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"Helping People Find Freedom in Christ" A Journey Toward Fulfilling Christian Ministry in Community

Clifford E. Watt

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“HELPING PEOPLE FIND FREEDOM IN CHRIST”

A JOURNEY TOWARD FULFILLING
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN COMMUNITY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF
THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

CLIFFORD E. WATT

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to the people who have stood by me through the entire journey. To my wife Carolyn, who has encouraged me to continue my call and my studies through these 35 years of marriage—sacrificing her own dreams in the process. And to my children, Mark and Aimee, who endured the life of pastor’s kids, and have shared their father—the perpetual student—with so many who were always so needy, and this through their entire childhoods—forfeiting attention and resources that should have been theirs.

DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

CLIFFORD E. WATT

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A JOURNEY TOWARD FULFILLING CHRISTIAN MINISTRY
IN COMMUNITY**

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have molded and influenced my life—all of whom have, in turn, made me the man I am becoming. It would be impossible to acknowledge every person who has contributed a brush stroke to the painting that is my life, but not making the attempt would be a travesty.

I must begin with my parents. They have given me such an advantage in life. They demonstrated a life that takes faith seriously. In addition, my mother taught me how to get along with people. Her repeated biblical quotes molded my values from the very beginning. One of her favorites was: “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”¹ My dad, a pastor with a propensity for healing church splits, taught me to listen for the “still small voice”² of God. It is impossible to calculate the number of pitfalls his wisdom has kept me from falling into. These two principles have been touchstones that have influenced me all through my life.

My wife, Carolyn has done without most of our married life. She did not marry a pastor—my call came after ten years of marriage. She is the one who confirmed the direction that I sensed to enter the doctoral program in the first place, and she has encouraged me from the depths of emotional wounds that could have commanded her entire consideration.

Ed Crawford taught me how to think—to take my belief system out of my back pocket and examine it without fear. He was the first to direct me toward the freedom I

¹ Romans 12:18 KJV

² 1 Kings 19:12 KJV

have found in Christ for myself. It was he who revealed the great schism in my theological tradition between the revivalists and the Wesleyan thinkers.

Dr. Rob Staples showed me the next logical step—to think relationally. He brought compassion to the discipline of theology. He showed me that it is possible to see sin as alienation from God, rather than mere acts of disobedience.

Dr. Morris Weigelt brought the theory of relational holiness to reality for me. Whether it was a lecture on the book of Hebrews, or a practical exercise in a spiritual formation class, he demonstrated devotion in real time. I owe to him the start my journey that is unlocking my inner person to this very day.

Dr. Ed Robinson was the first to awaken me to the reality of postmodern thought. From him I understood why the world looked as it did to me. He encouraged me to be comfortable in my own skin—that my gifts are things of beauty.

Charles Moore is my friend and book scout. I have journeyed with him as we have explored how faith looks in our relationship as brothers in Christ. He has taught me so much through our men's ministry small group. We have discovered so much walking arm in arm—and loving the journey. He introduced me to “We Really Do Need Each Other,” by Reuben Welch—an introduction that has confirmed my own inclination that it is the journey rather than the destination that is important.

I owe Dr. Chuck Conniry for his willingness to put up with a guy who had made this dissertation a career choice. He supplied a thumb in the back and the encouragement to finish the course. He also taught me that I must not only cut some corners, but how to know which ones to cut. Without his guidance this project would have simply remained electronic spasms in an aging brain.

Then, the “Patience of Job” award must go to Dr. Larry Shelton. He has patiently worked with me to document the premises of this model—suggesting sources I had never considered. He guided me through some rough personal days with the compassion necessary to weep with me, and then to nudge me to reengage with the project.

More than anyone else, I want to acknowledge Jesus Christ, who has given to me without finding fault. He has gifted me to see the world a little differently than anyone I know. He has given me the compassion to invest my life in something far greater than I ever thought possible. He has been my friend—knowing my innermost thoughts he has chosen to forgive me and guide me down the path toward peace and joy. No simple thank-you could ever suffice, and giving back to him what he already owns as a sacrifice of love and gratitude seems so inadequate—yet that is all I have to give—so this I do gratefully.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore a biblically based set of principles that will empower believers to have freedom in their Christian lives. There is an underlying belief contained in the Bible that it is natural for a believer to do ministry. Jesus said: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.”³ He also reminded us: “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”⁴

The problem with this premise is demonstrated in every day life by the inability of people who profess faith in Jesus Christ to do the ministry that Jesus said is expected. Chapter one deals with our mission in regard to these under achievers. Chapter two lays out a positive setting that will encourage healing to occur. Chapter three explores mechanisms for growth toward maturity in community. Chapter four plats out what the neighborhood we refer to as the body of Christ should look like. Chapter five covers the nuts and bolts of team ministry as it could look in the local church. The final chapter reveals some entry points into the family of faith, as demonstrated through ministry.

This is a model that has been developed in a real life setting through practical ministry at Gladstone Church of the Nazarene. The results are not intended to demonstrate this as the only legitimate model for the body of Christ. It is intended to show a biblically based model that can bring freedom in Christ to those who have been

³ John 15:14

frustrated by systems that hinder involvement and development, or have been incapacitated by wounds of the past. This model is a snapshot of an ever-changing organism that is the body of Christ. What is captured here has already changed because it is a living thing—a journey not a destination.

⁴ John 14:12

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INTRODUCTION

It was 1988—my first assignment as a senior pastor. The church was old, small, and struggling. This description was fitting of the building, the organization and the parishioners. A transplanted dancehall, salvaged from the previous century, served as the sanctuary, and was attached to the “new” Sunday school wing—added in the sixties. The original cedar shakes could be seen peeking through deteriorating asphalt shingles that had once covered them with pride. It was obvious that someone had sprayed a fresh coat of white paint over the aging shakes that comprised the siding. It was just as obvious that little care was taken to shield the windows in the process. All of this was nestled behind a car lot in a blue collar community that had become known to the rest of the metropolitan area for its depressed economy. But I was going to make a difference here.

Reality began to set in when I discovered that my predecessor had given pastoral calling a whole new meaning. We never did get a complete list, but I was amazed at his stamina. As a result, much of our time was spent healing relationships in very delicate circumstances. I was also suffering under delusions planted by an “A” type personality preaching professor. He had taught us to spend no less than 20 hours on each sermon, and we were to preach three sermons a week, (math was not his long suit).

A new sensation took hold of me for the first time in my life. It is best described by an old west event in which a scoundrel was captured, each limb was secured to a horse headed in opposite directions, and then a gun was fired. As distressing as this sensation is, it is amazing how one can become accustomed to it over time.

This is where George comes into the picture. George was 82 years old, and he had been successful in business. He had managed a regional rail hub for the Union Pacific

Railroad, and after his retirement he volunteered as a missionary to Africa. My story begins after he had come home and settled into a local church. He had become a member of the church four years before I arrived, and had acquired a reputation of being a difficult person. After a few months, George started coming to my office two or three times a month expressing his desire to go calling with me. George had a different focus than mine with his calling plan.

In addition to all the rest, I was in the middle of a degree program, and was already cutting corners just to get the minimum done. His desire was to spend three hours a week visiting the lonely ones in the church. In order to keep the peace, I made myself available two afternoons a month, and we had some good fellowship in the process. But I began to sense growing frustration in George.

Finally, one day the inevitable happened. In his face I could see the tension of his frustration and resolution. He said, “Pastor, I am very concerned that we are not spending enough time calling on the elderly.”

In one of those moments of inspiration that creates hours of reflective wonder, I said, “George, generally, when the Lord reveals a ministry need, it is because he wants the person given that insight to fulfill the need personally.” The frustration etched on his face began to change to one of discovery as the words soaked in. His paradigm had just changed. He had moved from being a frustrated “pastoral supervisor” to a gifted and motivated servant of Jesus Christ—called to ministry.

Though this incident occurred some twenty-five years ago, I think I have just begun to realize why that statement had the kind of impact that would change the focus of this one man and eventually the entire church body. In the pages that follow I will

attempt to put on paper what I have come to understand about the life changing dynamics that I have seen take place in those like George, who are willing to adopt them.

Frustrated Christians, who Marshall Shelly describes in his book as “Well-Intentioned Dragons”¹ are often seen as the enemy, to be tolerated or eliminated from places of prominence. But what if they are really misdirected Christians who could become happy and fulfilled in the ministry God has gifted and called them to? What would happen if we could bring direction and healing to them? What if people really are in love with Jesus Christ and really do want to show their gratitude by investing the talents he has given them for use in his kingdom? Could it be that these frustrated people, who are commonly referred to as problem people, may have simply stalled in the process of turning that desire into reality, creating the frustration revealed in so many who are like George? The purpose of this study is to explore a biblically based set of principles that will create an opportunity to move participants from the frustration of the “American way” that so much of the church in these United States of America has adopted. If the gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to change people, it should create a vehicle that can transform a person from a duty bound critic into a joy filled minister of Jesus Christ.

I invite you to consider some of the possible reasons that people stall in their ministry journey, and some suggested ways of helping to illuminate a path toward the kind of healing that will enable the journey to resume. I have discovered that many times what is interpreted as obstinate behavior is often a defense mechanism rooted in fear. I have observed that the root of this fear can be past failures brought about by poor self-

¹ Marshall Shelly, *Well-Intentioned Dragons: Ministering to Problem People in the Church* (Carol Stream: Christianity Today, Inc. and Word Inc., 1985).

esteem, poor theology, poor training, or even a lack of empowerment. The purpose of this fourteen-year experiment was to see if the systems cited below could create a pathway to healing, and freedom to demonstrate love for Christ through ministry.

Poor self esteem can be caused by any of the three issues mentioned above, but it can also be a result of emotional injury inflicted in the past. Lewis B. Smedes discusses many causes of poor self esteem, which he attributes to shame. This shame molds our self perception. The shame many of us carry through life began at a very young age. “When a child feels disowned from one day to the next, she blames herself. If she is not owned by her parents, it can only be that she is not nice enough, good enough, beautiful enough to be worth owning. Not by them and, consequently, not by herself.”² The longer and more ingrained an unhealthy thought becomes, the more it becomes a habit, and these thought habits create self perception. “The impact of your thought life goes well beyond the creation of serenity and happiness or the removal of vexation. It creates a foundation deep within your soul upon which your very character is built. Your whole being is shaped by what resides in your head.”³

Poor theology can cause a person to become overly introspective—causing narcissism on one hand or a sense of personal worthlessness on the other, or even to develop a critical spirit—causing those around us to quit trying.

Graceless religion tells us that, to be acceptable, we must live up to the customs and shun the taboos of its tradition. It shames us when we do what it forbids and do not do what it requires. Our religion shaped self easily becomes a self of hypocrisy and appearances; we feel compelled to make up for what we lack inside by obeying all its prescriptions on the

² Lewis B. Smedes, *Shame and Grace* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 76.

³ Archibald D. Hart, *Habits of the Mind: Ten Exercises to Renew Your Thinking* (Waco: Word Books, 1996), 23.

outside. Graceless religion creates the illusion that if we only follow the letter of the rules, we will be acceptable, and that if we fail we will be rejected and despised.⁴

As a result, it is necessary to correct grace concepts as well as community concepts. Correct theological thinking helps to give a sense of how each person fits into the bigger picture. This paradigm shift is based on 1 Corinthians, chapter 12 and other related biblical passages. This paradigm can only flourish in an atmosphere where there is acceptance, trust and freedom to learn through failure—in other words a true grace community.

Poor training is a much easier issue to address than long-term dysfunction or poor theology, but trust must be established as a foundational piece before the methods of training can be employed. Only when and if long-term dysfunction and poor theological paradigms are addressed can a system of training be pursued. This is not to say that each must be fully corrected, since we are each a work in progress. The system I have chosen is based on a vision of team ministries as a method of ministry implementation.

Empowerment is again based on trust, so this builds over a lifetime of positive input, and may be undermined to a degree by every negative perception. “Trust provides the motivation and energy that makes it possible for organizations to work.”⁵ And as with each of the preceding steps, empowerment only happens in an atmosphere where people are free to experiment and learn to discern direction for themselves.

