addict's belief and trust in Jesus Christ as the higher power are central in CR's recovery approach. Step three requires a conscious decision to turn the addict's will and life over to the care of God as understood in Jesus Christ as God incarnate. These first three steps are actions based on the will and trust. A process of blind trust, faith or "pro-action" can be seen in the first three steps, "action" in steps four to nine, and "post-action" or the discipline of service to others/maintenance of relationship in steps ten to twelve,.

John Baker's experience of AA's twelve steps and Rick Warren's recognition of the similarities between the "Eight Principles Based on the Beatitudes"⁵⁵ and AA's

⁵⁵ Rick Warren, "The Road to Recovery: Eight Principles Based on the Beatitudes," in *Celebrate Recovery: Leader's Guide*, updated ed. by John Baker (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 9.

twelve steps are significant for the CR ministry. Rick Warren states in the *Celebrate Recovery: Leader's Guide*,

Most people are familiar with the classic 12-Step program of AA and other groups. While undoubtedly many lives have been helped through the 12 steps, I've always been uncomfortable with that program's vagueness about the nature of God, the saving power of Jesus Christ, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit (the reference to "a higher power" language of AA). So I began an intense study of the Scriptures to discover what God had to say about "recovery." To my amazement, I found the principles of recovery—in their logical order—given by Christ in His most famous message, the Sermon of the Mount.⁵⁶

Warren lists "seven features that make [CR] unique":⁵⁷

1. Celebrate Recovery is based on God's Word the Bible. . . .
2. Celebrate Recovery is forward looking. . . .
3. Celebrate Recovery emphasizes personal responsibility. . . .
4. Celebrate Recovery emphasizes spiritual commitment to Jesus Christ. . . .
5. Celebrate Recovery utilizes the biblical truth that we need each other in order to grow spiritually and emotionally. . . .
6. Celebrate Recovery addresses all types of habits, hurts, and hang-ups. . . .
7. Finally, Celebrate Recovery is a leadership factory.⁵⁸

Warren's recognition of the power of the twelve steps and seven features recalls Father Dowling's intuitive recognition that the twelve steps parallel Ignatius and John Wesley's ideas.⁵⁹ The most profound parallel is to Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount when he pronounced blessings on those who acknowledge their spiritual poverty: "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matt. 5:3). Warren writes about his study of the eight

⁵⁶ Rick Warren, forward to *Celebrate Recovery: Leader's Guide*, updated ed. by John Baker (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 12.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Dick B. "Alcoholics Anonymous History: Big Book and 12 Step Sources: Identifying Spiritual Roots and Study References," under "Some A.A.-Related Shibboleths that Nee [*sic*] to Be Discarded: Second That the Twelve Steps Were Derived from the Exercises of St. Ignatius or John Wesley's Principles of Holiness," <http://www.dickb.com/AABigBook-StepSources.shtml> (accessed November 23, 2009).

Beatitudes: “My study resulted in an eight-week series of messages called ‘The Road to Recovery.’”⁶⁰ Trust is implicitly and explicit in the CR literature, and the program has since become a worldwide recovery movement.

Making and Keeping It Radically Personal

The CR program is intensely personal. The leader’s guide title witnesses to Jesus Christ: *Celebrate Recovery: A Recovery Program Based on the Eight Principles from the Beatitudes*, and Baker makes frequent mention of “A Christ Centered Addiction Recovery Program.” The table of contents in the leader’s guide includes: “The Road to Recovery: Eight Principles Based on the Beatitudes” and “Twelve Steps and Their Biblical Comparisons.”

A section entitled *From My Heart to Yours* describes CR’s spirituality and trust-based character as developed by John Baker, founder of the ministry. The following excerpt is Baker’s testimony and describes his trust in Jesus, himself, and others that formed the base of the CR ministry:

Slowly I became more and more uncomfortable with the lifestyle I was leading. I faced a major decision. I had a choice: do it my way—continue drinking and living by the world’s standards—or surrender, repent, and do it God’s way, but the truth is, I chose my way. My drinking increased and I turned my back on God. Proverbs 14:12 (TLB) says, “Before every man there lies a wide and pleasant road that seems right but ends in death.”

I was on that road. I was what is known as a functioning alcoholic. I never lost a job, never got arrested for drunk driving. No, the only things my sin-addiction cost me were my close relationship to the Lord and my family. Cheryl and I separated, after nineteen years of marriage. I lost all my purpose for living. You see, what I had considered the solution for my life’s problem, alcohol, *became* the problem of my life!

⁶⁰ Baker, *Celebrate Recovery*, 12.

My life was out of control. I had created my own Hell on earth! On an October morning in Salt Lake City on a business trip when I woke up I knew I couldn't take another drink. But I also knew that I couldn't live without one! I had finally hit my bottom. I was dying physically, emotionally, mentally and most important, spiritually. I was at Principle (and step) 1.⁶¹

The Principles and Steps

Baker uses AA's twelve steps, theologizes the language, and includes them in eight principles:

Principle 1. Realize I'm not God. I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable. "Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor" (Matt. 5:3).

Step 1. We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives have become unmanageable. "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out" (Rom. 7:18). . . .

Principle 2. Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover. "Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5: 4).

Step 2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. "For it is God who works in you to will and act according to His good purpose" (Phil. 2:13). . . .

Principle 3. Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control. "Happy are the meek" (Matt. 5:5).

Step 3. We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship" (Rom. 12:1). . . .

Principle 4. Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust. "Happy are the pure in heart" (Matt. 5:8).

Step 4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. "Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord" (Lam. 3:40).

Step 5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (James 5:16). . . .

⁶¹ Ibid., 15.

Principle 5. Voluntarily submit to every change God wants me to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects. “Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires” (Matt. 5:6).

Step 6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:10).

Step 7. We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). . . .

Principle 6. Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I have done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others. “Happy are the merciful” (Matt. 5:7). “Happy are the peacemakers” (Matt. 5:9).

Step 8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31).

Step 9. We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure others or them. “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift” (Matt. 5:23-4). . . .

Principle 7. Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will. . . .

Principle 8. Yield myself to God to be used to bring this good news to others, by both my example and my words. “Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires” (Matt. 5:10).

Step 10. We continued to take personal inventor[ies] and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it. “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

Step 11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for the knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Col. 3:16).

Step 12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs. “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore Him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted” (Gal. 6:1).⁶²

⁶² Ibid., 14-19.

Leadership Training in a Circle of Trust

CR is a Christian leadership incubator, and it creates and sustains itself through leadership development and training. Baker suggests “seven keys to start your recovery ministry and keep it growing: (1) worship, (2) leadership training, (3) senior pastor support, (4) fellowship events, (5) curriculum, (6) new groups, and (7) outreach.”⁶³ This paper focuses on leadership training because leaders must be sensitive people with hearts for this ministry. The most important training occurs when leadership candidates approach the ministry from a place or state of need.⁶⁴ A second, vital factor is their attitude toward God’s work in human affairs and their trust in Jesus and other leaders.

Baker writes, “If I had one word that would describe the leadership training of CR, it would be *consistent*. We schedule monthly meetings to discuss recovery issues and group dynamics. These leadership meetings include four elements: planning, teaching, sharing, and fellowship time.”⁶⁵ A mutually shared vision is essential for successful planning, teaching, sharing, and fellowship. This combines with participants’ shared experiences of sorrow, suffering, listening, and trust building until healing comes and is celebrated in worship and continued trust.

Celebrate Recovery at Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church (CRMABC) provides opportunity for a circle of trust. The development of a circle of trust requires leaders who

⁶³ Ibid., 23.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

volunteer for training based on the CR methodology, and CR leadership candidates must meet the following qualifications:

1. Be a growing Christian, not a new believer.
2. Complete all levels of the church's leadership classes.
3. Work hard on their own recovery and be able to talk comfortably about their own victories and struggles.
4. Complete a step study using the four Celebrate Recovery participant's guides.
5. Have a strong personal support network: family, recovering friends, accountability partners, church leaders, Christian counselor, and so forth.
6. Agree to attend ongoing monthly Celebrate Recovery leadership training sessions.
7. Avoid codependent relationships with members of their group.⁶⁶

Qualified candidates who seek leadership in recovery through the CR model make the commitment and are commissioned through a signed leadership covenant, which can be copied from the addendum of the *Celebrate Recovery: Leader's Guide*.⁶⁷

- I have read and agree to follow the *Celebrate Recovery: Leader's Guide*.
- I will attend monthly Celebrate Recovery Leader's meetings.
- I will uphold Celebrate Recovery's five rules in my small group meetings.
- I will pray for each person in my group.
- I will pray for the unity, health, and growth of the church.
- I will squelch gossip and resolve conflict with the truth by applying Matthew 18:15-17.
- I will continue working on my personal recovery and support team.
- I will develop another person to be my co-leader.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 25.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 221.

Signed:

Leader _____ Ministry Leader _____

Date _____

Baker writes, “Let me offer you a word of caution. If you are trying to run your recovery ministry or your church’s pastoral care ministry all by yourself, you are going to burn out. And not only will you burn out as a leader, but eventually your own recovery will begin to suffer.”⁶⁸ He further states, “The way to be an effective Celebrate Recovery leader is to start giving the responsibilities of your leadership away.”⁶⁹ Baker makes this important statement about leadership and the importance of trust in a collaborative team: “If you want to be a great recovery leader, and if you want to last and have your ministry grow and be more effective in reaching and helping hurting, . . . broken people, I strongly suggest that you consider one important word: T–E–A–M!”⁷⁰ T–E–A–M stands for training, encouraging, assimilation, and ministry leader. The CRMABC ministry adopted the T–E–A–M structure based on the mentorship of an apprentice by a trusted leader. Team leaders have specific roles and responsibilities designed to facilitate program operations and create trust:⁷¹

Celebrate Recovery T–E–A–M Leadership Strategy
 T = Training Coach
 Conducts NEW LEADERSHIP TRAINING and orientation
 Provides training sessions for MONTHLY LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

⁶⁸ Ibid., 26.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 27.

Develops and oversees leadership for SMALL GROUPS
 Develops a Training Coach APPRENTICE

E = Encourager Coach

Provides and oversees leadership in the SHEPHERDING CARE needs of
 the groups and ministry leaders
 Creates FELLOWSHIP EVENTS for the leaders and groups
 Helps identify NEW APPRENTICE GROUP LEADERS
 Develops an Encourager APPRENTICE

A = Assimilation Coach

Responsible for the PROMOTION of Celebrate Recovery to the members,
 the church, the community and the world
 Recruits and interviews new LEADERSHIP CANDIDATES
 Develops and maintains GROUP INFORMATION MATERIALS for
 groups and information tables
 Develops an assimilation Coach APPRENTICE

M = MINISTRY LEADER

Responsible for the entire RECOVERY MINISTRY
 Selects and schedules TEACHERS and TESTIMONIES for weekly
 meetings
 Oversees all CELEBRATE RECOVERY MINISTRIES
 Serves as the MAIN CONTACT with the church staff

The CRMABC leadership divided the labor and responsibility for the ministry's ongoing operations, served as the ministry's senior staff, and managed several meeting formats. First, a large group met one night weekly for a meal, an information-lesson-testimony session, an open share portion, and a "café experience" for informal networking. Second, step study group meetings focused on addictions, compulsive behaviors, and life sufferings in a confidential environment. Step study group meetings were open for four weeks followed by twenty-six highly structured process studies that used four separate dialog guides in small, closed, confidential groups. Groups spent six months to a year to process the twenty-six studies.

Celebrate Recovery's "Growth Funnel": A Safe Place

CRMABC creates a safe place, based on trust, where participants engage, embrace, overcome, and celebrate victory over destructive sin, addiction, and compulsive behaviors. The goal of recovery is a life of trust, discovery, and liberation with personal and social components that fulfill the twelfth step: "Having had a spiritual experience as a result of these steps, we try to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs." CRMABC leaders assist participants as they build trust and come together in a safe place. The small groups operate with specific guidelines that build participant trust and freedom from addictive behaviors. The small group guidelines are:

1. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts and feelings. Limit your sharing to three to five minutes.
2. There is no cross talk. Cross talk is when two individuals engage in conversation excluding all others. Each person is free to express his or her feelings without interruptions.
3. We are here to support one another, not to "fix" one another.
4. Anonymity and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to injure themselves [*sic*] or others.
5. Offensive language has no place in a Christ-centered recovery group.⁷²

CRMABC uses these guidelines for all group meetings including large groups, open share groups, and step study groups. Everyone in CRMABC observes the guidelines as a community discipline.

CRMABC adheres to Baker's model described in "The DNA of an Authentic Celebrate Recovery® Ministry":⁷³

⁷² Ibid., 47.

⁷³ Ibid., 32.

1. Jesus Christ is the one and only Higher Power. The program is Christ-centered.
2. The Bible and Celebrate Recovery curriculum (the leader's guide and the four participant's guides) are used exclusively. The large group lessons are taught from the leader's guide, keeping at least the acrostic and the Scriptures as the key points in the lessons. This is to keep consistency within groups, while allowing creativity for the teachers.
3. The ministry is "group based." All groups are gender specific and use the group guidelines and format.
4. Accountability is to Christ, the local church and Celebrate Recovery at Saddleback Church.

Churches or organizations can use the CR curriculum and include other materials or programs, but they are prohibited from using the CR title in altered programs.

Groups and New Groups

CR is a community of honest, trusting believers, and CR's purpose is to motivate and move participants into action, not to disseminate information or create good feeling, self-esteem, or leadership positions alone. It is about getting a job done: "Arise; shine, for the glory of the Lord has risen upon you!" (Isa. 61:1) CRMABC looks forward with a specific end in view: "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to bring you into a hope and a future." (Jer. 11:29) This end view is a new beginning with death to self and a new life with God through trust and action.

CRMABC's strength is trust, group life, and the formation of new groups. The structure and strength of this ministry draws people into the community when participants practice worship, leadership training, senior pastor support, fellowship events, curriculum, new groups, and outreach in a balanced manner.⁷⁴ The seven keys are

⁷⁴ Ibid., 23.

essential and neglect of any one hinders the ministry: “Built around individual needs and recovery issues, new groups act like blood transfusions in your recovery ministry. People gain a sense of excitement and enthusiasm when new groups start. Second Corinthians 9:12 says, ‘This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God’s people but is overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.’”⁷⁵

The addition of new groups to the ministry depends upon the presence and availability of leaders: “We do not start a new group if we do not have a trained leader and co-leader, trained by the leader, in place.”⁷⁶ Small group leaders have peculiar gifts made possible through practicing the guidelines required by the CR model. The gifts include “holding your tongue,” humility or meekness before God and others, and listening. Small group leaders exercise these gifts when they build trust and model, instruct, direct, and train others in the five small group guidelines.

The CR group guidelines and expectations are designed to build trust and create a safe place. “A safe place” is a common title for all groups and participants, and the five guidelines must be practiced and modeled to build trust in any group. Leaders, co-leaders, and participants share responsibility for trust building. Consistent group practice of the seven keys in a recovery community helps build trust and overcomes trauma, obsessive and compulsive behaviors, and destructive habits. Emotionally healthy churches require emotionally healthy leadership.⁷⁷ Likewise, emotionally healthy recovery ministries

⁷⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 33.

⁷⁷ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003).

require trust within the leadership team. The next chapter describes the formation and culture of a healthy, trustful CR ministry team.

CHAPTER 4
CELEBRATE RECOVERY AT MABC

The Background

In July-August 2003, John¹ and the author of this paper developed a friendship at a Wednesday morning men's prayer breakfast. These two believers discussed the need for some kind of help for men involved in addictions. The most common need they discussed was help for men struggling with sexual issues including pornography, pornography addiction, or involvement that triggered other sexual misconduct. The two believers shared concerns and realized that some marriages and families in their immediate circles were at risk of failure. Their dialogue shifted toward, "What should we do?"

By the end of October, John and the author discovered they personally knew and counseled ten to fifteen men who struggled with sexual addictions. The author consulted friends and contacts at sober living centers and sought advice from local university medical center's behavioral medicine specialists in addiction medicine, chemical dependency, and eating disorders. John and the author discovered the "Oxford House" had a "sober living home" model, and they visited a nearby facility to judge if the model could be used for men struggling with sexual addiction who had been ejected by angered

¹ Names have been changed to protect anonymity.

wives. Within a week they determined that a residential home was cost prohibitive because of real estate values. Later, John and the author discussed an eating disorder ministry the author and his wife discovered in a recovery ministry called “Celebrate Recovery” (CR) at their previous church. John was aware of CR, knew it was similar to AA, and he and his wife had some experience with a similar “faith-based” addiction approach under Alcoholics Anonymous’ oversight. In November, John approached the senior pastor of Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church (MABC) and inquired about launching a CR ministry, but the church was not open to the possibility. In February, John introduced the author to Mel, a MABC staff member who came to faith in Jesus through the ministry of Teen Challenge, an addiction recovery ministry. The three met regularly, prayed for one another, and sought ways to develop a ministry for people struggling with addictions.

In March, the men’s prayer breakfast prayed that a way would open for CR in Riverside. Whenever Mel shared his testimony of addiction and overcoming it through Jesus and Teen Challenge, relatives and friends of those struggling with addictions asked him for help. The need for a recovery ministry became more apparent and urgent. Mike was scheduled to give his first sermon at MABC, and he accompanied his sermon with a five-question addiction problem survey for response by the congregation. John designed the questions and congregants returned 689 surveys; 87 reported that they “needed help immediately” and would like to have a visit from someone to minister to their need.

The senior pastor reviewed the results at the next church staff meeting and said, “I guess we really do need this ministry.” The author met with the senior pastor, and the

senior pastor asked the author and his wife to lead a CR ministry as a type of “intensive care” for those who needed it within the congregation and as a possible outreach to the community. The author replied, “I would only do it if Mel would be the ministry leader as my wife and I had been at MABC only one year and we would need Mel’s connectivity to the staff.” The pastor agreed, and the way was open.

Leadership and Team Formation

With the commissioning of the ministry, John, Mel, and the author had immediate input from their wives who volunteered to establish and develop the CRMABC program. John’s wife served on the MABC staff as director of the child development ministry, Mike’s wife was an area director for a company, and the author’s wife was a registered nurse who led a twelve-step eating disorders group. She ordered the CR leadership materials so the husband and wife teams could read and understand CR’s methods and process. The three-couple team attended a CR “summit” training seminar in August 2004.

The CR summit experience persuaded the three-couple team of the soundness of CR’s policies, procedures, and protocols. The team trusted the program and each other, learned more, and built a trusting community together. The leadership team formed around the functions of the T.E.A.M. acronym described earlier in this paper: Training coach, Encourager coach, Assimilator coach, and Ministry leader.

After the summit and a period of prayer, the team decided that each of the three couples fit specific T.E.A.M. roles. A fourth couple joined the team in November and filled the fourth role. The team was complete by the middle of December and celebrated

its progress the week before Christmas. A sense of trust continued developing among the team members.