For the journey to continue, a second area of exploration is required. Each person must develop a vital spiritual life. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry has said: “If you want to

⁴ Smedes, *Shame and Grace*, 39.

⁵ Warren Bennis and Joan Goldsmith, *Learning To Lead* (Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1997), 120.

build a ship, don't summon people to buy wood, prepare tools, distribute jobs, and organize the work, rather teach people the yearning for the wide, boundless ocean.”⁶ Our desire is not to staff an organization. Our desire is to create opportunities for Christians to demonstrate love through ministry. It only makes sense that our goal is to create an atmosphere where love can grow. To facilitate this, some healthy models of spiritual formation will be briefly explored. This is done for two reasons. First, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ affirms a person's intrinsic value, since we are created in his image.⁷ When we realize it is the person who is important, not the productivity, it relieves the pressure caused by past failures and the fear of future ones. Second, a personal relationship with Jesus gives direction in life. “The overarching goal of all pastoral care and counseling (and of all ministry) is to liberate, empower, and nurture wholeness centered in Spirit.”⁸ Classical and contemporary approaches to spiritual development can help in this process, and since there is no substitute for contemplative prayer in the life of a believer, this step is pivotal.

Just as Maslow formulated the hierarchy of needs,⁹ these steps are also to be seen as progressive steps. The first step must be engaged before people are ready to take this second step. This second step is designed to create an introduction to contemplative prayer for those who are ready, and will be accomplished by suggesting a structure for

⁶ Christian A. Schwarz, and Christoph Schalk, *Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998), 26.

⁷ Genesis 1:27.

⁸ Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling* (Nashville: Abington Press, 1992), 26.

⁹ Abraham Maslow, “A Theory of Human Motivation,” *Psychological Review Journal*, 1943.

daily, weekly, and monthly quiet times, each is designed to help the worshiper listen long enough to discern affirmation from our Risen Lord. Everything hangs on this step.

An additional benefit of quiet times, which I will refer to as Sabbaths, is an uncanny leading through the “still small voice”¹⁰ of our Risen Lord—a leading that is to be respected and encouraged by leadership at all levels.

A third area of exploration is the transformation of the body of Christ into a biblical model. This design for ministry is found in the Bible itself, as well as secondary sources that deal with the subject. The model I will explore is a modified system of team ministries. The term “team ministries” has been used for other systems of administration, but with different starting points. I have started with the basic idea as developed by John Maxwell, but I will suggest a subtle, but vital difference in how the biblical model differs in principle at its very core.

The first emphasis that differs from Maxwell’s model is that Christ, rather than the pastor, is the head of the church. Many have affirmed this starting point in speech, but in practice the pastor becomes *the* conduit of divine truth and vision. In the system that follows, the church is released into the control of Christ directly. This is why a lifestyle of spiritual vitality is so critical to its success. A bridge will be built to connect this principle with 1 Corinthians 12 and other selected passages. “Building teams does not begin with a certain kind of technique; it begins with a certain kind of heart.”¹¹ Wayne Cordeiro, pastor of New Hope Christian Fellowship in Honolulu, Hawaii, also improves the discussion by restoring the living organism model to the church, where John Maxwell

¹⁰ 1 Kings 19:12, KJV.

¹¹ Wayne Cordeiro, *Doing Church as a Team* (Ventura: Regal Books, 2001), 177.

used a very rigid business model with the Pastor as CEO. John Ed Mathison, pastor at Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church, in Montgomery, Alabama, adds what he calls “Niche-pickin’” to the equation. “We believe everybody has a niche God has given them, and each person is encouraged to pick their niche.”¹² He says: “When laypeople pick a niche that uses their spiritual gifts and find a ministry that matters to them, they lose interest in nit-picking.”¹³

The second emphasis in this area of exploration is a biblical model of servant leadership. Maxwell’s system uses a business model of leadership designed to organize and control ministry. Mathison’s system releases people to discover where they fit. Galloway’s compilation is designed to grow the church through teams. Cordeiro seems best to capture the heart of the matter—releasing the dream. Servant leadership in this context is designed to release individuals to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, employing the leader to empower and resource those under his or her care. The primary model of this leadership style is Jesus himself.

The fourth area of exploration is the use of ministry teams as a useful structure to facilitate fluid ministry empowerment in the local church as opposed to a more static board/committee system. This system requires ongoing training, mentoring and personnel support. We will look at the three models already mentioned, along with Natural Church Development’s implementation. Then we will look at the system we have set up at Gladstone Church of the Nazarene. Examples of failure will be cited as well as

¹² Dale Galloway, ed. *Building Teams in Ministry* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2000), 51.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 52.

those of success, since failure can be as powerful a teacher as success. In this process, we will look at the five dysfunctions of teams as revealed by Patrick Lencioni, president of The Table Group: 1) Absence of trust, 2) Fear of conflict, 3) Lack of commitment, 4) Avoidance of accountability, and 5) Inattention to results.¹⁴

The method used to form teams and to evaluate priorities will also be investigated, along with team leader recruitment and evaluation. We have learned many things through early failures. We discovered that we needed to change paradigms from a corporate system of boards and committees to team structures in this process. In the beginning we used Natural Church Development materials to train team leaders in regular monthly meetings that included lecture and group problem solving. Their system was selected because of its emphasis on the church as a gardener, whose mission it is to make the soil healthy, allowing new plants to grow healthy. Team leaders were given authority to define mission within the overarching mission of our local church, and were encouraged to keep the mission and method fluid. This means that teams morph from month to month, and year to year. As a result, descriptions of teams are nearly impossible to keep current, but productivity and involvement continues to be very high.

This vision is a fresh approach to ministry in the church of Jesus Christ. It is not a new vision, but one that has been abandoned for a very long time—a vision rooted in the principles Jesus offered to his disciples. I hope you will enjoy the journey as we visit the steps that form a path from frustrating dysfunction to fulfillment in ministry—which is a lifestyle of freedom in Christ. Since this is a work in progress, the last chapter can never be written, but I hope this progress report is worth the time invested.

¹⁴ Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc., 2004), 195-220.

CHAPTER 1

DISCERNING WHEAT FROM WEEDS

From a Christian perspective, we can learn a great deal from the principles that Jesus taught. While it may be a mistake to copy what Jesus did, the principles he taught, we believe, are timeless. We may not be able to dress in sandals and drag a gaggle of misfits across the wilderness, but we can invest our lives in others, using the unremarkable events in life to demonstrate the truly remarkable truths of the kingdom.

In my tradition, a great deal of effort is given to evaluating individuals for ministry. Supporting documentation is found in appendix A. The “Covenant of Christian Character,” is taken from the Bible, and is easily verified. However, included in appendix B, the “Covenant of Christian Conduct” is a prime example of the Americanization of the gospel. The pastor of a church is charged with maintaining the purity of the church he pastored. This duty is described in the Manual:

500. The objectives of church discipline are to sustain the integrity of the church, to protect the innocent from harm, to protect the effectiveness of the witness of the church, to warn and correct the careless, to bring the guilty to salvation, to rehabilitate the guilty, to restore to effective service those who are rehabilitated, and to protect the reputation and resources of the church. Members of the church who do violence to the Covenant of Christian Character or the Covenant of Christian Conduct, or who willfully and continuously violate their membership vows, should be dealt with kindly yet faithfully, according to the grievousness of their offenses....

501.2. The person who has authority to respond is determined by the position within the church of the individual or individuals who may be involved in misconduct as follows:

<i>Person Implicated</i>	<i>Person with Authority to Respond</i>
Nonmember	Pastor of local church where the conduct in question takes place.
Layperson	Pastor of church where layperson is a member. ¹

Set this lengthy list of requirements included in a modern day church, against the requirements set down for converted Gentiles by the council of Jerusalem.

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.²

The emphasis seems to have shifted from inclusion into the family for continued growth and development, to defending the organization from any kind of danger from within or any black eye from without. It could be argued that, at least in my tradition, the church has become more American than Christian—more fixated on flawless performance rather than on growth through experience. Donald Dayton postulates that the American Civil War era is one of the main contributors to this drift. He explains the process this way:

The Civil War also resolved—at least on the surface—the most profoundly social of the reform issues that revivalism had supported. Left after the war were the temperance movement, the “purity crusade,” the anti-Masonry campaign, and related issues. These concerns were more susceptible to translation into questions of morality detached from the larger social framework. As a result, one detects in the post-Civil War period a growing concern for personal purity, understood increasingly as

¹ *Manual (2005-2009)* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2005), 220-221. This citation is incomplete. Cf. Turabian.

² Acts 15:28.

“no smoking, no drinking, no dancing, and no gambling”—the elements that came to characterize the revivalistic ethic of later days.³

Having seen first hand the damage this kind of “perfectionist” thinking has done, we looked for a paradigm shift in our local church body. We are currently working with five families that have cautiously joined our family who were disenfranchised as a result of various requirements that did not fit their ethical values systems, either politically or socially. They have helped us redefine the difference between biblically based morality and culturally based social and political values. As a result of their insight, we have opted to get back to the basics.

Where better to start than with the founder of Christianity—Jesus Christ. The first principle we considered is one of the “kingdom of heaven” parables:

²⁴Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.

²⁶When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

²⁷“The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’

²⁸“An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

²⁹“No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”⁴

In this parable, Jesus reveals a more productive focus with regard to kingdom business. He was focused on tending to the entire crop that presents itself, and culling

³ Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1976), 124.

⁴ Matt. 13:24-30.

only after full maturity is reached. We have adopted this principle as the way church should operate, and not just as a limited vision of salvation, but an overarching principle for considering ministry participants at all levels in the church.

Since it is often difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between those who are *unwilling* to minister and those who are *unable* to minister,⁵ our approach has been to withhold judgment, and to keep the door of opportunity open. We have also observed that an environment of withholding judgment is one of the most difficult environments to maintain over the long term. This is one area where Natural Church Development has been so helpful. The idea is that growth in the church is the result of the activity of the Spirit of God. As the church, our function is to remove impediments that hinder growth.⁶ This shift in focus has changed our emphasis from evaluating individuals to evaluating the growth environment—exchanging a bad habit for a good one.

Impediments to Be Removed?

Conventional wisdom has often taught that church leadership is charged with keeping the church free of those who would impede the growth of the church. Leadership conferences like Pasadena Consultation – Homogeneous Unit Principle, have attempted to define the elements that accelerate church growth. One such principle is that a homogeneous church grows best.⁷

⁵ Shelley, *Well Intentioned Dragons*, 11.

⁶ Christian A. Schwarz and Christoph Schalk, *Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998), 10-11.

⁷ Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. LOP1: Pasadena Consultation – *Homogeneous Unit Principle* (Pasadena, CA: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1978).

Another such principle is that effective leaders follow a certain profile. When I was attending Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs, I went to work for a parachurch organization in the business of enriching marriages. During my time there, one of the management team retired, and I was asked to fill in. After several months of “proving myself,” the general manager said he would like to consider me as the permanent replacement, but first I would have to take a personality profile to see if I would be able to do the job they had been so happy with. A couple of weeks later, I was called to his office and told that they would not offer the job to me, since I did not have the right personality to lead that part of the ministry. The theory was that only certain kinds of personalities made good leaders—I did not have such a personality. After twenty-three years of leadership—fourteen at the church I now serve, I still wonder what I could have done without the personality deficiency that kept me from that position. What growth could have occurred, in the church I now pastor, beyond doubling in size under my leadership? I also wonder why God would create me with such a deficient personality, and then call me to lead a part of His church? I guess He has much to learn about good American leadership.

Another principle was taught by John Maxwell at a leadership conference held at Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa, ID, in 1988. It was called PALCON (**P**astors **a**nd **L**eaders **C**onference). In that conference he taught that when a pastor encountered opposition, an effective way of dealing with that opposition was to gather a loyal group, designed to roll over any opposition. The idea was to weaken the political clout of the opposition, and once marginalized, the leader could institute the desired program.

The principles mentioned above may be effective in building a strong organization, but what about the people who are “rolled over”? What about the churches that have died as a result of the trauma inflicted? What about the people who have been disenfranchised? What if they can never be redeemed? Could it be that Jesus understood the gravity of this kind of thinking, and could it be that the principle found in the parable of the weeds cited above, applies here as well?