Foundation and Kick-off

The team coordinated with the senior pastor and pastoral staff during a ninety-day “ministry kick-off” launch period. This allowed time to solidify the team, work with the pastoral staff toward a combined operation, and develop trust between the CR team and the pastoral staff. The team developed further mutual trust, had confidence in the CR leadership training, policy and procedure materials, and developed a MABC contextual identity. The team identified, recruited, and trained group leaders and held training sessions every two weeks for an hour and a half in the evening and three, three-hour sessions on Sunday evenings from January through March with a ministry launch date of March 31.

The senior pastor preached a series of eight sermons called the “Road to Recovery,” and he reported after the third sermon: “This is good stuff, I’m just delivering it as Rick [Warren] wrote it.” Three individuals delivered their personal testimonies during the last three sermons. The testimonies impacted the congregation significantly, which could be sensed by the silence when the testimonies ended.

March 31, 2005, was kick-off day. Two hundred people attended, and the team followed all CR protocols and suggestions from CR staff at Saddleback Church. CRMABC staff explained the ministry, and the participants moved to an adjoining room

and divided into “open share’ groups. Six women’s groups and four men’s groups met and involved seventy-eight participants.

Three months passed from the first night to the formation of the first “step groups,” and an additional thirty-plus individuals investigated the CR program. The CR team was amazed at the response. The team organized the large CR meetings on Thursday nights, four weekly women’s step study groups, and three men’s step study groups. A fellowship dinner on Thursday nights prepared by chefs from a men’s barbeque ministry preceded the large meeting, followed by open share meetings and the “Solid Rock Café” that closed around 9:30. Challenges developed when participants experienced personal difficulties or clashed with other group members, but the CR team met and mastered these issues and thrived in the struggles.

Recovery Is Discovery

The core feature of CR is its inductive, interactive, and reiterative listening dynamic, and the twelve steps is the focus of activities. Progress requires personal commitment and time, and trust among team members is essential for success. The development of a “safe place” of acceptance in recovery allows participants to “begin to step out of denial, remove the veil and masks of our powerlessness, realizing our control is seen to be very limited or illusory.”² A safe place operates effectively in an atmosphere of trust that the team practices and demonstrates. Some participants had previous experience in recovery groups, and this was helpful because they modeled recovery

² J. Keith Miller, *A Hunger for Healing: The Twelve Steps As a Classic Model for Christian Spiritual Growth* (New York: Harper One, 1992), 14.

behavior, honest expression, and sympathetic acceptance of addicts. J. Keith Miller writes, “The beginning of self-acceptance and the absence of denial and condemnation are essential in recovery ministry and are the foundations of recovery.”³

A group of addicts who confess and accept human weakness and brokenness, profess the need for a higher power, and form a trusting community can make progress in recovery. The author of this paper repeated frequently, “Broken lives are embraced as worthy of notice, recognition, and value, and participants must pay attention and respond to other participants.” An atmosphere of trust is essential and includes attentive listening and response. The team learned that participants experienced honest expression, open acceptance, and willing confession after large meetings and involvement in open share groups. This stimulated a spirit of confession in others who heard the confessions, and trust developed quickly on the foundation of open, honest testimonies.

Discerning the Heart and Voice of Another

The team learned the importance of listening and realized participants had difficulty with silent moments in the group. The second challenge was to listen without providing unsolicited feedback that included gestures of any kind. Third, crosstalk was an issue, and it took time to practice the discipline of silent listening as others spoke about their pain and difficulties. Strong bonding occurred in the groups and among individuals over six to twelve weeks, and participants honored confidentiality. Learning to listen,

³ Ibid., 104.

avoiding crosstalk, and holding strict confidence became a collective discipline and created opportunity for trust and progress.

A fourth discipline of making “I” statements developed and enabled participants to focus on themselves and the “self in others. This had a profound effect because sharing became personal, confessional, and was a new and invigorating experience for many with positive consequences. Listening and hearing reinforced group trust, and trust enabled continued listening and hearing. Participants learned to hold what was spoken in confidence and how to focus on their own voices and the voices of others. Some persons were ready to enter twelve-step groups within three to four months; others took longer and began twelve-step group experiences at eight to twelve months. Some remained only in the large group and open share experiences and did not begin twelve-step groups for various reasons. Others left the CR ministry after exposure to the large meeting and open share small groups.

Celebrate Recovery Leadership Preparation

The team continued the CRMABC ministry but did not form a second wave of twelve-step study groups for an extended period. Two experienced participants, who later became leaders of the team and were AA “trusted servants,”⁴ helped the team begin the second wave of twelve-step study groups. This couple had been sober for twenty-seven and twenty-three years through AA, Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and Overeaters

⁴ Alcoholics Anonymous does not use the word “leader” but rather, “trusted servant.” Tradition Two: “*For our group purposes there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*” [emphasis added]. *Alcoholics Anonymous* (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 2001), 562.

Anonymous (OA) ministries. The couple was a great asset in sustaining team leadership and often functioned as a positive catalyst in the ministry leadership team based on their extensive experience.

The leadership team's membership changed four times in three-plus years. The consistent, core team included the author and his wife and the experienced couple who sustained and produced leaders over time. One reason the CRMABC ministry leadership team had turnover was the inability of some team members to deal with participants' issues and crises, including its leaders. Crises occur and can provide creative, new realities in team members' lives, and eventually the team viewed crisis as a type of opportunity.

At the end of CRMABC's first year of operation, it became apparent that recovery provides participants discovery opportunities, and the most profound CR ministry tool is the ability to listen to others' crises as a shared experience. Listening includes participants' ability to hear themselves and others. In the process of listening, individuals hear their own voice and the voice of others, and a new objective and subjective sense grows in the midst of human sorrow, suffering, and sacrifice because the "stepping out of denial process begins with the realization of the illusions of power, pretense and control."⁵ Listening and hearing often includes sacrificing personal prejudices.

Listening requires patience because participants repeat their stories frequently. Listening, however, opens the opportunity for mutual experiences through shared lives and hearing one another. The listening discipline creates an environment for change as

⁵ Miller, *A Hunger for Healing*, 14.

“the first service that one owes to others in fellowship” by allowing space for reflection, discovery, and recovery in the process of “learning to listen.”⁶

After multiple listening experiences, participants may become bored and even dread another encounter and recitation, but the author believes this provides powerful moments of discovery. If participants persevere, a new richness in understanding God, oneself, and others may develop despite the speaker’s repetition, and the author believes recovery in a group format facilitates powerful encounters with God, self, and others. Perseverance and practice reinforce listening skills and may offer a moment of sacred hearing. Group experience in recovery is a powerful dynamic because participants share common problems, solutions, and life experiences. The recovery experience can become redemptive through disclosure, listening, and hearing as Guy Grimes said, “There is healing in revealing.”⁷

Trust and Community

A critical moment in the CR process is a participant’s encounter with self by hearing others clearly, and twelve-step work emphasizes reality without denial through the discovery of common problems, solutions, and life experiences. For example, the first step says, “We admitted we were powerless and our lives had become unmanageable.” Each succeeding step reinforces this admission and reflection on self and expands the first step’s meaning: “I realize that I am not God. I admit that I am powerless to control

⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1954), 91-92, 97-98.

⁷ Guy Grimes, “There Is Healing in Revealing,” (sermon, Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church, Riverside, CA, June 3, 2004).

my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable.”⁸ Earnest Kurtz adds, “To be not-God [is] to need others; to need them precisely in their weakness, from one’s own weakness; to need them as they [are]—alcoholic—precisely [because] one [is] himself alcoholic.”⁹

Having “come to believe” is an interlude between steps one and two and expresses an action where recovery can occur. It is a place between the “now and the not yet”¹⁰ and is a critical pause between in the addict’s decision making process. One senses that reflection on life and self-examination are important as participants examine their choices. This author has observed that personal admission and confession of weakness come through self-examination before others and before Jesus Christ as the center of recovery. It is an apparent admission and confession of a profound and liberating truth.

The moment between steps one and two is the focal point of this paper. Apparently what participants do between the two steps determines their progress through the remaining steps and seems to be a profound moment in founding, grounding, and establishing trust and faith in the midst of vulnerability. CR’s step two of recovery in the *Leader’s Guide* asserts, “We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could

⁸ Kurtz, *Not God*, 3. “The term *not-God* is the theme around which the history of Alcoholics Anonymous is recounted and its interpretations offered. The exact phrase appears nowhere in either the published literature of Alcoholics Anonymous or the primary sources used in this research, yet the two senses contained in this expression not only pervade the written documents but also lie at the heart of the A.A. fellowship and program.”

⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁰ Lane A. Burglund, “Eschatological Tension and Existential *Angst*: ‘Now’ and ‘Not Yet’ in Romans 7:14-25 and 1QS11 (Community Rule, Manual of Discipline)” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (July 1997): 163, <http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/burglandeschatologicaltension.pdf> (accessed March 18, 2010).

restore us to sanity.”¹¹ Trust is foundational to this statement, and trust opens the way for recovery through conscious submission to the “Higher Power, the [Jesus] of Celebrate Recovery.”¹²

Human Faith, Relationship, and Trust

Step three completes the process as a leap of faith: “[I] consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ’s care and control.”¹³ This commitment is a personal encounter between self and God. The potential result of this choice is a redeemed and recovering human being who faces addiction in God’s strength. John Powel quotes Irenaeus, “The glory of God is a human being who is fully alive.”¹⁴ Powell focuses on the “link” between the glory of God as the “Ground of Being” and “Human Beings” as the essence of relationship. Step three acknowledges this relationship and confirms the psalmist’s observation: “What is man that thou art mindful of him or the Son of man that thou art mindful of him; Thou has set him a little lower than the angels” (Ps. 8:5).