Our focus at Gladnaz has been to include the principle of another parable of Jesus as well:

⁶Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. ⁷So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’

⁸“‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”⁸

As a result, our first response to difficult people is to enrich the soil they are in, since we understand impediments to be deficiencies in nutrition. This is why it is necessary to assess the atmosphere of the local church.⁹ Jesus expected that his disciples would produce “offspring” similar to what they had become. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”¹⁰ This is not a command, but a statement of fact. This interpretation is based upon the word translated “you will be.” The

⁸ Lk. 13:6-9

⁹ Swartz and Schalk, *Natural Church Development*, 9-11.

¹⁰ Acts 1:8.

word used is ὁσεσθι, which is in the second person, plural, future, *indicative* case.¹¹ If it were a command, it would be in the *imperative* case. Those who refuse to produce may actually be imprisoned by the scars inflicted on them in their past. “Their unhealthy shame blocks their spiritual arteries and keeps grace from getting through. And when it comes, the word of grace they do hear sounds more like judgment than amazing grace. The sweet hour of prayer becomes an hour of shame.”¹² With this understanding, care is taken to create an atmosphere where health can occur without a “drop-dead” date. So time in a healthy environment can create an atmosphere of growth, or reveal the character of a foreign element—a judgment reserved for “harvest.”

Mistaken Identity?

Another area that has fallen in line with the American management style is the issue of identifying the right person for each ministry need. Maxwell includes a section in his T.E.A.M. process. He says: “You can help a person find their place of ministry by looking up their spiritual gift from the following list.”¹³ In the pages that follow, he then lists 173 ministries that fall under 20 spiritual gifts he has identified. He cites *Finding Your Ministry* by Raymond Hurn as the source for the 20 categories. While we have used Hurn’s profile,¹⁴ we have discovered that it is so subjective that it was often used as

¹¹ Harold K. Moulton, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 68.

¹² Smedes, *Shame and Grace*, 77.

¹³ John Maxwell, *Pastor + People = T.E.A.M. Together Experiencing A Ministry* (Bonita, CA: Injoy Ministries, 1988), 14.

¹⁴ Raymond W. Hurn, *Finding Your Ministry*. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1979), 25-33.

leverage to authenticate ministry rather than to inform the legitimate seeker of ministry gifting.

One example of this was a lady who came to our church looking for a place to minister. She had a very stern and dominant personality, and she pointed to a similar profile as validating her as a prophet. She cited this authority as a reason for her stern disposition, and saw no need to grow in her interpersonal skills, since that is the way prophets are. She would avow that God had given her a passage of scripture as a prophetic utterance. The verses cited were often taken completely out of context, distorting their meaning from the original intent. Then to make matters worse, only a few of her prophecies came true. And while these few insights were helpful, her demeanor created a repelling effect that mitigated much of the value. So after creating a great deal of confusion and trauma among the impressionable, she moved on to greener pastures.

These systems that have been used for qualifying or disqualifying people for ministry can be of value as well. The *Ministry Strengths and Gifts Survey*, used for ministry candidates by the Church of the Nazarene, is very helpful in assessing areas a strength and areas where education could strengthen ministry skills.¹⁵ The danger occurs when these tools are used to categorize rather than inform. The result is a cookie-cutter operation that results in people who perceive a call to ministry, but now believe they are not qualified for it. Jesus called a variety of personalities from various strata of society to perform ministry they were unqualified to do. There were fishermen, a Zealot, a tax collector, and these are just the ones that were recorded in the Bible. One such example was a traditionalist named Saul:

¹⁵ “Ministry Strengths and Gifts.” n.d. Available [Online]: <http://nazarenepastor.org/clergyeducation/Default.aspx?tabid=71> [March 2007].

¹³For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.¹⁶

A case can be made that Paul was the correct replacement for Judas Iscariot,¹⁷ but was not even on the ballot.¹⁸ We never again hear of Matthias as an apostle, but Paul seems to infer that he was the true replacement though he was “abnormally born.”¹⁹

I wonder how Saul would have been handled by the modern church—a persecutor of the church and killer of its saints. Or even the converted Paul, an upstart with all kinds of wild ideas. Or would Peter have found favor in today’s church—making rash decisions—leaving Jesus to suffer alone. How about “doubting” Thomas, or even Matthew the tax collector?

Our contention is that each person is called and gifted by our Risen Lord. This is a doctrine that is clearly laid out by Paul in I Corinthians 12:

There are different kinds of gifts, but they are all from the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve but the same Lord to serve. And there are different ways that God works through people but the same God. God works in all of us in everything we do. Something from the Spirit can be seen in each person, for the common good. The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom, and the same Spirit gives another the ability to speak with knowledge. The same Spirit gives faith to one person. And,

¹⁶ Galatians 1:13-17.

¹⁷ Ralph Earle, Harvey Blaney and Charles W. Carter, *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary, Volume IV* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 503-504.

¹⁸ Acts 1:23-26.

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:3-12.

to another, that one Spirit gives gifts of healing. The Spirit gives to another person the power to do miracles, to another the ability to prophesy. And he gives to another the ability to know the difference between good and evil spirits. The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak in different kinds of languages and to another the ability to interpret those languages. One Spirit, the same Spirit, does all these things, and the Spirit decides what to give each person.²⁰

It can be argued that the passage cited above uses the term “Spirit,” which for some could mean something different than our “Risen Lord.” However, out of the 224 times the term “Spirit” is used in the New Testament in the New International Version of the Bible, it is qualified 109 times. Of the times the term is qualified, the Spirit is referred to as the “Holy Spirit” 90 times, the “Spirit of God” 11 times, the “Spirit of Christ” twice, the “Spirit of the Lord” four times and the “Spirit of Jesus” twice.²¹ Paul defines the doctrine of the Spirit more fully in his letter to the Romans:

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.²²

In this passage there is a clear muddling of terms, which may be the point. J.

Kenneth Grider, in his article on the Holy Trinity includes the following:

In Roman Catholic and Anglican and Protestant West, however, we have followed the Athanasian Creed, which declares, “The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten; but

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, NCV.

²¹ Edward L. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger III, *The NIV Complete Concordance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 880-882.

²² Romans 8:9-11.

proceeding.” This double procession of the Holy Spirit (from both the Father and the Son is probably the teaching of certain NT passages. One is Rom. 8:9, where we read of both “the Spirit of God” and “the Spirit of Christ”—which probably means “who proceeds from God,” and “who proceeds from Christ.”²³

Given that our Risen Lord is the one who gifts and calls each person, what remains is the motivation for ministry. John Maxwell focuses on commitment. In fact, to be a member of the church he was pastoring before starting Injoy Ministries full time, he required a written commitment to a specific ministry in the church.²⁴ While commitment may be a good motivator, we have found that a better motivator is contained in Paul’s letter to the Philippians:

¹If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
⁷ but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,

²³ Richard S. Taylor, ed., *Beacon Dictionary of Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1983), 531.

²⁴ Maxell, *T.E.A.M.*, 8-11.

to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.²⁵

Commitment works well when there is some method of accountability, but love and gratitude work not only to achieve the mission, (even when no human is watching), but also fulfill the servant who is involved.

As a result, rather than being a “spiritual cop,” the pastor is understood to be a shepherd—to make sure that the flock is fed and protected from mortal injury. In this role, the pastor organizes the church, and allocates resources to give opportunity to all who profess a call to ministry. It is also understood that failure is a part of the process, since each of us brings limitations to the equation. When there is failure in performance of the mission, much can be learned. When there is failure in the relationship with Christ, humility and dependence can be gained. Paul reminded the Corinthians of these limitations when he wrote: “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”²⁶ These limitations sometimes reveal a flawed understanding of the call to ministry, and sometimes they reveal a flawed implementation of that call.

As a result of these limitations, the pastor is also charged with the responsibility of providing resources designed to refine ministries. It is good to remember that we pastors also have the same kind of limitations as the rest of the flock. I guess that is a part

²⁵ Philippians 2:1-13.

²⁶ 1 Corinthians 13:12

of “walking humbly with your God.”²⁷ Assessing where we are in our journey is often helpful in the process, so evaluation tools are still acceptable if they are limited to assisting growth rather than qualifying or disqualifying ministers.

²⁷ Micah 6:8.

CHAPTER 2

PREPARING THE SOIL

So how do we fortify the soil for ministry? How do we create an atmosphere that is growth friendly? While we have adopted the language and overarching principles of “Natural Church Development,”²⁸ this study is focused on individuals within the greater body. As a result, many examples are offered, which reveal that these methods *can* succeed. They are not offered as proof that these methods *will* succeed. Only time will reveal success and failure in each individual. The expectation is that not all will succeed—nor that all will fail—none are expected to succeed fully—none are expected to fail fully, but each will be given an opportunity to express love for their Lord through ministry, which is our definition of success anyway.

Realistic Self-Esteem

It is understood in this system that self-esteem is defined from each person’s world-view. Jesus put it this way: “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”²⁹ If a person is focused on wealth, accumulation of wealth will be the measure of self-esteem. If a person is focused on popularity, self-esteem will be vested in social

²⁸ Christian A. Schwarz and Christoph Schalk, *Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998).

²⁹ Mat. 6:22-23 NIV

standing. If a person is focused on power, influence will be the barometer. As Jesus teaches:

“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.”³⁰

Honesty about one’s worldview is necessary for change to take place. It is easy to become like the frog in the experiment cited in Robert Quinn’s book, *Deep Change*. A frog is placed into a pot of cold water, and the pot is slowly heated. The frog is eventually cooked without realizing it. But if the frog is taken from a container of cool water and place in the pot of hot water, it jumps out.³¹ We may grow up with a worldview that is familiar, making us oblivious to the slow change that is killing us on the inside. I have also known many who say they have a certain worldview, but their actions reveal conflicted thinking instead. Only when people own who they truly are—even discover that they are worthy of love—will they be able to jump out of the hot water and see the inconsistencies that have deterred them from living freely in Christ. “Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.’”³²

For instance, many say that Jesus Christ is the most important component in their lives, all the while their value is derived from something other than Christ—including

³⁰ Luke 6:43-45.

³¹ Robert E. Quinn, *Deep Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996), 18-19.

children, home, job, and money. When other things usurp the place of God in one's life, self-esteem is derived from deficient sources—sources that lead to self-centeredness, obsessiveness and ultimately frustration.

Christ-Centered Theology

We have discovered that a healthy world-view starts with a Christ-centered theology. "Theology may be defined as a systematic explanation of the contents of a religious faith....Christian theology is not primarily reflection on Christian faith as such but on the God who became receptively incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth and who by the Holy Spirit creates faith in the Church."³³ "Faith is that voluntary assent that [humankind] gives to the revelation of God and the self-committal or trust of the entire [person] to the control of such truth."³⁴

God is understood to be the creator of all that is,³⁵ and as a result, he is the architect of each person. Jesus Christ is understood to be the second person of the Divine Trinity, sent to redeem and restore humankind to intimacy with God.³⁶ A Christ-centered theology understands that we are crafted and redeemed by a loving God who desires intimacy with us. Our response is to return God's love, demonstrated as works of

³² John 8:34-36.

³³ Richard S. Taylor, ed., *Beacon Dictionary of Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1983), 520.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 207.

³⁵ Cf. Genesis 1:1.

³⁶ Taylor, *Beacon Dictionary of Theology*, 101-103.

obedience. We have discovered that this motivating desire is quantified by the depth of understanding of God's gift to us.³⁷

This gift is commonly referred to as grace. The word grace is a translation of the Greek word χάρις, which means "graciousness, attractiveness, favor, grace, or goodwill."³⁸ The essence of the doctrine of grace is that while humans deserve God's rejection, God actually shows that he is for humans as demonstrated through the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, which is the action of God's grace in history to redeem humankind.³⁹

Most people who experience the grace of God at all experience it on one or more of four levels:

- We experience grace as *pardon*: we are forgiven for wrongs we have done. Pardoning grace is the answer to guilt.
- We experience grace as *acceptance*: we are reunited with God and our true selves, accepted, cradled, held, affirmed, and loved. Accepting grace is the answer to shame.
- We experience grace as *power*: it provides a spiritual energy to shed the heaviness of shame and, in the lightness of grace, move toward the true self God means us to be.
- We experience grace as *gratitude*: it gives us a sense for the gift of life, a sense of wonder and sometimes elation at the lavish generosity of God.⁴⁰

Care must be taken, however, to insure that desire is not confused with performance. Performance is qualified by many factors to include the issues addressed in

³⁷ Cf. Luke 7:26-47.

³⁸ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 877.

³⁹ Taylor, *Beacon Dictionary of Theology*, 240.

⁴⁰ Smedes, *Shame and Grace*, 108.

this study. The basic premise for this study is that frustration is caused by a strong desire to demonstrate devotion to God, but that desire is thwarted by injury, ignorance or other human frailties. The reality is that none of us achieves a full and unfettered demonstration of devotion, but life can be a process of finding freedom in Christ that allows a freer demonstration of our devotion as we grow in grace.

Empowering Ministry

The church, then, becomes a support entity. We have had to cleanse our local church of the notion that we are a business. The business model cannot function effectively to achieve a healthy environment for empowering ministry. Instead we use a family model. A business model seeks productivity; a family model seeks personal growth and intimacy. So pastors become mentors that disciple those who are in the family. Discipling in our setting does not adopt a formal education environment, but it is a demonstration of a faith walk as the two “stroll arm in arm together.” This happens in the same way that Jesus taught His disciples in the course of living among them—so discipling in our model happens as we live together. The pastor becomes less of an executive and more of a friend—more to be loved and less to be admired or feared.

An example of this is our Ish⁴¹ Sunday school class. Though a class setting is not ideal, it is the predominant mode of instruction in our culture. The premise of this group is based loosely on John Wesley’s Holy Clubs. The only rule in Ish is that nothing shared in class is revealed outside of class without permission. Each person is given the opportunity to share their week with the class—good, bad or ugly. The class reciprocates

⁴¹ “Ish” refers to the attitude of the group: comprised of 20ish to 30ish; we meet at 6:30ish, etc.

by encouraging and praying for each member. In the course of the dialogue, a teaching moment often presents itself. When this happens, each member of the class is encouraged to contribute personal insight, frustration or to ask questions. I teach what the Bible has to say, and together we discover a truth that applies to the situation that spawned the discussion. These times have been as effective in changing lives as anything I have ever seen.

The most important piece of empowering ministry in our setting is the attitude we have toward what is usually perceived as failure. For us, the term failure is reserved for disengaging from the process of living and growing. Other setbacks are viewed as opportunities for growth and insight. This is more than lip service. We do not expect each person to understand a Divine call completely—in fact, we suspect that no one understands a call to ministry completely—even that the call itself is intentionally vague. Maybe it is simply a call to action and discovery. Further, we suspect that no one implements that call flawlessly. In fact, fulfillment of the call is not even the issue. That would be a part of the business model. Intimacy with Christ and the community is the issue, and the call to ministry is an opportunity to return that love through acts of service. The result is that setbacks are seen as opportunities to understand more fully, or opportunities to refine the process of implementation of a call to ministry. As family in its best expression, failure is not met with expulsion or alienation, it is met with support for the person even though the performance may be lacking.

When an individual comes to leadership and declares a desire to minister, that individual is heard, and facilitated. The pastoral staff, instead of being a permission giving body, becomes a resource providing a sense of teamwork, and the church board is

charged with adapting church policy and finding ways to fund the proposed ministry. In the event that resources are lacking, which seems to be a perennial problem, we brainstorm as to how the task can be accomplished without being fully funded. The team leader for the proposed ministry is encouraged to be a part of this process. In fact, we try to publicize as much information as possible. This is a result of observing that trust is built through openness, and distrust is built through secrecy. In addition, information vacuums seem to spawn gossip and speculation.

This system does not always succeed in a cost-effective ministry. We recently responded to a ministry request that involved buying a bus. This was one of the most expensive investments we have made. After two years of successful ministry, the team leader moved to another location, and no one felt called to replace him. So after investing more than twenty-four thousand dollars, we sold the bus for twelve thousand dollars—the price we originally paid before maintenance dollars were spent. The ministry was successful in creating community, and transporting teens on two separate mission trips, but the cost was out of proportion to the benefit—using a business model. The connections that were made on the bus probably would not have happened in any other venue.

Even when the project seems doomed to failure at the outset, it is not stopped. This is done for two reasons. The first is that sometimes the only way to correct a defective call is through reality. When leadership prevents people from moving forward, the individual seems to be even more convinced that they would succeed if allowed, and until they are allowed to fail, they cannot move on to a more accurate understanding of what God has in mind. So the process becomes a growth opportunity for all involved.

The second reason that a dubious ministry idea is not stopped is that sometimes it is the leadership team that has flawed vision. We do not believe that the pastor is the sole conduit of God's wisdom and grace. We believe that the pastor is *a* conduit along with all those who are plugged into the Vine.⁴² The same truth applies to the church board, or any other leadership structure.

All failure is critiqued with the attitude of: "What did this event reveal?" Failure is not seen as a loss of time or resource. It is seen as a lesson to facilitate learning. Many successes in our church family have been born from initial set backs that have been modified, resulting in a refined understanding of God's call and an opportunity to express love through ministry.

One final piece that is critical to empowering ministry is acknowledging the fallibility of the pastor. The business model teaches that a pastor must cast a vision for others to follow. This vision must be articulated and defended, much like the story of a doctoral candidate, who spent years developing a thesis, and then spent the rest of his life defending it. The unfortunate reality is that such a method stops, or at least impedes further development of the individual and the ministries affected.

Our view is informed by our understanding of sin. In our denominational heritage, sin was to be avoided at all costs, because to be "sanctified wholly" was to have sin eradicated from the individual. The practical result was that people tended to make excuses for sin, properly so called. They would say things like: "That is just a personality flaw." In a system such as this, opportunities for growth are lost.

⁴² Cf. John 15.

We would rather admit sins quickly so they can be forgiven and cleansed quickly, then we can grow beyond that issue. In the same way, we hold a vision very loosely. The pastor's vision not only informs the rest of the family, but the rest of the family informs the pastor's vision. Each person connected to "The Vine" sees a part of the whole vision, just as a part of the human body would give specific but limited perspective to the whole picture. For instance, the foot would have a very different perspective of life than the forehead. They have different functions, therefore they have different perspectives. A children's worker sees the world very differently from a person working with the elderly, or even with the teens.

While the pastor usually has a broader perspective than most, it is still limited. If the vision for the church is to be a conglomeration of the several parts, and is to be constantly changing, the vision for the church family will take on a life of its own that gives energy to each contributing member.

Ministry-Specific Guidance

With that said, there is always a need for curriculum that shares the discoveries of others who have a similar call to ministry. The scope of this paper is to acknowledge the value of these helps, but not to explore them. As the pastoral staff team leader, it would be presumptuous of me to think that I could speak with any discernment on a wide variety of tools designed for areas of ministry in which I have no meaningful perspective. In addition, any materials that could be cited would be obsolete before this project is even finalized.

Suffice it to say that each team leader should be considered the right source to recommend tools designed to help other members of that team. Team philosophies will

be explored later, but each team is as diverse as the personalities it represents. The issue with regard to curriculum is that one size does not fit all. The Audio Visual Team would need very different guidance than the Worship Team, or even the Counting Team.

It is important to remember that we are not trying to motivate people to get involved. We believe motivation is the result of profound gratitude for the sacrifices God has made for us, and a clear understanding of the gift God has given to us. We are trying to prepare the soil so that people can take root and thrive in their calling once the seed has been planted. And as with soil, the job is never done. The weeds are never eradicated—nutrients need to be continually infused into the soil—and water must be continually applied. But our focus is on the soil, not on the plant. While we can discern what the soil lacks by observing the plant, but the plant itself is God's business.

CHAPTER 3

FORTIFYING THE SOIL

Spiritual Formation

Mel Lawrence says, “Spiritual formation is the progressive patterning of a person’s inner and outer life according to the image of Christ through intentional means of spiritual growth.”¹ Wesley Tracy adds, “There is no possibility of spiritual formation apart from ‘intersections’ or encounters with God. That is to say, spiritual development is not a matter of self-achievement, self-help, or self-discipline. It is strictly a matter of *relationship* with God.”² The role of humans in this relationship is to find ways that will allow for a more steady focus on the Holy. Ray Dunning notes, “[Humanity] was created to bear the likeness of God; ideally [it] is ‘the image and glory of God.’” ... “‘The glory of God’ is the divine likeness, which [humanity] is intended to bear. Insofar as [humanity] departs from the likeness of God, [it] is sinful.”³ It is this *Imago Dei* that craves wholeness and intimacy. “The original *imago* includes: (1) Freedom for God; (2) Freedom for the Other; (3) Freedom from the Earth or World; and (4) Freedom from

¹ Mel, Lawrence, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 15.

² Wesley D. Tracy, E. Dee Freeborn, Janine Tartalia, and Morris A. Weigelt, *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 17.

³ H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City), 1988, 276.

Self-domination.”⁴ Sin is the distortion of these freedoms. Dunning continues, “It is crucial to any discussion of sin to recognize that it is a religious category. It has meaning only in terms of one’s relation to God,”⁵ “[Humanity’s] sinful state of being is [its] lost relation to God.”⁶ “[Humanity’s] problem” says Wynkoop, “is not a substructure of some alien substance clinging to [its] soul but of [its] own alienation from God.”⁷ Sin has a dual nature, as Dunning says, “It is a state of being, and it is a manifestation of that state.”⁸ According to this view, sin is not so much the things we do wrong as it is the state of being, which is independence from God. And original sin is viewed not so much as being created with some kind of warped character, but as having been born not knowing God. This relational view of the kingdom is beautifully pictured in the parable of the good shepherd as recorded in John’s gospel:

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.⁹

The goal of spiritual formation is to create an atmosphere conducive to the restoration of the *Imago Dei*. It would be a mistake to conclude that our work is to restore

⁴ Ibid., 278-279.

⁵ Ibid., 284.

⁶ Ibid., 297.

⁷ Mildred Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972), 164.

⁸ Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*, 296.

⁹ John 10:14-16.

it ourselves. Our work is to respond to what John Wesley called the “preventing grace” of God that draws us to himself in the process of salvation, as he states:

If we take this in its utmost extent, it will include all that is brought in the soul by what is frequently termed natural conscience, but more properly, preventing grace — all the drawings of the Father; the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more — all that light wherewith the Son of God “enlighteneth everyone that cometh into the world;” showing every man “to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God” — all the convictions which his Spirit, from time to time, works in every child of man; although, it is true, the generality of men stifle them as soon as possible, and after a while forget, or at least deny, that they ever had them at all.¹⁰

So it is that the awareness of God is a result of his drawing us toward restoration to Himself, and our responding to that pull, and that we are open to an increasingly intimate relationship with Him that we refer to as spiritual formation.

Biblical Imperatives

The Bible is rife with invitations to participate in this divine initiative. From the song of creation in Genesis¹¹ to the resolution of all things in Revelation,¹² God’s desire for intimacy with his creation is a central theme. From the beginning, the breath of God is revealed as the source of life.¹³ Later in Genesis the infinite breath of God becomes

¹⁰ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley, Third Edition* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1986), 44.

¹¹ Gen. 3: 8-10 NIV, “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9But the LORD God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’

“He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.’”

¹² Rev. 21:3 NIV, “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.’”

¹³ Gen. 2:7 NIV, “the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”

finite in humanity.¹⁴ In Genesis 6:3, the word that is translated “My Spirit” is from the Hebrew word “*ruach*.” In his book *Shekhinah/Spirit*, Mike Lodahl comments that the words of Jesus in John 3:8 are referring to the Old Testament language: “For these words of Jesus, summarize the notion of *ruach* found in the Hebrew scriptures: *ruach* is wind or breath, i.e., air in movement, as well as spirit.”¹⁵

In his discussion of Genesis 6, Brueggemann, while emphasizing the sovereignty of Yahweh, still sees this tie between life and the immediate presence of God. He says:

The judgment is that God will not endlessly and forever permit his life-giving spirit to enliven those who disorder his world. The breath of life (Gen. 2:7; Ps. 104:29-30) remains his to give and his to recall. He is not finally entrusted it to any other, the judgment of verse 3 asserts the sovereignty of Yahweh, who presides over the gift of life.¹⁶

The overarching theme is that intimacy with God was lost as a result of the choice Adam and Eve made to become independent of God, and then was recovered to a degree with each age as patriarchs responded to the drawing of God, reestablishing trust and reliance upon him. As Dunning suggests: “God is the Object of the questing soul of [humankind] because God is known by [humanity], even though He has been forgotten.”¹⁷ It is not within the scope of this study to plumb the depths of this recurring quest. It is enough to establish that there has been a widespread recognition of some kind of longing for intimacy with God deep within the heart of humankind. Cheslyn Jones

¹⁴ Genesis 6:3 NCV, “The LORD said, ‘My Spirit will not remain in human beings forever, because they are flesh. They will live only 120 years.’”