Bradley Nassif writes, “Athanasius believed and taught (in the doctrine of “divinization” properly understood) ‘God became human so that humans might become divine.’”¹⁵ Nassif concludes that Irenaeus and Athanasius “tell us that we can’t be truly ‘godly’ unless we’re first truly human. And we can’t be truly human unless we’re in

¹¹ Baker, *Celebrate Recovery: Leader’s Guide*, 10.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Powell, *Fully Human, Fully Alive*, 1.

¹⁵ Bradley Nassif, “The Poverty of Love,” *Christianity Today.com*, posted April 30, 2008, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/may/11.34.html> (accessed December 11, 2009).

communion with Christ in His Trinitarian relations.”¹⁶ Darrell Johnson asserts, “At the center of the universe there is a relationship. . . . It is *out of* that relationship that we were created and redeemed, and it is *for* that relationship we were created and redeemed.”¹⁷

Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes about this human condition:

He who is alone with his sin is utterly alone. It may be that Christians, notwithstanding corporate worship, common prayer, and all their fellowship in service, may still be left to their loneliness. The final break-through to fellowship does not occur, because, though they have fellowship with one another as believers and as devout people, they do not have fellowship as the undevout, as sinners. The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. So everyone one must conceal his sin from himself and from the fellowship. . . . But it is the grace of the Gospel, which is so hard for the pious to understand, that confronts us with the truth and says: “You are a sinner, a great, desperate sinner; now come, as the sinner that you are, to God who loves you.”¹⁸

Bonhoeffer writes, “Only those who believe [trust] obey. . . . Only those who obey believe [trust].”¹⁹ Community experiences can promote trust and the CR fellowship provides community for addict participants.

Sustaining team leadership in recovery requires establishing trust repeatedly as the foundation of leadership team relationships. A successful, Christ-centered twelve-step addiction recovery ministry is founded and formed by servant leaders who consistently accept and admit their weaknesses, build trust, and sustain the team through periods of conflict. They trust one another and hold each other accountable in weakness and imperfection.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Darrell Johnson, *Experiencing the Trinity* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College, 2004), i.

¹⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 110-111.

¹⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (1959; repr., New York: Touchstone, 1995), 68.

The author of this paper values practicing the twelve-step recovery principles under Jesus' leadership and the Holy Spirit's power in a devoted community. The leadership team builds and teaches trust through vulnerability in community that may overcome mistrust, distrust, and unbelief. Trust is essential in a recovery ministry team. The next section develops the concept of trust-building through "vulnerability based trust" within a safe community led by servant leaders. This supports the thesis that trust is essential among leaders in a recovery ministry.

Trust and Patrick Lencioni's Model

The team celebrated its first annual retreat in January 2006. At this retreat, the author prepared an exercise in building team trust designed to sustain the leadership community based on Patrick Lencioni's model described in *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.²⁰ The author believed Lencioni's model provided an excellent paradigm to disciple the team and sustain its trust level. It could also provide greater self-awareness and, therefore, greater team awareness as trusted servant leaders. Team members could recognize their similar dysfunctions, promote openness, accept weakness, and facilitate vulnerability and trust. The author believed the team members' willingness to participate with humility and confession was essential.

²⁰ Lencioni, *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 26.

Personality Profiling

Lencioni believes the Meyers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) is a useful tool for team building in a context of teamwork and trust. Lencioni employs the MBTI in his consulting work with corporate America for two reasons:

1. The MBTI is valid and reliable. It has been tested for decades since its development in the 1940s by Isabel Briggs-Meyers, based on the insights of her mother Katherine Cook Briggs. . . . The amount of research and testing that has been done is staggering.²¹
2. The MBTI is the most widely known tool out there. . . . The popularity of the tool is important. That's because of the executives we work with (more than 70 percent) are somewhat familiar with the MBTI and have taken part in a Meyers-Briggs exercise at some point in their careers. And so they tend to accept its validity relatively quickly and get up to speed with less time and effort than they'd spend on something new.²²

Lencioni believes the MBTI helps team members understand and describe one another as individuals, and it provides two benefits:

First, it drastically increases the likelihood that team members will admit their weaknesses and strengths to one another. After all, once they voluntarily self-identify their "type," they have little reason to resist opening up. In fact I've found that they're usually eager and relieved to tell their peers who they are and why they act the way they do.

Second, by providing team members with a *common vocabulary* for describing their differences and similarities, you make it *safe* for them to give each other feedback without feeling like they're making accusatory or unfounded generalizations. It is amazing to observe previously guarded team members calling out one another's strengths and weaknesses after having those strengths and weaknesses validated by an objective tool.²³

Lencioni writes, "Sometimes within minutes of beginning a discussion of Meyers-Briggs, someone will say, 'I'm an ENTJ' and everyone around the room will say 'no

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 25.

wonder!''''²⁴ Lencioni gives four critical suggestions on the way the MBTI should be administered:

1. *Go fast.* People are generally smart, and there is nothing like a slow lecture or a simplistic exercise to entice them to tune out. When in doubt go faster leaving things out rather than covering everything up front. Better that they ask questions later for clarification than getting bored. . . .
2. *Apply it.* Every profiling tool is going to be based on a psychological, behavioral theory, but the reason why you're talking to your clients or employees about it is so they can build trust and become a more highly functioning team at work. . . .
3. *Anticipate objections.* Don't wait for someone to say, "This is a bunch of touchy-feely mumbo jumbo!" Instead, start by saying, "Now for those of you who might be wondering if this is a bunch of touchy-feely mumbo jumbo let me say right now that I wondered the same thing when I first learned about this. And I can tell you it is based on real data and it is extremely practical for what we are trying to do here." . . . You get the picture. Demonstrate to your audience that you know, and even understand, what they might be thinking, and take the issue off the table. It's simple—but surprisingly effective.
4. *Know your stuff cold.* That doesn't mean you have to impress people by showing them that you know your stuff cold. But it will help when there is push-back, or when someone (usually an ENTP) tries to debate the merits of whatever tool you're using.²⁵

Lencioni also discusses teamwork and trust, and he believes trust is the foundation of effective teamwork (see figure 1 on page 77):

In the course of my experience working with CEOs and their teams, two critical truths have become clear to me. First, genuine teamwork in most organizations remains as elusive as it has ever been. Second, organizations fail to achieve teamwork because they unknowingly fall prey to five natural but dangerous pitfalls, which I call the five dysfunctions of a team. . . .

1. The first dysfunction is an **absence of trust** among team members. Essentially, this stems from their unwillingness to be vulnerable within the group. Team members who are not genuinely open with one another about their mistakes and weaknesses make it impossible to build a foundation of trust.

²⁴ Ibid., 26.

²⁵ Ibid., 28.

2. This failure to build trust is damaging because it sets the tone for the second dysfunction: **fear of conflict**. Teams that lack trust are incapable of engaging in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas. Instead they resort to veiled discussions and guarded comments.
3. A lack of healthy conflict is a problem because it ensures the third dysfunction of a team: **lack of commitment**. Without having aired opinions in the course of passionate and open debate, team members rarely, if ever, but in and commit to decisions, though they may feign agreement during meetings.
4. Because of this lack of real commitment and buy-in, team members develop an **avoidance of accountability**, the fourth dysfunction. Without committing to a clear plan of action, even the most focused and driven people often hesitate to call their peers on actions and behaviors that seem counterproductive to the good of the team.
5. Failure to hold one another accountable creates an environment where the fifth dysfunction can thrive. **Inattention to results** occurs when team members put their individual needs (such as ego, career development, or recognition) or even the needs of their divisions above the collective goals of the team.

And so, like a chain with just one link broken, teamwork deteriorates if even a single dysfunction is allowed to flourish.

Another way to understand this model is to take the opposite approach—a positive one—and imagine how members of truly cohesive teams behave.

1. They trust one another.
2. They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas.
3. They commit to decisions and plans of action.
4. They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans.
5. They focus on the achievement of collective results.

If this sounds simple, it is because it is simple, at least in theory. In practice, however, it is extremely difficult because it requires levels of discipline and persistence that few teams can muster.²⁶

²⁶ Ibid., 188-190.

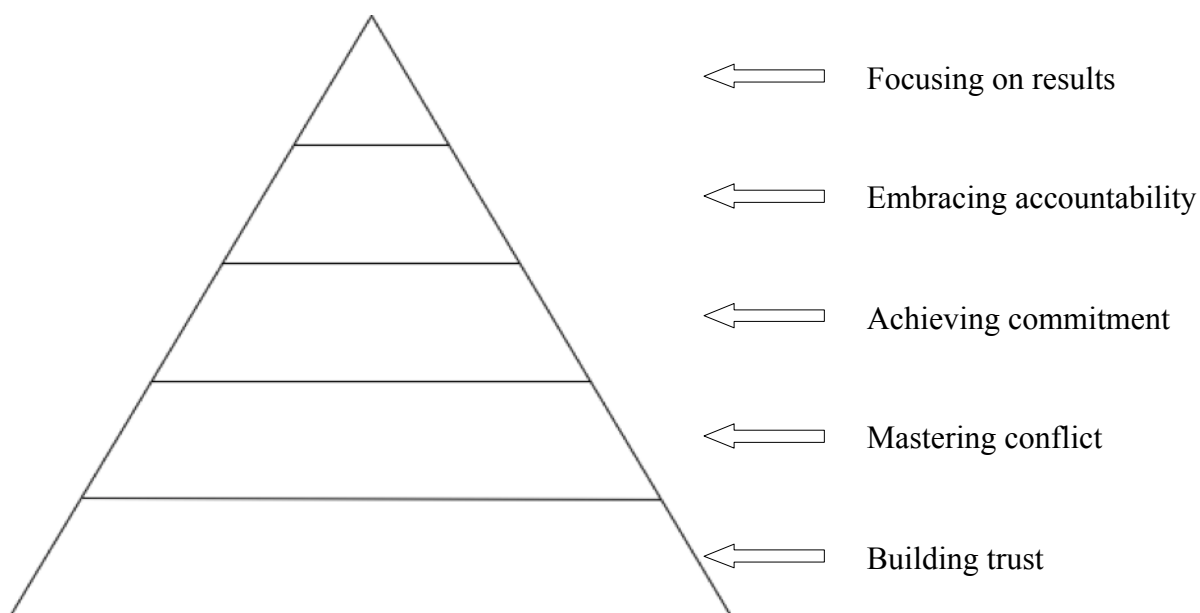


Figure 1. Lencioni's model of cohesive team behavior built on trust

Lencioni writes, "Trust lies at the heart of a functioning cohesive team. Without it teamwork is all but impossible."²⁷ He continues, "In the context of building a team, trust is the confidence among team members that their peer's intentions are good, and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group. In essence, teammates get comfortable being vulnerable with one another."²⁸ Vulnerability based trust requires that team members have good intentions. As a result, "team members make themselves vulnerable to one another, and [are] confident that their respective vulnerabilities will not be used against them. The vulnerabilities I am referring to are their weaknesses, skill deficiencies, interpersonal shortcomings, mistakes, and requests for help."²⁹

²⁷ Ibid., 195.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 196.