¹⁵ Michael E. Lodahl, *Shekhinah/Spirit, Divine Presence in Jewish and Christian Religion* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1992), 43.

¹⁶ Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta, GA.: John Knox Press, 1982), 72.

¹⁷ Dunning, *Grace, Faith and Holiness*, 146.

observes this yearning in the Psalter. “The worst thing that can happen,” says Jones and his colleagues, “as a number of psalms make clear (e.g. Ps. 51:11), is for God to remove his presence and leave the worshipper in the dark.” The very thought of God’s withdrawing produces a soul-altering effect—namely, “the idea that God’s presence is so essential that no merely earthly good can compare with it: to be ‘with God’ is better than riches, and no amount of material well-being can be worth having if God’s presence is withdrawn (see especially Ps. 73.23-6).”¹⁸

This Divine Initiative became flesh and lived among us. Toward the end of his ministry, Jesus began to prepare his followers for the next transition:

If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.¹⁹

Jesus seems to assume that this intimacy would change behavior. This changed behavior would then invite increasing intimacy between the two:

For it is not, truly, a matter of anything we do or don’t do. It is a matter of how we *cannot but* think and act, given the context of our mental and spiritual formation. So any significant change can come only by breaking the stranglehold of the ideas and concepts that automatically shunt aside Jesus, “the Prince of Life,” when questions of concrete mastery of our life arise.²⁰

¹⁸ Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold, eds., *The Study of Spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 55.

¹⁹ John 14: 15-20.

²⁰ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), xv.

So for us, spiritual formation is more about keeping the channel clear so that the Spirit of God can flow freely through us to the world in which we live. We become conduits of his grace, irrigating all that we are near in the same way a stream gives life to the valley in which it flows. The practical application for us is that we are charged only by keeping ourselves open to the Spirit of God—to whatever he has in mind for us. For some of us, this simple exercise requires all the strength we can muster.

Many have taken the time and energy to record the struggles they have encountered in this never ending task. St. Augustine of Hippo gives the well-worn insight: “Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise; for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee.”²¹ Unfortunately, the sense of restlessness Augustine referred to in his book is often misunderstood by many searchers as a hunger for things of the creation rather than that of the Creator himself. Later in his journey Augustine prayed:

Suffer me, I beseech Thee, O my God, and give me grace to go over in my present remembrance the wanderings of my forepassed time, and *to offer unto Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving*. For what am I to myself without Thee, but a guide to mine own downfall; or what am I even at the best, but an infant sucking the milk Thou givest, and feeding upon Thee, *the food that perisheth not*? But what sort of man is any man, seeing he is but a man?²²

In my early days, I searched for the theological positions of this giant of the faith. My training encouraged me to find support for my theological position in those like Augustine, but it was not until I began to read his journey as one struggling to let go of his past and his own pride that I began to sense with him the beauty of becoming the

²¹ Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), 1.

²² Ibid., 26.

hungry infant. My emphasis shifted from *what* I know to *who* I know. As a result, it is no longer important for me to defend my faith. I am compelled to share my journey in the way that the apostle Peter instructed: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”²³ Others can continue to debate the orthodoxy of the journey, my focus is to embrace the writer and try to experience with him the beauty of discovery—discovery of who he is and discovery of who he created me and called me to be. Some witnesses resonate with my experience, while others leave me flat. This is not to say that some things are right and other things are wrong—that would be to debate the orthodoxy. It is to say that some things resonate with my journey, while other things may inform others on their journey, but simply do not resonate with me on my journey.

Much can be learned from the contemplatives of our past like St. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila. E. W. Trueman Dicken argues that:

One is, in truth, ultimately secure only in the darkness, as John of the Cross so confidently affirms (Poem, ‘On a dark night’, stanza 2).

The words ‘night’ and ‘darkness’ in his works thus come to include ‘privation’ in all its forms, privation not only of satisfactions which are sinful by their very nature, but of a satisfaction other than that perfect loving relationship with God which, like Tressa, John of the Cross speaks against that ultimate satisfaction. Hence the counsel:

In order to attain to the enjoyment of all, wish to enjoy nothing.

In order to attain to the possession of all things, desire to possess nothing whatever (*Ascent, I.xiii.ii*)....It has been objected by contemporary critics that the demands made by our authors are severe to the point of irrelevance for the twentieth-century people, who find such austerity alien and unacceptable. In fact the teaching of the great Carmelites is at all points rock-rooted in holy writ....²⁴

²³ 1 Peter 3:15.

²⁴ Jones, *et al.*, *Study of Spirituality*, 367, 369.

At the risk of being one of those “contemporary critics,” I would point out that the apex of scripture as Jesus taught it is to: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”²⁵

While it can be argued that Jesus began his ministry with a time of “privation,”²⁶ the text does not refer to this time as a time of prayer and fasting, but rather a time of temptation. But even if one were to cede that period of beginning, Jesus’ ministry as a whole was certainly not characterized as one of privation. “The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’”²⁷ His first miracle was at a wedding feast where he turned water into wine.²⁸ In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus concluded the section on “mammon” with: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”²⁹ He did not condemn the comforts of clothing and food in this sermon. Instead, the issue seems to be more about worry than money—and there is a difference between the *love* of money and the *need* for it.

²⁵ Matthew 22:37-40.

²⁶ “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.” Matthew 4: 1, 2 NIV.

²⁷ Luke 7:34, NASB.

²⁸ Cf. John 2:1-11.

²⁹ Matthew 6: 33-34.

Having said all of that, there is still much to be gained from this ancient witness of the disciplines. Even if one detail of the narrative does not resonate with our present-day circumstances, this should not negate the value of the rest of the story. Some contemporary authors seem once again to have struck a common chord with many in this present society with regard to solitude. One such author is Henri J. M. Nouwen. He reminds us that “Without solitude it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life.”³⁰ This spiritual centering affects our actions, but the actions must follow rather than lead. “When we cling to the results of our actions as our only way of self-identification, then we become possessive and defensive and tend to look at our fellow human beings more as enemies to be kept at a distance than as friends with whom we share the gifts of life.”³¹ I have discovered that in our modern world solitude is easier to say than to do.

As soon as we are alone, without people to talk with, books to read, TV to watch, or phone calls to make, an inner chaos opens up in us. This chaos can be so disturbing and so confusing that we can hardly wait to get busy again. Entering a private room and shutting the door, therefore, does not mean that we immediately shut out all our inner doubts, anxieties, fears, bad memories, unresolved conflicts, angry feelings, and impulsive desires. On the contrary, when we have removed outer distractions, we often find our inner distractions manifest themselves to us in full force....³²

This difficult task is more than finding a secret formula, and using that formula for success in ministry. Ministry is not primarily rooted in people. In fact, “The goal of our life is not people. It is God. Only in him shall we find the rest we seek. It is therefore to solitude that we must return, not alone, but with all those who we embrace through our

³⁰ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Only Necessary Thing* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 42.

³¹ Ibid., 42.

³² Ibid., 45.

ministry.”³³ That is to say, solitude is not an either/or proposition—it is a both/and proposition.

Community Contextualization

We can see clearly in the recorded life of Jesus that though he did get away for times of prayer,³⁴ his focus was discipling those given to him.³⁵ It can be argued that he did not get away in solitude for solitude’s sake. He got away for communion with the Father, because it was his nature. In the same way that it is the nature of a dog to bark. The dog does not bark to become a dog—the dog barks because it is a dog. Jesus did not get alone in order to become more, he got away to satisfy the hunger of intimacy with the Father that was his nature. The result of that intimacy revealed itself through his works—his ministry was empowered.³⁶ It must have been a frustrating exercise at times to get his message across to those who had not discovered this inner life.³⁷ Then, toward the end of his ministry, as Jesus was revealing to his disciples that his death would soon take place, he began to prepare them for a huge transition, and Philip wanted Jesus to “show” him the Father:

³³ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart* (San Fransico: HarperSanFransico, 1981), 40.

³⁴ Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35, 6:46, Luke 6:12, 22:39-44, 9:28.

³⁵ “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world.” John 17:6 NIV

³⁶ “Jesus gave them this answer: ‘I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.’” John 5:19-20 NIV

³⁷ “A man in the crowd answered, ‘Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.’

Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”³⁸

Jesus’ emphasis was not on the discovery of the Holy, but rather on faith. “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing.”³⁹ If we are going to do what Jesus did, it would seem that we would desire to be conduits of what God is revealing to us—flawed and incomplete as that may be.

As Richard Foster points out, “True, God may call out an occasional Elijah or John the Baptist, but these exceptions only prove the rule. The vast majority of us are not meant to live out our faith in isolation. We need the community of faith, the body of Christ.”⁴⁰

Reuben Welch also struck a common chord with many in his book, *“We Really Do Need Each Other,”* first published in the early 1970s. He addressed the impact of the

‘O unbelieving generation,’ Jesus replied, ‘how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.’” Mark 9:17-19.

³⁸ John 14:9-17.

³⁹ John 14:12.

⁴⁰ Richard J. Foster, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 56.

good old songs that focused on that good old American contribution to the Christian faith—*individualism*. He said:

The vertical line of Godward relationship and the horizontal line of human relationship are not two lines but one line in continuum. It all belongs together. I'm not talking about what ought to be or what would be nice if it were true, I'm talking about God's reality the way he has constituted the life we have with him. Our life with him is tied to, is one with, our life with our brothers and sisters.... And if you are like me, when you are burdened and weary and sad, you need Jesus, but you also need someone to be Jesus to you—someone to bring his healing presence to you. And sometimes the answer to your weariness and heavy-heartedness is not to "tell it to Jesus alone," but to begin to share and care with someone else. You can get yourself in a little spiral of self-pity and your martyr complex. "Lord, I'm so persecuted but Lord you understand." Way to go. That's enough to bless this dying world, isn't it? Well, let's go on singing the good songs—it's okay. They aren't true, but it's okay. You see, we really do need each other, not because of the inadequacies of God, but because it is the way his grace works.⁴¹

John Wesley is credited by many in my tradition with including personal experience⁴² as one of the filtering mechanisms for biblical interpretation. With this idea in mind, Reuben tells a story at the end of his book that paints this picture so well. It is best recounted in his own words:

Let me just tell you this true thing before I stop writing. At school a few years ago there was a summer school course in "Group and Interpersonal Relations." About a dozen people took the class and at the end of it they decided they wanted to do something together as kind of a closing to the class. You know, they had come to know each other and to share each other and really be personal to each other and break down walls and so forth—so they decided to get together and take a hike up to Hennigar Flats.

Now Hennigar Flats is about three miles up the side of the mountain behind the campus and it takes about an hour and a half for anyone to make the hike. So they set the day
and made the sandwiches

⁴¹ Reuben Welch, *We Really Do Need Each Other* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), 39, 41.

⁴² Cf. *Grace, Faith & Holiness*, 77.

and made the chocolate
and brought the cold drinks
and the backpacks

and they all gathered for the safari and they started up the mountain—together. But it wasn't long until the strong, stalwart ones were up in front and the other ones were back in the middle and way back at the end of the line was a girl named Jane—who was, you might say, out of shape. At the front was Don, a big, strong, former paratrooper. He and some others—the strong ones—were up in front and the weak ones were back in the back and way in the back was Jane. And Don said—it was he who told me the story—he looked back a couple of switchbacks and saw Jane and the Lord told him that he had just better go back and walk with her. That was kind of hard on Don because he has a need to be first. But he went down and started walking with Jane and the people in the level above called down, "Come on up. It's great up here." And Jane yelled, "I don't think I can make it." And they hollered, "Yeah, you can. Try harder, come on up." And every time they called to her, down went her own sense of value—"I can't make it." "Oh, yeah, you can. Come on." So the strong went on ahead and there was Jane, and she never made it to the top.

Now, look what you have. You have a group—we know each other and we like each other and we want to do this together. But before long, you have divided into the strong and the weak, and the haves and the have-nots, and the ables and the unables.

So what had started out as a group has now become a fragmented collection. And so the strong say, "You can do it." And the weak say, "No we can't." And so the strong say "Try harder"—which is a big help.

Thankfully, that's not the last chapter. They must have learned their lessons because they decided that was not the way to end the fellowship of that class and they got together and decided to do it again. But they made some new rules—

it was everybody going or no body going
they were all going together.

So they set the day

and made the sandwiches
and made the chocolate
and brought the cold drinks
and the backpacks
and they all gathered for the safari and they started up the mountain.

It took them four hours to make it to the top

and the water was gone
and the cold drinks were all gone
and the sandwiches were all gone
and the chocolate was all gone
and the backpacks were empty, but they all made it—together.

Let me share with you the thing that this real life parable has been saying to me—Christian fellowship is no place for get in or get out—it is get in, get in. And if you need to slow down—you slow down. That’s why it’s good for us to read scripture and sing hymns together—the slow folk have to speed up and the fast folks have to slow down and we have to do it together. I know, don’t you, that it is God’s intention that we go together as a body.⁴³

This simple story has informed my understanding of my role in ministry more than any other. I have so many “Dons” and “Janes” under my care—not to mention all the others who fit somewhere in that continuum. The Bible reveals that Jesus’ disciples shared life, they did not just share a class or a textbook, but they shared the common occurrences of living life together in community. They walked together, and learned as they went. We are not asked to *discover* the Holy, we are asked to *receive* the Holy and *share* the Holy. And as Reuben’s story so beautifully illustrates, that is best done arm in arm. We can encourage others to catch up, and devalue them, or we can walk with them—enjoying the journey—together.

It is in this context that the story of Moses makes the most sense in God’s salvation story. “So Moses went back to the LORD and said, ‘Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.’”⁴⁴ Moses was walking with the people of Israel. They either made it together or they did not. He was not shouting down at them, “Come on, you can make it.” He was in the muck of life with them—he identified with them—he suffered with them—he lived and died with them.

⁴³ Ibid., 121-124.

⁴⁴ Exodus 32:31-32.

Jesus himself also modeled this type of community attitude, and Paul reminded us to follow Jesus' example:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:
Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.⁴⁵

What I think we can learn from the ancient and contemporary contemplatives is this: Solitude is vital for spiritual development, but it cannot be the end in itself. It only empowers the spiritual development that God seeks for us when it is tempered by interaction with the community of faith that we are a part of—this is the spiritual development that we also seek, knowingly or unknowingly. This craving for spiritual wholeness is the path to freedom in Christ, and it is freedom in Christ that creates fulfillment in us as persons. Fulfillment is the soil where we can grow and bloom with the fruit that God has designed us to produce. When all of this is in harmony, there is joy in ministry. This natural development creates church growth without the stress created by quotas and other artificial motivation so common in the American way of life.

⁴⁵ Philippians 2:5-11.

CHAPTER 4

LEARNING THE GARDEN

Having looked at individual health within the structure we call church, what structure should the church have? Should it look like corporate America? Should it look like first-century Palestine? Is there a set of principles that can adapt to whatever culture in which the church finds itself? For the Christian, it seems plausible to look to the Bible as a starting point for the search. In my tradition, we have a very specific statement about the inspiration of Scripture:

We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.¹

Within the definition of inspiration, the word “plenary” may create some misunderstanding. J. Kenneth Grider gives a very clear and concise definition:

This word means “full”; and, in theology, it is used especially of the conservative view of the inspiration of Scripture—that all of Scripture is inspired, and that God helped the Scripture writers so “fully” that what they wrote is altogether trustworthy. It is not a theory of the mode of inspiration, but the view that all of Scripture is inspired. Only conservatives would advocate plenary inspiration—not liberals. Some conservatives who advocate it are verbal inspiration theorists, who understand that each word of Scripture was inspired. Others are dynamic plenary-inspiration theorists, who believe that the Scripture writers were inspired with certain thoughts, but that the choice of words was their own. Some combine both views, affirming that inspiration extended to the

¹ *Nazarene Manual 2005-2009*, 31.

words as far as necessary to achieve accuracy, but not in such a way as to constitute dictation, or hamper a writer's own natural style.²

My own view of "plenary inspiration" is a modified dynamic version. The variety of literary styles and intellectual depth of the different contributors of the Bible seems to support this view referred to as the Dynamic Theory.³ H. Orton Wiley has defined this theory as an attempt to include the best of both worlds:

This is a mediating theory and is advanced in an effort to explain and preserve in proper harmony, both the divine and human factors in the inspiration of the Scriptures. It maintains that the sacred writers were given extraordinary aid without any interference with their personal characteristics or activities. It preserves the scriptural truth that God speaks through human agencies, but insists that the agent is not reduced to a mere passive instrument.

It is with this conviction as my bias that I turn to the Bible as my primary resource for the principles of organizing the part of the family of God that I am called to pastor.⁴

Christ Is the Head of the Church

The first principle to be reckoned with is that the risen Jesus is an active participant. He is the designer of the church, as seen in Matthew's gospel:

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

² Taylor, *Beacon Dictionary of Theology*, 404.

³ H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology, Vol. I* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1940), 176.

⁴ "A pastor is a minister who, under the call of God and His people, has the oversight of a local church. A pastor in charge of a local church is an assigned minister." *Nazarene Manual 2005-2009*, 185.

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”⁵

Of course, much has been made over the language of verse 18 as to whether Jesus was speaking about the foundation of the church as being the person Peter, or the confession: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”⁶ “The Greek for Peter is “*petros*,” which means “stone.” The word for rock is “*petra*,” which refers to “a mass of live rock as distinct from ‘*petros*,’ a detached stone or boulder.”⁷ One of the arguments intended to refute this position is that Jesus was likely speaking Aramaic, “where only one word, “*Kepha*,” could be used.”⁸ The resolution of this issue may be seen as a matter of personal bias, but for the inquirer, some clues might influence the outcome. One compelling consideration is that the author was likely present during the original discourse, so his choice of words in the Greek accurately convey the nuances of Jesus’ statement—irrespective of recent attempts by some modern scholars to question the integrity of the gospel writers. The value of these writers has already been evaluated for the purposes of this study by the understanding of the modified dynamic plenary view of inspiration discussed above.

⁵ Matthew 16:13-19.

⁶ Matthew 16:18.

⁷ Earle, *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary, Volume IV*, 75.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

A second area of controversy comes from the term “Hades.” The King James Version of the Bible rendered the term to mean “hell.” *Sheol* is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek *Hades*. Both mean the place of death, or of departed spirits. They should not be rendered “hell” (KJV), which is the proper translation of *Gehenna*—place of torment or everlasting burning.”⁹ As a result, the meaning of this phrase should be understood to convey the principle that the church will be victorious over death itself or at the very least, that the church will transect or even transcend death.

The third problem encountered in this passage is found in the phrase, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”¹⁰ The interpretation of the first two issues will of necessity inform the interpretation of this third idea. While Catholic scholars typically interpret “rock” in this passage as a reference to the institutional Church, I stand with the majority Protestant position in interpreting this term in the light of its immediate context—namely, the great confession, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”¹¹ “Robertson well remarks: ‘Every preacher uses the keys of the kingdom when he proclaims the terms of salvation in Christ.’”¹² Thus conceived, the phrase “keys of the Kingdom” in this context highlights *access into the Kingdom* that the confession of Jesus Christ provides to every person who calls upon his name. As Paul

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Matthew 16:19.

¹¹ Matthew 16:16.

¹² Earle, *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary, Volume IV*, 76.

states in Romans 10:13, quoting Joel 2:32, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

By the evidence left to us in the Scriptures, Jesus not only understood himself to be the author of the church, but he also understood that the church itself exists in his very being, as is recorded in John’s gospel:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.¹³

Leon Morris comments, “Jesus does not say that the church is the vine but that He is. The church is no more than the branches which are ‘in’ the vine.”¹⁴ It is from the risen Jesus that we receive our life-sustaining flow. This is why spiritual formation is so vital to this model for ministry. If we are focused on our own spiritual health, our living becomes small, but if we allow ourselves to be conduits of God’s grace, our world begins to bloom and grow, as characterized by Frank Laubach: “My child, when you pray to Me of your own little troubles and doubts, your prayer is pretty thin and small. When you

¹³ John 15:1-8.

¹⁴ Leon Morris, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), 668.

reach out to help other people by offering yourself as a channel for Me, your prayer becomes at once large and noble.”¹⁵

Just as a self-centered religion is dead, I have known many who have died inside as they worked diligently for their own religion. They worked diligently *for* Jesus, but they did not reveal the evidence of the power from the vine—the fruit of the Spirit of Christ.¹⁶ Of course it is always dangerous to assess the spiritual vitality of another, since emotional injuries can mask the true nature of one’s faith, but we are reminded: “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.”¹⁷ Jesus told another story that depicted people like this. It ended this way: “Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”¹⁸ Not only were the efforts of these hard workers considered null and void, but they were actually considered to be evildoers. Could it be that Jesus does not need our efforts, but rather revels in the blooming fruit caused by our reliance upon him?

My mother has lived with us since my dad was stricken with Alzheimer’s disease. He is now gone, but she continues to tend a garden every year. She is consumed by her garden during the summer months. It is a pleasure to share the joy she expresses at the

¹⁵ Frank C. Laubach, *Letters by a Modern Mystic* (Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press, 1979), 47.

¹⁶ “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” Galatians 5:22-25.

¹⁷ Matthew 12:33.

¹⁸ Matthew 7:22-23.

development of the different vegetables she has planted. She is keenly aware of the maturation rates for each of the plants, and finds great joy as she anticipates the harvest each will yield. We could buy vegetables cheaper than we can raise them. The cost of city water, fertilizer, rototiller, hoes, rakes, seeds, and so on is much higher than the cost of buying enough vegetables for the three of us. Added to this, there is the never-ending effort of weeding, watering, harvesting, and canning. Of course I have noticed that homegrown tomatoes do seem to taste much better than those from the grocery store. Then there is the pride of sitting at the dinner table and surveying the bounty that was raised in our own backyard.

It is with this insight that I am guided in my interpretation of John chapter 15. He created all that is, so if he needed something done, would not it be simpler and faster just to do it himself? But if he takes delight in the garden, it is the progress of the plants rather than the produce itself that he seeks. This passage that is often referred to as “the vine and the branches” does, however, include the idea that bearing fruit is a sign of spiritual health. “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”¹⁹

Back to the illustration of my mother’s garden. This year my mother started her own tomato plants in her newly acquired greenhouse. She tended them daily. One day she announced that the plants were ready to be transplanted into the garden, which we did. After a few days it became apparent that two of the dozen or so plants were not taking root in their new environment. Slowly they shriveled up and died. As a result, they were replaced by plants that did take root and grow. In the same way, Jesus revealed that

¹⁹ John 15:8.

producing fruit does demonstrate that we are disciples, but it only demonstrates spiritual health when the production results from dependence upon Jesus, who is the vine.

Not only is Jesus the author and the embodiment of the church, but he is also the head as well:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.²⁰

In my tradition, the pastor is President of the corporation and Chairman of the board, as delineated by the *Manual*:

The pastor and the secretary of the church board shall be the president and secretary of the church, incorporated or not incorporated, and shall execute and sign all conveyances of real estate, mortgages, releases of mortgages, contracts, and other legal documents of the church not otherwise provided for in the Manual and subject to the restrictions set forth in 104-4.3.²¹

Because of this political structure, it is easy to think of the pastor as the head of the church. This logic often drifts as far as: “the pastor is the primary conduit of grace and wisdom for the church.” He becomes the resident expert on the spiritual and business sides of the local church. However, such a conception pastoral leadership stands in opposition to Scripture’s teaching that Christ is the head of the church, and that the pastor is just one of many conduits of grace and insight for the church. Each person receives

²⁰ Colossians 1:15-20.