Group members must be reasonably comfortable with honest exposure, but this has nothing to do with being “touchy-feely” in the group; instead, it is pragmatic and results-oriented. For the Christian group the end result is that others will say, “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34). Lencioni writes, “Achieving vulnerability-based trust is difficult because . . . most successful people learn to be *competitive* with their peers, and protective of their reputations. It is a challenge for them to turn those instincts off for the good of the team, but that is exactly what is required.”³⁰

Many people struggle with competitiveness in relationships. Although recovery is not a career direction, it elicits the range of dysfunctions associated with living and serving together, and human foibles and dysfunctions surface and remain challenges to trusting relationships. It is a challenge to turn natural instincts toward the good of the team and ministry. Lencioni adds,

The costs of failing to do this are great. Teams that lack trust waste inordinate amounts of time and energy managing their behaviors and interactions within the group. They tend to dread team meetings, and are reluctant to take risks in asking for or offering assistance to others. As a result, morale on distrusting teams is usually quite low, and unwanted turnover is high.³¹

Lencioni believes,

[Team members who lack trust] conceal their weaknesses and mistakes from one another, hesitate to ask for help or provide constructive feedback, hesitate to offer help outside their own areas of responsibility, jump to conclusions about the intentions and aptitude of others without attempting to clarify them, fail to recognize and tap into one another’s skills and experiences, waste time and

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

energy managing their behaviors for effect, hold grudges, and dread meetings and find reasons to avoid spending time together.³²

He believes members of trusting teams admit weaknesses and mistakes, ask for help, accept questions and input about their areas of responsibility, give one another the benefit of the doubt before arriving at a negative conclusion, take risks in offering negative feedback and assistance, appreciate and tap into one another's skills and experiences, focus time and energy on the important issues, offer and accept apologies without hesitation, and look forward to meetings and other opportunities to work as a group.³³

Building Trust

Lencioni asks,

How does a team go about building trust? Unfortunately, vulnerability-based trust cannot be achieved overnight. It requires shared experiences over time, multiple instances of follow-through and credibility, and an in-depth understanding of the unique attributes of team members. However, by taking a focused approach, a team can dramatically accelerate the process and achieve trust in relatively short order.³⁴

Lencioni offers several tools for building trust, and the first two tools are also found in the CR materials:

1) *Personal History Exercises*: This is a reasonably low risk exercise going around a group or table sharing personal short histories, life experiences, occupations, education, siblings, hometown, [and] interesting backgrounds that allow one another to relate on a more personal basis and see one another as human beings. . . . This encourages greater empathy and understanding and discourages unfair and inaccurate behavioral attributions. . . .

³² Ibid., 197.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

2) *Team Effectiveness Exercises*: This exercise is more rigorous and involves more risk than the previous one. It requires [that] team members . . . identify the single most important contribution that each of their peers makes to the team, as well as the one area that they must either improve upon or eliminate for the good of the team. All members then report their responses, focusing on one person at a time, usually beginning with the team leader.”³⁵ . . . 3) *Personality and Behavioral Preference Profiles*: Some of the most effective and lasting tools for building trust on a team are profiles of team member’s behavioral preferences and personality styles. These help break down barriers by allowing people to better understand and empathize with one another.³⁶

The first two exercises are demanding and indicate the presence or absence of group trust. When they were attempted for the first time in the CRMABC team, they were more than the group could tolerate. The author brushed over the resistance and moved to the third exercise believing it would be less threatening, which proved to be the case.

The first two exercises were too threatening, but the personality and behavioral preference profiling was effective and the team moved forward in trust building. Bonding experiences, laughter, and hilarity occurred during the personality profiling exercise. The author had never witnessed such fun-loving, open, joyful, accepting, and affirming experiences within the team, and this experience confirms Lencioni’s comments: “Some of the most effective and lasting tools for building trust on a team are profiles of team members’ behavioral preferences and personality styles. These help break down barriers by allowing people to better understand and empathize with one another.”³⁷

³⁵ Ibid., 198.

³⁶ Ibid., 199.

³⁷ Ibid.

The Leader's Role and the Behavioral Profiling Exercise

Lencioni writes,

The most important action that a leader must take to encourage the building of trust on a team is to demonstrate vulnerability first. This requires that a leader risk losing face in front of the team, so that subordinates will take the same risks themselves. What is more, team leaders must create an environment that does not punish vulnerability. Even well-intentioned teams can subtly discourage trust by chastising one another for admissions of weakness or failure. Finally, displays of vulnerability on the part of a team leader must be genuine; they cannot be staged. One of the best ways to lose the trust of a team is to feign vulnerability in order to manipulate the emotions of others.³⁸

The author as team leader became more authentically vulnerable when he did not play the traditional, invulnerable leadership role. This required his participation with the team, but not as an authority figure in front of the team. This practice reduced the leader's aura of ministerial pretense subjectively for the leader and objectively by the team toward the leader. The author co-led and co-mentored the group as a cohort of servant-leaders and disciples within the ministry.

Lencioni describes the behavioral profiling experience:

Purpose of the exercise: To improve trust by giving team members an opportunity to demonstrate vulnerability in an objective, in-depth way, and to help team members understand one another's strengths and weaknesses so that they can avoid making false attributions about behaviors and intentions.

Time required: Two to four hours, depending on the size of the team, the skills of the certified facilitator, and the team members' level of knowledge of the profiling tool.

Instructions: The following instructions are written with the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) in mind. However, the basic flow can be adapted to other tools.

³⁸ Ibid.

1. Have all team members complete the MBTI diagnostic questionnaire at least a few days before the session begins, leaving enough time for the scores to be tabulated.
2. At the beginning of the session, present an overview of the Myers-Briggs model and the Temperament model, giving team members an opportunity to ask questions as well as to do some qualitative assessments of their types.
3. Present team members with their MBTI scores, and help them to identify their own true type by reviewing multiple sources of data (such as indicator results, qualitative assessments, and other reading material.)
4. Once all types have been identified, have team members each read a short description of their own type out loud to the rest of the team. In those instances where more than one person has the same type, have each member with the type reread the description, giving other team members an opportunity to hear the description in the context of that particular person. It is often best to stagger the reading of similar types, rather than have them read in succession, to avoid confusion and repetition.
5. List all types on a white board, and discuss with the team how the collective type of the team manifests itself. Discuss any areas where there is great consistency among the team. When there is consistency across multiple areas, identify the team type, read the one-page description of the type, and discuss the ramifications.
6. Identify potential weaknesses or blind spots that the group must avoid as a result of its particular inclinations. Acknowledge strengths too.
7. After the exercise had been completed, have team members read a more comprehensive description of their own type, highlighting sections that they find particularly insightful and descriptive of their tendencies. Also have them choose one or two of their areas that they would like to improve about themselves, based on their Meyers-Briggs type. Have all team members report these findings to the group, preferably on day two of an offsite.
8. Within a week of the exercise, have team members go back to the teams that they lead and discuss the MBTI profiles. This provides an opportunity for them to demonstrate vulnerability with their staff members, and to give them a better understanding of their probable strengths and weaknesses as a manager.³⁹

The team used the behavioral profiling experience over a three-year period. The author introduced the MBTI to the leadership team during the second CRMABC retreat in January 2006, which followed a preliminary retreat six months after the end of the

³⁹ Ibid., 119-121.

ramp-up period. At the first retreat, CR participants celebrated the first six months of the ministry and made attempts at bonding and trust building. This made it a very low risk, low task experience with plenty of “alone time” to relax and reflect on the past six months of “our new life together.” At that time the leadership team decided to attempt a retreat every six months. The first annual leadership team retreat occurred six months after the first retreat and a year after beginning the ministry.

During the first annual leadership retreat, the author introduced the MBTI as a trust-building tool in a low-pressure manner designed to promote a non-threatening, fun, and insightful team experience. The author described the MBTI in a monthly team meeting four weeks before the retreat. Two weeks before the retreat, members completed the seventy-eight question MBTI posted on the Humanmetrics.com web site.

The Humanmetrics website offered the inventory at no charge, and respondents completed the instrument at home. The seventy-eight question Humanmetrics version of the MBTI is shorter than the usual one hundred forty-five question MBTI. The short form may be more attractive for those who resist taking tests. The author collected and collated the MBTI results a week before the retreat. With the exception of one person who did not like psychological testing, the team completed the process with little to no resistance. The author shared the MBTI results at the end of the first annual leadership retreat because he believed the team would more likely absorb them at the end. This appeared to be the case because all but one participant received the results with great joy and enthusiasm and a desire to “know and do more with this because we really need it.”