²¹ *Nazarene Manual 2005-2009*, 64-65.

insight through intimacy with our risen Lord, and brings a unique perspective that informs and enriches the whole, as Wilber Dayton writes:

The human body serves to illustrate the principle of unity in the body of Christ (v.12). No member in itself constitutes the body. Nor will all the members, unless properly related one to the other in the body, constitute a body. The body is more than the sum of its parts—it is a body—an emergent from the proper relation and harmony of all the parts, even as water is an emergent from H₂O. Water is something more than H₂O. It is water, and if it is reduced to its chemical components it ceases to be water. The spiritual body, the body of Christ—the Church—is like that. It is only the Church when all the members are harmoniously related and functioning in unison.²²

This principle of harmonious unity coordinated by the head of the church, Jesus Christ, is what Paul is referring to in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. First he says that we are vessels in which God works. As diverse as each of us is, it is one Spirit that animates our several gifts. God himself has given these diverse gifts for the common good, and he gives these gifts according to his own design. The gifts given and empowered by his Holy Spirit are coordinated into a cohesive unit. Each entity is integral and indispensable. Cultural and political casting has no input as to the placement or value of the individuals within this body, nor can any part evaluate another. Further, he points out that none of the parts are self-sufficient. Rather, each part is interdependent in function and sustenance. And finally, he points out that we are to seek the greater gifts, as opposed to developing the gifts on our own.

This dependence upon God for the gift does not devalue or negate the covenantal relationship between the gift giver and the gift receiver. It is still necessary for the recipient to hone the gifts and craft the skills germinated in the gifts, a principle Paul

²² Wilber T. Dayton, *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary: Vol. V, Romans through Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), 202.

referred to in reference to his understudy, Timothy: “For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”²³

In the Corinthian passage, Paul sets the stage with an interesting foundation. According to Paul, the Holy Spirit of God is the initiator of all gifts, and each of the spiritual gifts is given by him for the common good. While pinpointing the exact nature of Paul’s vision of the church through this illustration leaves room for a lot of individual interpretation, it is clear that he is working within the framework that “the risen Christ gathers his disciples to himself in such a way that they are called by him to continue the work of his incarnate life in current history. They are his body for his work in the world.”²⁵ Dunning goes on to tie Ephesians 4:11-16 into the model: “Christ is the Head and the Church is the body and will be in constant process of completion (Eph. 4:11-16).”²⁶ When added to the 1 Corinthians 12 passage, Paul’s model of the body does not include the head, since that is reserved for Jesus Christ himself.

The Pastor Is Part of the Body

This view challenges the notion that the pastor as the head of the local church. A better way of understanding the role of a local pastor in this system might be as that of an overseer, or even a facilitator of ministry. When the head is excluded as a viable metaphor, I suppose the circulatory system would illustrate the pastor’s role as overseer adequately—bringing nutrients to each of the several parts that make up the body. But

²³ 2 Timothy 1:6

²⁵ Colin W. Williams, *The Church*. Vol. 4 in *New Directions in theology Today* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 62.

²⁶ Dunning, *Grace, Faith & Holiness*, 515.

that would only give a partial picture to the role of pastor as defined in Scripture. In fact, Paul refers to pastors as shepherds in his writings, as Willard Taylor points out in his discussion of this passage: “Pastors are shepherds of a flock of communicants; the Greek word (*poimen*) employed here means literally “shepherd.” The task of the pastor is to feed the flock and to protect them from spiritual dangers.”²⁷ In addition, the oversight provided by pastors should be understood as slightly different from that of the “presbyter” found in other places of Scripture, since this term “presbyter” has a specific reference to those who are advanced in years.²⁸

Through all of this discussion, it is important to remember that “*teleios*” is not the goal. “*Teleios*” refers to completion or being fully ripened,²⁹ though the process of ripening is certainly present, particularly in the biblical passage referred to earlier:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.³⁰

²⁷ Willard H. Taylor, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: Beacon Bible Commentary, Vol. 9* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1965), 208.

²⁸ Moulton, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*, 340.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 400-401.

³⁰ Ephesians 4:11-16.

The flavor of the vegetables from my mother's garden tends to waft into the interpretation of this passage as well. The budding and maturing of plants, eventually producing fruit that seems sweeter because of the personal investment, illustrates the garden in which God has called each of us to thrive. As noted earlier, the process of becoming seems to be the main focus here. Willard reminds us that the purpose of ministries in the church, is two fold: "(a) First, these ministries are given to edify or build up the body of Christ (12),"³¹ and "(b) Second, these ministerial gifts are given to foster maturity. Verse 13 looks back to the previous one and offers further explanation of the 'building up' of the Church."³²

In *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations*, a distinct difference is noted between leaders and managers. "Managers get other people to do, but leaders get other people to *want* to do. Leaders do this by first of all being credible. That is the foundation for all leadership."³³ While the Bible may not make a distinction between the ideas of leadership and management, our culture does, and it is the purpose of this exercise to communicate biblical principles that inform ministry as it functions today. So, for the sake of clarification, we will accept modern scholarship's distinction between the two. One of the basics involved in credible leadership is genuine appreciation for the efforts given by others. Ron Carucci makes a distinction between mere compliments and gratitude offered in appreciation for the efforts of others. His contention is that compliments can be viewed as condescending,

³¹ Ibid. 209.

³² Ibid.

³³ J. M. Kouzes and B. Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987), 27.

while gratitude has more depth. It would seem that the idea of gratitude is so basic that it should not need to be addressed. But as the old saying goes, “Everybody knows what ‘assume’ means.” “William James said, ‘The deepest craving of human nature is the need to be appreciated.’ Regardless of whether you agree, it is certain that we all desire to be seen as significant and to know our contributions matter.”³⁴ Carucci explains the difference this way:

A compliment is a generic acknowledgement of something tangible—a completed task, a nice tie, a persuasive presentation, or a kind gesture. *Gratitude* goes beyond the compliment to the intangible *why* you are thankful for the completed task or the persuasive presentation, the *personal* effect the tangible act had on you, and your *genuine curiosity* about what it took for the tangible act to be accomplished.³⁵

Explaining why the act made a difference reveals how the sacrifice benefited the larger body. As much as we would like to do good for good’s sake, to be appreciated for our effort creates a community of emotionally bonded participants. Carucci illustrates this phenomenon with a TV program called *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. He relates the following:

Tragic stories of terminal illnesses, deaths of parents and children, unforeseen injuries disabling a household’s only breadwinner, caring families who have adopted underprivileged children but lacked sufficient space to care for them, handicapped children unable to thrive in inadequate environments...all of these are transformed in just a week to stories of hope, promise, and inspiration. The tears on the faces of the design team and volunteers tell it all. *They* are the ones who feel grateful to be part of changing the lives of others. *They* tell of the blessing they have received to work on the home of a family in their community. These people have worked tirelessly and selflessly in shifts around the clock for seven days to complete the house. The family benefiting from this work often struggles to find words to express the gratitude they are feeling.

³⁴ Ron A. Carucci, *Leadership Divided* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 174.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 175-176.

Each member of the team knows he or she has made a life-changing difference in a family who is adjusting to some kind of tragedy. They could not change the outcome of the tragedy, but they could do something—they did something.

Someone had to initiate the project, but that someone relied on others to refine the plan and complete the task. Thus the conclusion:

If we accept the underlying premise that fundamental transformation—be it personal or organizational—happens only in context of relationship, then it stands to reason that the experience of that transformation must be among networks of many relationships, or a *community*.³⁶

Often the leader who initiates change within the body is the pastor, but not always. Pastors are just people with the same personalities as the rest of the flock—some of these personalities lend themselves to aggressive leadership, while others find a more pastoral setting to their liking. If we take the passage in Ephesians 4 seriously, it is the Spirit who creates the sculpture that facilitates growth and intimacy.

As pastors then, we are gifted and called to create an atmosphere where the body can thrive and grow. While that may require leadership, it does not demand autonomous control. Others within the body may be far better equipped to assess and resolve issues of which the pastor is unaware. For instance, a corporate executive may be better equipped to handle the day-to-day business operations of the local church than a pastor that has no experience in the corporate world. This is as it should be. C. Peter Wagner observes that the pastor cannot do it all, and should not. He readily admits that every Christian should have a ministry. But he says, “The best pastor is not one who relieves members of their ministries, but one who makes sure each member has a ministry and is working hard at

³⁶ Ibid., 178.

it.”³⁷ This sounds very different from the pastor defined in the original text. Imagine a shepherd forcing a lamb’s face into the grass, trying to force the frightened creature to eat from the bounty the shepherd has provided.

Though Wagner has admitted that the pastor can no longer be the professional hired by the church to do the work, he still makes the pastor the substitute for internal motivation that comes from a grateful heart. Wagner later defines the gift of administration, which he believes is helpful, but not necessary. The term, “administration,” used in 1 Corinthians 12:28, is from the word κυβερνησις. The verbal form means to govern.³⁸ The noun is variously translated, “captain, steersman, or pilot.”³⁹ John Maxwell defines leadership as influence.⁴⁰ Bennis and Goldsmith describe leadership as follows:

Leaders conquer the context—the turbulent, ambiguous surroundings that sometimes seem to conspire against us and will surely suffocate us if we let them—while managers surrender to it. Leaders investigate reality, taking in the pertinent factors and analyzing them carefully. On this basis they produce visions, concepts, plans, and programs. Managers adopt the truth from others and implement it without probing for the facts that reveal reality.⁴¹

Wagner goes so far as to make a shift from the definition of the word used in 1 Corinthians 12:28 from “captain” to “ship’s owner.” Without justifying this redefinition, he then distances the pastor even farther by saying,

³⁷ C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1994), 133.

³⁸ Moulton. *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*, 243.

³⁹ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 456.

⁴⁰ John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville: Nelson Business, 1993), I.

⁴¹ Warren Bennis, and Joan Goldsmith, *Learning To Lead* (Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1997), 4

pastors of growing churches are equivalent to the owner of ships. They need to know where the ship should go and why. They need to locate a captain and recruit a crew. But they do not necessarily have to be or want to be a captain, to say nothing about a member of the crew, for the total purpose to be accomplished.⁴²

The pastor of a growing church, as defined by Wagner, is one who is no longer the pastor defined by the biblical text. This definition of a pastor is no longer of one from among the flock to be with the flock, it now describes a person removed from the flock altogether. Besides doing violence to the text, two dangers immediately come to mind from this change: 1) the pastor is unable to rejoice and grieve as one from among the flock, and 2) the pastor is elevated to a position of superiority rather than that of a servant leader. Have we put so much emphasis on church growth as defined by the American culture that we are willing to redefine the role of pastor in order to accomplish the short range, dare I say shortsighted goal of church growth? Or maybe the world has just changed enough that the theology found in the second chapter of Acts no longer applies. There Luke records, “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”⁴³ In the first century the “Lord added.” It seems that people like Wagner put an inordinate amount of emphasis on the human part of the equation, while Luke put the lion’s share of responsibility for church growth on the shoulders of the Holy Spirit.

In the Wagner model, the pastor is subjected to the responsibility of making sure that the church grows. In Luke’s model the Lord is the prime mover. The latter model seems somewhat reminiscent of an earlier quote from the incarnate Jesus, “and on this

⁴² Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*, 145.

⁴³ Acts 2:47b.

rock I will build my church,”⁴⁴ It may be that the incongruity is a result of the model to which one looks. In Wagner’s book, *Leading Your Church to Growth*, he reveals a key to his insight. In a section attempting to redefine servant leadership, he quotes from Lawrence O. Richards. In part it states: “In researching three outstanding congregations he discovered that in all three ‘the leadership is strong and holds unusual authority in the church’.... They have learned how to combine humility with power and servanthood with leadership.”⁴⁵ It is clear that he is looking to churches that are dynamic, and seeking to copy what works for them.

One such leader was growing a dynamic church in a small town adjacent to the one in which I pastor. His story was published in a church periodical as an example of what a pastor should be and do. I can still remember the logic cited for doing what he was doing, because after all, “see how it is working.” The church did grow to roughly three times the size it was when this man came. In the implosion that followed, dozens were devastated, and vowed that they were done with organized religion. Another of the many examples of this type of strong leadership happened in a very wealthy and dynamic church in my own city. The pastor was very charismatic and charming to those in the congregation, but he was demeaning and harsh to his paid staff. Many who were a part of that congregation still idolize this man, though he has been gone for several years. It is interesting that I have heard no such approval from those with whom worked. Several in my local congregation have shared similar stories with me. And though there was excitement and growth for a time, there was considerable collateral damage among the

⁴⁴ Matthew 16:18.