The following year a change in team leadership added to the enthusiasm about the MBTI as a trust-building tool. The second leadership retreat was conducted at the church and included the MBTI. The tool became part of the CRMABC leadership team's "life together."

The third year leadership retreat was a monumental experience that was heightened by another experience in July 2007. The First Baptist Church of Upland, California, asked the CRMABC team to assist them in founding a CR ministry at the Upland church. This was the second time a church approached the CRMABC team about founding a CR ministry. The first request came in late summer of 2005 from a small congregation in Hemet, California. CRMABC was new, so the team allowed them to observe the large group meetings and, where appropriate, the open share groups. Subsequently, the Hemet church launched its own CR ministry.

The MBTI experience helped team members become more articulate regarding personality traits and provided a deeper common bond and common language. The use of common language deepened trust and opened team members' hearts to one another as group members shared deeper parts of their lives. The author observed that trust grew and strengthened.

A difficulty developed. One team member appeared to resist the growing trust level, and he influenced two others. He influenced his spouse directly, and another individual indirectly through group meetings and one-on-one meetings. The situation became more strained and required intervention and discipline, but the resistant member cast a shadow within the team that soon frustrated the author and the whole team.

At the time, two people functioned in each team role. The first served as mentor and the second as an apprentice. As a result, eight participated in team leadership of which three, the resistant member and the two influenced members, formed a disaffected subgroup within the team. Their disaffection was profoundly infectious.

At the same time, the team's growing circle of trust provided a safe haven within the soon to be embattled team. The team believed Jesus would remain at the center of the circle of trust in spite of its imperfections and disaffections. Some team members, however, perceived that the team's mutual trust was eroding, and the group felt a profound sorrow as a sense of distrust clouded relationships. The single, trust-lacking member undermined the entire ministry and helped confirm this paper's thesis that trust based on a theology of weakness is required in a recovery ministry program.

The erosion of trust was palpable and discouraging after the positive trust-building experience. The decline continued. Mistrust and distrust grew and the group became embattled and beleaguered by suspicion, discouragement, and anger, and some members avoided contact at meetings designed for sharing, discussion, conflict resolution, relationship management, and planning. This period of decline occurred over a nine-month period between January and September 2008.

Darker shadows emerged at the end of September 2008. The mistrust spread despite three core team members who struggled to hold things together. At that time, the circle of trust included only three of the eight leaders with another on the margin who struggled with trusting relationships and a return to drug addiction. Trust eroded further.

Between September and Christmas 2008, confusion, discouragement, disaffection, and trust eroded as three core members struggled to deliver ministry and sustain the program despite the involvement of two disaffected team members and a few stalwart participants. By November, the author called for a meeting with the pastoral staff to consider the demise of the CRMABC ministry. Leadership at that meeting declared a halt to the ministry for time to reconsider and possibly renew and recover the ministry after the 2009 New Year. The three core team members held many meetings, but efforts failed and CRMABC ceased in January 2009.

The three core members and the author began a new ministry similar to CR called “Life’s Healing Choices” that was also founded by John Baker with the support of Rick Warren at Saddleback Church. This new ministry began in February 2009 but ended services in August 2009. The next chapter discusses the essential role of trust and its measurement in a recovery ministry.

CHAPTER 5

TEAM TRUST AND A SAFE COMMUNITY

The author of this paper asserts that trust is essential in a recovery ministry. Trust is based on a theology of weakness and the recognition of vulnerability that promotes honest communication and provides a safe place for recovery participants. Trust sustains the team and ministry as a functional community. Lencioni writes about teams and team dynamics and states:

When it comes to teams, trust is all about vulnerability. . . . Vulnerability-based trust is predicated on the simple—and practical—idea that people who aren't afraid to admit the truth about themselves, are not going to engage in the kind of political behavior that wastes everyone's time and energy, and more important, makes the accomplishment of results an unlikely scenario.¹

Lencioni believes the first challenge to trust is the “difficulty that people have in admitting their weaknesses, their faults and their mistakes.”² Failure among leadership team members occurs through “the inability of executive team members to be vulnerable to one another—to build trust.”³ Vulnerability-based trust is rare because:

It is the human desire and struggle for self preservation. The idea of putting themselves at risk for the good of others is not natural, and is rarely rewarded in this life, at least not in the ways that most people expect. . . . The key to all this,

¹ Lencioni, *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 14.

² *Ibid.*, 16.

³ *Ibid.*, 17.

then, is to teach team members to get comfortable being exposed to one another, unafraid to honestly say things like “I was wrong” and “I made a mistake” and “I need help” and “I’m not sure” and “you’re better at this than I am” and yes, even “I’m sorry. . . . For a team to establish real trust, team members, beginning with the leader, must be willing to take risks without a guarantee of success. They will have to be vulnerable without knowing whether that vulnerability will be respected and reciprocated.⁴

The creation of a safe place requires team member trust and vulnerability facilitated by a theology of weakness. Vulnerability and trust based on a theology of weakness form the foundation for sustaining a CR leadership team that overcomes human dysfunctions.

Team Evaluation Methods

Lencioni describes five team dysfunctions and how to overcome the dysfunctions.

The five dysfunctions are described in chapter 4 of this paper. This paper’s author believes Lencioni’s model for overcoming the five team dysfunctions provides new metrics for leadership team evaluation that identifies a team’s functional status and progress. The five assessment categories are:

Metric One: Trust

- Trust is the foundation of teamwork.
- On a team, trust is all about vulnerability, which is difficult for most people.
- Building trust takes time, but the process can be greatly accelerated.
- Like a good marriage, trust on a team is never complete; it must be maintained over time. . . .⁵

Metric Two: Mastering Conflict

- Good conflict among team members requires trust, which is all about engaging in unfiltered, passionate debate around issues.
- Even among the best teams, conflict will at times be uncomfortable.

⁴ Ibid., 18.

⁵ Ibid., 35.

- Conflict norms, though they will vary from team to team, must be discussed and made clear among the team.
- The fear of occasional personal conflict should not deter a team from having regular, productive debate. . . .⁶

Metric Three: Achieving Commitment

- Commitment requires clarity and buy-in.
- Clarity requires that teams avoid assumptions and ambiguity, and that they end discussions with a clear understanding about what they decided upon.
- Buy-in does not require consensus. Members of great teams learn to disagree with one another and still commit to a decision. . . .⁷

Metric Four: Embracing Accountability

- Accountability on a strong team occurs directly among peers.
- For a culture of accountability to thrive, a leader must demonstrate a willingness to confront difficult issues.
- The best opportunity for holding one another accountable occurs during meetings, and the regular review of a team scoreboard provides a clear context for doing so. . . .⁸

Metric Five: Focusing on Results

- The true measure of a great team is that it accomplishes the results it sets out to achieve.
- To avoid distractions, team members must prioritize the results of the team over their individual or departmental needs.
- To stay focused, teams must publicly clarify their desired results and keep them visible.⁹

The five metrics reflect a foundation of trust facilitated by vulnerability, a theology of weakness, and participants' willingness to admit weaknesses, faults, mistakes, and failures. The metrics help team members hold each other accountable and

⁶ Ibid., 50.

⁷ Ibid., 59.

⁸ Ibid., 68.

⁹ Ibid., 80.

provide a basis for outcome measurement. This requires unlearning the human tendency to appear strong and invulnerable.

Behavioral Profiling

Lencioni writes that behavioral profiling provides the foundation for understanding, establishing, and building vulnerability-based trust, and overcoming the five dysfunctions. He writes, “The idea here is simple: give team members an objective, reliable means for understanding and describing one another.”¹⁰ This provides the two following benefits:

First, it drastically increases the likelihood that team members will admit their weaknesses and strengths to one another. After all, once they voluntarily self-identify their “type,” they have little reason to resist opening up. In fact, I’ve found that they’re usually eager and relieved to tell their peers who they are and why they act the way they do.

Second, by providing team members with a common vocabulary for describing their differences and similarities, you make it safe for them to give each other feedback without feeling like they’re making accusatory or unfounded generalizations. It is amazing to observe previously guarded team members calling out one another’s strengths and weaknesses and having those strengths and weaknesses validated by an objective tool.¹¹

As described earlier, Lencioni recommends use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)¹² for two reasons:

First, and most important, the MBTI is valid and reliable. It has been tested for decades since its development in the 1940’s by Isabel Briggs Meyers, based on the insights of her mother Katherine Cook Briggs. . . . Second, the MBTI is the most widely known tool out there. In this case the popularity of the tool is important. That’s because most of the executives we work with (more than 70

¹⁰ Ibid., 25.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 155.

percent) are somewhat familiar with the MBTI and have taken part in a Myers Briggs exercise at some point in their careers. . . . Another benefit of the popularity of the MBTI is the established vocabulary that exists among many—if not most—of the leaders we meet.”¹³

For this paper the first point is relevant, and the second is less relevant because few MABC executives were involved in the CRMABC program. The last benefit was significant because the CRMABC team’s vocabulary was limited initially and was expanded by use of the MBTI. Team members were excited by the MBTI after a one-hour introduction, a training seminar, and online self-inventory experiences. One participant stated, “I was able to get outside and a bit above myself and the team after taking the online inventory and reading the one page print out describing my personality type.”¹⁴ The same person added, “I can’t wait to read about the other personality types.”

Of the first eight CRMABC team leaders to take the inventory, only one was somewhat apprehensive and resistant; the team, therefore, moved quickly, went to work, and anticipated objections.¹⁵ Lencioni describes a common group experience: “I will never get tired of watching the reticence and guardedness of untrusting teammates melt away as they acknowledge to one another what makes them tick. Without fail, there is laughter, teasing, relief and insight. And that is exactly when the seeds of trust begin to

¹³ Ibid., 26.

¹⁴ The Encourager, or “E” member of the T.E.A.M., made this statement at “The First Annual CR T.E.A.M. Leadership Retreat, Hilton Inn, Victorville, CA, January 21, 2006.

¹⁵ Ibid.

grow.”¹⁶ Except for one participant, CRMABC leadership team experience with the MBTI in 2006 was positive, effective, and paralleled Lencioni’s comments.

Timing: Repetition, Pattern, and Needs Identification

A ninety-day ramp-up period followed formation of the leadership team as recommended by the *Celebrate Recovery: Leaders Guide*. The ministry was well promoted and supported by MABC’s pastoral staff, and the senior pastor delivered an eight-sermon series called the “Road to Recovery” with simultaneous small group leaders’ meetings held every other week.

The ministry was launched in March 2005, and ninety people made commitments to form gender specific “open share groups.” Seven men’s groups formed including two sexual addiction groups and eight women’s groups. Within four months, four women’s “closed step study groups” formed and began the twenty-six week period of study.¹⁷

New needs were identified as the program progressed, and the team sought paid and volunteer professionally trained assistance. The challenges to the team revealed the strength of the CR design as the four T.E.A.M. roles helped members divide tasks and create mutual support. Some team members reported the challenge of “clarifying role

¹⁶ Lencioni, *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 30-31.

¹⁷ The first step study group the writer participated in took six months to process. The second group in 2007 took eleven months to process. The first group was initially composed of nine men, and five graduated at the end of the six months. The second group was initially composed of five men and after six weeks, reduced to three men who graduated at the end of eleven months. The three men were on the CRMABC leadership team. The author was an apprentice in the first group and a “trusted servant” who facilitated the second group.

definition and task responsibility between professional support and volunteer support.”¹⁸ William L. White clarifies the roles of professional help, sponsors, “recovery coaches,” and addiction counselors in a recent essay.¹⁹ The CR model recommends four types of T.E.A.M. volunteer support and clarifies the roles of “sponsor” and “accountability partner.”²⁰

At the end of the first year, the author fulfilled the teacher role and identified the need for greater team sophistication to deal with challenges posed by perceived mental illness. The author believed exposure to personality theory and personality typing through the MBTI would help the CRMABC team deal with challenges. The challenges were emotional and required trust as leaders left the program and new leaders emerged. Trust continued as a major team concern because the team experienced two leadership changes in the first twelve months. Information on personality theory and leaders’ personality types facilitated the transition as existing team members assisted new leaders in understanding the MBTI and its application. Transition periods allowed the existing CRMABC leadership group to retake and reconsider the MBTI when it assimilated new team members.

¹⁸ Linn Denson, “Role Differentiation and the CD Counselor in Recovery: Accountability Partners, Sponsors and the Professional” (presentation at T.E.A.M. huddle, Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church, Riverside, CA, March 4, 2008).

¹⁹ William L. White, *Sponsor, Recovery Coach, Addiction Counselor: The Importance of Role Clarity and Role Integrity* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Department of Behavioral health and Mental Retardation Services), <http://www.nacsw.org/Download/CSW/addiction.pdf> (accessed Dec. 4, 2009).

²⁰ Baker, *Celebrate Recovery: Leader’s Guide*, 26-27, 117.

By the third annual leadership retreat in 2008, some CRMABC team leaders had two or three MBTI experiences and used MBTI language that provided insight into human behavior. Established leaders shared their profiles with apprentice leaders who became more informed and conversant with behavioral profile information, understanding, and language. Lencioni writes,

This serves three purposes. First it provides a great opportunity for demonstrating vulnerability with their subordinates. Second, it gives those subordinates real insights into their leaders, so that they'll feel more comfortable providing feedback and interpreting behavior correctly. Third, it [gives] the [leaders] a better understanding of their own profiles, because teaching is one of the best ways of learning.²¹

Leadership Retreat Experience

The third annual CRMABC leadership retreat was a peak experience for the CRMABC leadership team. The author engaged a marriage and family counselor, who had used the MBTI in counseling for over twenty-five years, as a support for the CRMABC leadership team. The counselor gave MBTI inventories to all team members two weeks before the retreat, assessed them, and interpreted the results privately with each leader at different times during the retreat. Eighteen leaders were typed during the third annual retreat including four from an Upland church.

A church in Upland, California, formed a new CR team in 2007, which added a high moment for the CRMABC team experience. The CRMABC leadership team proctored a training seminar for the new team in September of 2007, and Upland launched its CR ministry in November 2007. The Upland church continues operating its

²¹ Lencioni, *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 34.

CR ministry through the devotion of its leadership team and the support of the congregation's pastor. The CRMABC ministry continued operating for another year and ended its service to the community and congregation the week before Christmas 2008.

CRMABC Outcomes and Measurable Results

Jesus Christ is the center for Christians, and their trusting relationships with him place him at the center of all things. As Darrell Johnson writes, "At the center of the Universe is a relationship."²² Central to this relationship with Christ is confession of believers' need for him, weakness as human beings after the fall, and trust in Jesus as their deepest security. Jesus is the center of all things and all things are connected through him because God holds creation together, and life together in Christ is the best human option. Humans were created for one another and are redeemed through relationship. The relationships with God and others are based in and depend on trust, and the thesis of this paper asserts that trust is essential in a recovery ministry.

The CRMABC ministry functioned for four-plus years and through four leadership cohorts. The three initial cohorts were built on trust, but the fourth and final cohort was dysfunctional and resulted in the demise of the ministry because a lack of trust undermined the leadership team. Over the four plus years, the team had eight different people in various leadership roles, but during the last year of operation the team encountered interpersonal trust challenges it could not overcome. This challenge involved the addition of a dysfunctional couple whose participation destroyed group trust and

²² Johnson, *Experiencing the Trinity*, i.

undermined the ministry. This experience confirms this paper's thesis that trust is essential to a recovery ministry.

The CRMABC leadership team trained and supported CR ministries at two other churches. One of the churches participated in two one-and-a-half day leadership training retreats, and leaders from the other church observed two evening meetings and launched a CR ministry. A third church began the process but did not embrace the leadership training because the pastor resisted the formation of the ministry.

The CRMABC's greatest result was the maintenance of a trustful relationship of believers that lived in fellowship and served in Jesus for others; however, these experiences were paradoxical:

1. Even with the demise of CRMABC with its ultimate failure of trust, several members continue in relationships of trust.
2. While the group experienced the trauma of trust failure, the circle of trust continued as a safe place in the midst of distrust.
3. Sacred trust continues in the hearts of four believers in spite of their suffering for Jesus and with others.

The MBTI as a trust-building tool contributed to the CRMABC and beyond into other congregations:

1. The group experienced joy, laughter, and hilarity with the discovery that personality types differ, are normal and human, and contribute to the health of the group.
2. The group benefitted from the MBTI's articulate, common language about personality.

3. The group realized that one person can sabotage trust in a leadership group and threaten the life of the community.
4. The group demonstrated that trust in Jesus and others is the foundation of a recovery ministry.

The CRMABC produced measurable results:

1. The CRMABC ministry leadership team was founded, established, and sustained over four and a half years through three leadership cohorts. During this time:
 - Over 250 people participated in the ministry.
 - Over 150 participants experienced gender specific open share small groups.
 - Over 60 participants experienced closed step study groups.
 - Over 30 participants gained leadership instruction, support, and experience.
 - Over 30 participants gained leadership apprentice experience.
2. Two other churches began CR ministries and were assisted and supported by the CRMABC leadership team. A third church explored the possibility of a CR ministry but declined.
 - One of the churches participated in two half-day leadership-training retreats.
 - One church sent its leaders to participate in two CRMABC evenings and then launched a CR program.
3. Leadership team cohesion was enhanced and morale lifted when use of the MBTI stimulated a desire to learn more about personality types.
 - Of the four mentors and four apprentices in the ultimate cohort, seven sought more information about personality types. One submitted to the typing process,

responded with passivity and suspicion, and later challenged group trust and cohesion.

- The author initially typed nine people.
 - A certified marriage and family therapist typed eighteen.
4. Building trust among the leadership team through use of the MBTI and the Lencioni model of overcoming team dysfunctions operated for four-plus years.
- Trust building began at the first annual retreat.
 - The author employed a slow, non-threatening process while applying Lencioni's model of trust as a base for sustaining group life and the MBTI as a trust-building tool.
5. A marriage and family therapist emphasized relational skills based on Lencioni's model and the MBTI.
- Eighteen people were typed employing the MBTI ahead of the third annual retreat by the family therapist.
 - The leadership from the daughter CR ministry participated in the retreat and personality typing.
 - The family counselor presented on personality, the MBTI, personality in the Bible, fear, trust, and risk taking in ministry and Christian service.
 - The family counselor and his wife, a doctoral prepared family therapist, were available to team members.

6. Employment of the MBTI:

- awakened the understanding that counseling professions recognize many normal personality types,
- opened attitudes toward counselors as resources for help,
- opened attitudes of forgiveness of others,
- inspired participants to trust Christian marriage and family therapists and counselors and their biblical insight for living and healing.

The INFP personality type was dominant among group members on each use of the MBTI. Renee Baron describes the INFP personality:

INFP's are gentle, calm, easygoing, and affirming. They pursue their inner values, are open to new ideas but can be inflexible when one of their core values feels violated. Integrity and commitment to what they believe in is essential. They have a strong inner life and complex feelings. INFP's can be hard to understand because their feelings and passionate convictions are mostly on the inside, so what is most important with them is shared with only a few.²³

Baron further describes the INFP personality type as persons who:

- Value authenticity and depth in relationships. . . .
- Are loyal, devoted, and committed to family and friends[, and] integrity in close relationships is among their most cherished values. . . .
- Are reticent, reserved, and relate best one-on-one or with a small group of close friends. . . .
- Can be entertaining and whimsical when they feel comfortable. . . .
- Have the capacity to nurture, encourage, validate and affirm others. . . .
- Appreciate those people who take the time to understand their dreams, goals and aspirations. . . .
- Are **often in conflict** between the need for inner solitude and a desire for connection with a few others. . . .
- Are deeply caring but can appear indifferent and/or antisocial. . . .

²³ Renee Baron, *What Type Am I: Discover Who You Really Are* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 144.

- Can either lose themselves by focusing on others or be focused on their own dreams [so] that they are oblivious to others' needs. . . .
- Will often present others with their final decision rather than discussing issues as they arise. . . .
- Can be sensitive about their environments, dislike loud noises and loud people who interrupt their inner concentration. . . .
- Want a partner who shares their values and goals; are **often disappointed** if their loved one's ideals and pleasures don't match theirs. . . .
- Are cautious about making a commitment but once made, it is usually long-lasting.²⁴

Lencioni's model of overcoming team dysfunction and use of the MBTI provided a foundation for group trust-building, but the CRMABC ministry ended as group trust dissolved. Lencioni reports a similar experience:

The head of sales for one particular executive team we worked with decided that vulnerability wasn't his thing. He announced to the team, "Listen, it took me years to trust my wife, so I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for me to trust you guys." Everyone laughed it off, but the CEO realized that this wasn't going to change without some work.

So, over the course of a few months (which he later would admit was a little too long), the CEO unsuccessfully pushed the sales VP to open up to the team and earn their trust. Finally, he managed the reluctant executive out of the company, and was surprised to watch his team change almost overnight. The trust among the executives, and the speed and quality of their decisions, improved dramatically. **All because of one person.**

And that is a testament to the power of vulnerability, and the need for unanimity. Everyone on a team has to participate. That doesn't mean that everyone will do it the same way. . . . [I]f one member of a team is unwilling to be open about weaknesses, mistakes, and issues, it will have a profound impact on everyone else.²⁵

The CRMABC leadership team included two members who lacked trust and undermined the group's trust level, and the team experienced an impasse and paralysis over the next nine months. In the final five months, group cohesion dissolved and the

²⁴ Ibid., 144-145.

²⁵ Lencioni, *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 34-35.

ministry faced overwhelming challenges. This experience confirms the paper's thesis that trust is essential in a recovery ministry.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The author of this paper demonstrates that trust is necessary in a Christ centered addiction recovery ministry. Launching and sustaining the ministry required a deep commitment to ministering in weakness because the ministry lacked experienced leadership. The first trust is that “God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor. 5:19a). The second trust is that “[he does] not impute our trespasses to us; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19b). Vulnerability-based trust based on incarnational commitment to follow Jesus Christ sustains a recovery ministry.

The hallmark of authentic Christian ministry is Christ’s weakness. Vulnerability-based trust is Christian weakness and operates through the power of the Holy Spirit in a Christ centered recovery ministry. Participants confess weakness in the first three steps of Alcoholics Anonymous that reflects and aligns with a personal identity based on Jesus’ weakness.

The Celebrate Recovery ministry by John Baker at Saddleback Community Church incorporates AA’s twelve steps into an addiction recovery ministry, utilizes New Testament concepts, and conforms with the evangelical Christian tradition. Baker’s ministry at Saddleback interprets AA’s twelve steps as eight principles, which he believes parallel the Beatitudes of Jesus and support Jesus’ spirituality as a ministry of weakness.

The application of Patrick Lencioni's leadership team building model and the Myers Briggs Temperament Inventory provides tools for establishing and building vulnerability-based trust in a recovery ministry. They help sustain the ministry that requires much human interaction with addicted people.

The Christ centered Celebrate Recovery ministry operated for four plus years at Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church. The leadership team practiced vulnerability-based trust, adopted a theology of weakness, practiced the principles and structures of the twelve step Celebrate Recovery ministry, and employed Lencioni's model for establishing, building, and sustaining a leadership team.

Three leadership cohorts served the ministry with a change of eight team leaders during the four-year period and provided three years of effective service. Suspicion, distrust, and irresolvable conflict developed in the fourth year and created a crisis that ended the ministry. The strife introduced by two dysfunctional leaders caused the breakdown in trust and subsequent conflict, and this experience supports this paper's thesis that trust is essential in sustaining a recovery ministry.

The disintegration of the leadership team deepened and accelerated when MABC's pastoral staff did not assist the leadership team through its crisis. The pastoral staff supported the ministry in the three-month pre-launch period and its first six months of operation. Subsequently, MABC's major supporting contribution was the provision of physical facilities.

CRMABC produced many positive results. For example, two other churches adopted and operated the program and received instruction, modeling, support, and

sponsorship from the CRMABC leadership team. Both ministries continue their recovery ministry in 2010 and serve congregations and local communities. A third congregation sought training and support from the CRMABC leadership team,.

This paper demonstrates the MBTI facilitated participants' understanding of personality type and group process, helped create trust, and promoted cohesion. The MBTI experience deepened the understanding of personality and facilitated team leaders' interactions with one another and program participants. The team's use of Lencioni's model helped build trust among CRMABC leaders, and the five points of his pyramidal model provided metrics to assess the direction and needs of the recovery ministry.

CRMABC's experience demonstrates the positive impact of a Christian marriage and family therapist skilled in the MBTI. The recruitment of a Christian counselor with biblical insight and understanding deepened trust in the mentoring and the protégé teams, reinforced instruction, and provided support during a one-and-half-day retreat that helped launch a sister CR ministry.

Desired Outcomes

The author had three personal goals for the CRMABC ministry at its inception in June-July 2004: (a) the ministry would function for two or three years, (b) no single person would assume or command a hierarchical leadership role, and (c) the author would not fill a ministry leader role. The CRMABC ministry team fulfilled the first two goals. In regard to the third goal, the author emphasized relationships, served as a sponsor, supported others as accountability partner, and answered late night and early

morning phone calls and visits. These demands were daunting. The author assumed too much responsibility and did not lean sufficiently on the group and the team for participation and support. Ultimately the author shared leadership roles with another person, and this helped preserve trust and team cohesion. It also lightened the author's load.

The theology of weakness helped build trust through humility, and vulnerability-based trust held the ministry together through difficult times because confession and humility are contagious. CR operates through circles of trust that create safe places where a theology of weakness preserves and renews the ministry through humility and confession. The recovery ministry reached an unforeseen and unpredicted end. The experience, however, provided riches in human service and divine awareness among participants, especially team leaders. They came to know God, themselves, and others in ways they never imagined possible.

A Review of Chapters 1 through 6

Chapter 1 described the crisis of trust and confidence from the largest of institutions to the smallest of teams present in the North American culture and church. This fundamental crisis of human faith and trust enters into personal relations and personhood.

Chapter 2 described a biblical theology of weakness adopted as a theological base for the project and paper. In recent decades, a theology of power infiltrated church

practice and undermined Jesus' way of weakness. Jesus' way of weakness and theology of weakness were distorted and functionally lost in many church circles.

Chapter 3 presented a history and development of AA beginning in the 1930s through the middle 1950s because it is central to understanding CR as a re-evangelizing of the principles of AA. AA universalized Christian principles movement. The AA movement echoes Dietrich Bonhoeffer's writings on "religionless Christianity," which coincided with the founding of AA.

Chapter 4 described John Baker's re-evangelization of the AA twelve steps into a program called Celebrate Recovery. CR harmonized with Rick Warren's pastoral experience at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, in the 1990s and 2000s. CR's guidelines suggest use of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as a tool in the S.H.A.P.E. interview. Patrick Lencioni also recommends use of the MBTI in his model for building trust in secular, industrial leadership and management teams. The CRMABC leaders used Baker's program, the MBTI, and Lencioni's model in their addition recovery ministry.

Chapter 5 reported CRMABC results and demonstrated that a Christ-centered recovery ministry based on trust and a theology of weakness functioned effectively for three years with minimal church support. The recover ministry declined in the fourth year due to erosion of trust and the introduction of distrust into the leadership team. Chapter 5 reports qualitative and quantitative program results. For example, the program applied the Lencioni model to the CR's leadership T.E.A.M. concept, and the two components

proved compatible. The author introduced the Lencioni model through a minimalist approach and tested the effectiveness and efficacy of the MBTI and the Lencioni model.

CRMABC leadership used the MBTI and Lencioni's model, and the team functioned in trust and confidence for three years. The MBTI is used widely in business and academic institutions, has established validity and reliability based on decades of research, and is easily and inexpensively available through Humanmetrics.com. It provides a common language, and its designation as an inventory comports with steps found in AA and CR, especially step four.

Further Inquiry

Several questions bear further inquiry:

1. How can team members and team leaders use the insights and conclusions from MBTI-identified personality types as compared to personal inventories described in step four?
2. How might the MBTI and Lencioni model facilitate trust-building between recovery teams and church administration?
3. Could pastors use personality typing of their pastoral leadership teams to promote trust among pastoral team members?
4. How does the development of trust among pastoral team members impact congregations?
5. What other instruments and trust-building tools could be used in recovery ministry programs?

6. Can the negative influence of individual team leaders be isolated or negated to avoid a recovery ministry collapse?
7. What is the role of a sponsoring church in a recovery ministry program?

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