⁴⁵ Peter C. Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1984), 87.

flock. This is not the picture I have of the good shepherd, caring for the frightened ones—going out looking for the one that strayed. Wilkes puts it so well:

I realized that we who lead often overlook the fact that the true place of Christlike leadership is out in the crowd rather than up at the head table. People who follow Christ's model of leadership would never be embarrassed to find themselves among the kitchen help. Such a leader is comfortable working with those who serve in the background and gladly works alongside them until they complete the job.⁴⁶

In his book *Spiritual Leadership*, J. Oswald Sanders lists the differences between Natural and Spiritual leadership tendencies:

Natural	Spiritual
Self-Confident	Confident in God
Knows men	Knows God
Makes own decisions	Seeks to find God's will
Ambitious	Self-effacing
Originates own methods	Finds and follows God's methods
Enjoys commanding others	Delights to obey God
Motivated by personal considerations	Motivated by love for God and man
Independent	God-dependent ⁴⁷

It is clear that this system can only function under the model given by Jesus. It simply will not adjust to the system of leadership fashioned by Dr. Wagner. It would be interesting, though not within the scope of this study, to investigate the way leaders like Billy Graham operate. Would his ministry come closer to the ministry model Wagner proposes or the one Wilkes attributes to Jesus?

Everything else aside, I have learned to modify much of my behavior through the insights provided by the Dr. Wagner. Nevertheless, my experience in the church I have

⁴⁶ C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership*. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998), 13.

⁴⁷ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*. (Chicago : Moody Press, 1967), 38.

served for the last 13 years serves to disprove Wagner's principal thesis. Although I do not qualify as "a strong leader" by Wagner's criteria, neither I nor my congregation have suffered the dire consequences of a leadership vacuum that would appear to have been inevitable. I guess we really do "have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."⁴⁸

Every Part of the Body Has a Function

If we accept the servant leader model for the pastor, it will inform how we view the rest of the body as well. The choice might be between two basic starting points. The first starts with a mission statement and an organizational chart that makes it possible to achieve measurable goals as set forth by the mission statement, and then goes about recruiting people to fill the slots in the organizational chart. The second starts by assessing the flock—discerning what the body should look like, given the parts available.

As Dayton and Engstrom point out:

your first goal is to see the process working, not to decide on the outcome. This may be hard for a leader to accept. After all, isn't it the job of a leader to lead? Yes, but if you believe that—in a Christian organization—the Holy Spirit indwells all the members, and the same Holy Spirit is willing and able to shape them into a body, you have to allow Him the opportunity to work.⁴⁹

This is where good spiritual formation principles come in. The first job of the pastor is to be still. The analogy of the circulatory system works well here. If Christ is the head of the church and the pastor is the cardiovascular system, it is the brain that informs the parts to move and have their being. The pastor then sends nutrients to the parts—

⁴⁸ 2 Corinthians 4:7

⁴⁹ Edward R. Dayton and Ted W. Engstrom. *Strategy for Leadership* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1979), 123.

creating an atmosphere for productivity. The pastor discerns how the body is functioning, assisting the body by supplying the nutrients to empower its several parts. In this process, the pastor is responsible for making opportunities available for the body to flourish, but it is ultimately about the body, not the pastor.

There is also a difference in philosophy. Do we need to evangelize the world, or do we evangelize the world as we go, witnessing to the grace of God at work in our lives? Are we charged with building the church, or is it our confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of the living God that builds the church, even if we are in a Roman prison like Paul? Do we follow a road map that leads to victory—setting out mission statements and five-year plans, or do we take the next step revealed to us as an exercise of faith—believing that it is enough that God knows the way and will guide us one step at a time? Does God work through a five-year plan so that we need not bother him but once in a while, or does he crave our fellowship continually—desiring to direct us in the process of communion—to walk with us as we go? Does the Spirit of God desire individuals to live by faith, while setting a different standard for organizations who coordinate the ministries of these individuals living by faith?

There does seem to be one text that encourages careful planning. It is found in Luke's gospel. Jesus is teaching:

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish."

Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not

able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace.⁵⁰

The problem with using this passage as a reason to plan ahead is that the conclusion found in the verse that follows changes the context to one of complete surrender. “In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.”⁵¹ The planning referred to is to reserve nothing—do not even start without counting the cost of discipleship.

Each member of the body has a vital part to play as it is directed by the head, Jesus Christ. As Paul reminds us in the passage referred to earlier: “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’”⁵² This principle should apply to the pastor as well. If the pastor is a part of the body, the power to include or exclude other parts has not been delegated.

In their book, *Ministry: It’s Not Just for Ministers*, Gary Morsch and Eddy Hall deal with the myths that have become orthodox over centuries of reinforcement. One of these myths involves the myth of secular work. They say:

God does not view work the way our culture does. Our culture identifies a few vocations—those involving “professional ministry”—as sacred. Other vocations—such as being an accountant, sanitation worker, homemaker, or mechanic—it labels secular. These jobs, according to the conventional wisdom, are not concerned with religion.

But God is not willing for us to divide life into the religious and nonreligious, the secular and the holy. He calls us to so live that our entire lives are sacred. Paul writes, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31)...For the Christian, every aspect of life, every moment of every day, is to be holy.⁵³

⁵⁰ Luke 14:28-32.

⁵¹ Luke 14:33.

⁵² I Corinthians 12:21.

⁵³ Gary Morsch, and Eddy Hall, *Ministry it’s not just for Ministers* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1993), 63.

H. Orton Wiley puts it this way:

The gifts of the Spirit must be distinguished from natural gifts or endowments, although there is admittedly, a close relationship between them. While they transcend the gifts of nature, yet they function through them. Grace quickens the powers of the mind, purifies the affections, and enables the will to energize with new strength; and yet the gifts of the Spirit transcend even sanctified human powers. The strength of the Church is not in the sanctified hearts of its members, but in Him who dwells in the hearts of the sanctified. It is the indwelling Spirit who divides to every [person] severally as He will, and then pours His own energy through the organism which He has created.⁵⁴

While Paul teaches: “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”⁵⁵ Scripture also teaches that the Spirit of God is the source of life as mentioned briefly in Chapter 3 above. In Genesis, “the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”⁵⁶ Then in chapter six, “Then the LORD said, ‘My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.’”⁵⁷ The word used for “contend” also means “remain in.” Arnold Airhart in his article, “Holy Spirit,” makes the connection:

The Spirit of the Lord is the mysterious, irresistible *power* of God, the mode of His activity, God’s dynamic *presence* in creation, and also the animating *principle* in man. Even so, [humanity] is not represented as His mere instrument, but as a voluntary servant or co-worker with the Spirit.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1952), 318-319.

⁵⁵ I Corinthians 12:7.

⁵⁶ Genesis 2:7.

⁵⁷ Genesis 6:3.

⁵⁸ Richard S. Taylor, ed. *Beacon Dictionary of Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1983), 262.

If the Spirit of God is the source of life, and life is a result of His immediate presence, then the gifts that accompany His presence must be resident in every living being as well. No one can boast about anything—all things are a gift that accompanies the Spirit of God. Just as the Spirit and the gifts are inextricably linked, the more a person releases personal control to the Spirit, the more His gifts are released to function fully in the surrendered individual.

A second area at issue is the definition of “church.” Richard Taylor points out that Jesus used the term ἐκκλησία to imply “my flock” or “my church.” This usage is usually defined by theologians as the “universal church” or the “invisible church.”⁵⁹ In the beginning of Paul’s explanation in 1 Corinthians 12, he says: “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”⁶⁰ He does not define “common good.” Does the common good mean all of creation, or only those within the body? If part of our mission is to make our God known, it would seem that the gifts would be employed without boundaries.

After he fleshed out the picture of what it means to be the church, Paul began his conclusion this way:

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid., 112-113.

⁶⁰ 1 Corinthians 12:7.

⁶¹ 1 Corinthians 12:27-31.

He moves from what is “given for the common good” to the placement of gifts in the church.⁶² While it would be futile to argue for inclusiveness from the lack of textual evidence here, it would be just as fruitless to argue for exclusivity from this text. The big picture is far more helpful in understanding the interaction of the Spirit in humanity as seen in the beginning as recorded in Genesis. Rather than trying to distinguish between the “natural” and the “spiritual,” it seems better to argue that anyone who has been quickened by the Spirit of God understands that anything “natural” is a myth. Humankind cannot exist apart from the immediate presence of the Spirit of God. Therefore, gifting cannot be separate from God either. To the extent a spiritually alive person yields control to the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit become more evident and useful, empowering that person to make a positive difference in the world.

In quashing the myth of the secular, Morsch and Hall have also erased the line between gifts used inside the church and those used for the common good, which may be outside the church. A teacher in a state university may be using the same gift as the Sunday school teacher. As Wiley points out, “While [Spiritual gifts] transcend the gifts of nature, yet they function through them.”⁶³ The difference is: “Grace quickens the powers of the mind, purifies the affections, and enables the will to energize with new strength; and yet the gifts of the Spirit transcend even sanctified human powers.”⁶⁴ As a result, the teacher who is spiritually alive is allowing the Spirit to work through the natural gift to be more than the teacher who is not spiritually alive. In the same way, the accountant

⁶² The word used for “appointed” in the NIV is the Greek word *étheto*, which is third person, 2nd aorist, middle, indicative case for *tithemi*, meaning “to place” or “deposit.”

⁶³ H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1952), 318-319.

figuring the accounts of a Fortune-Hundred company is using the same gift as the faithful treasurer of a local church. Again, the spiritually alive treasurer is aware that he or she is a steward of divine resources rather than just a calculator of dollars and cents.

So the body is more than a church body, or even a church denomination. It is the church universal as it lives openly and authentically in the world in which it has been called to bear witness. This must be kept in mind as we address the workload of a local church. If a church spends all its collective energies in making the local church flourish, the energy to participate in the outside world is seriously diminished.

Another piece of the puzzle is addressed by researchers like Oswald and Kroeger. They have studied the variety of ways we perceive and react to stimuli in life. Some of the differences they have noted are listed below:

Extroverts relate more to the outer world of things, people and environment....

Introverts prefer to relate more to the inner world of ideas, concepts and feelings....

Those with a preference for sensing allow the world to touch them deeply through their five senses. They want to be founded in the practical, concrete aspects of life.

Those with a preference for iNtuition [sp] want to perceive meanings, possibilities and relationships in reality. They tend to be future-oriented and prefer to rely on their imagination.

Those with a preference for Thinking are more comfortable with logical decisions. If possible they prefer to stand outside a situation and analyze its cause and effect.

The preference for Feeling is marked by comfort with value-centered decisions. Those who prefer Feeling over thinking prefer to stand inside situations to decide what they like and dislike.

The judging preference identifies persons who want their lives ordered, structured and planned....

Those with a preference for Perceiving what to respond to life rather than plan it.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Ibid., 319.

⁶⁵ Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger. *Personality Type and Religious Leadership* (The Alban Institute, 1988), 2-3.

Of course, as they point out, we each have the ability to access either side of the continuum in each of the four categories mentioned above, but we tend to prefer and become comfortable with one or the other sides as we deal with specific functions of thought.

Within the maze of personality types, God has called each of us to minister in our world. Each ministry includes untold combinations of personalities, giving various perspectives and responses to opportunities that present themselves. Is it any wonder that the job of leading the church is best left to the head and not the pastor? No pastor can discern every perspective that is required to get a full picture of the task that the church is called to complete.

The Spirit Directs Each Member of the Body

That the Spirit actively directs each member of the Body is likely the reason why Paul includes this important warning in his letter to the Romans:

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.⁶⁶

He is the one who is qualified to direct this myriad of perspectives, backgrounds, gifts and skills. Ceding the management side of the body to the one who truly understands each of us, there is still a great deal that a good leader contributes to the body. "When leaders create an atmosphere of care and concern, hope and vision

⁶⁶ Romans 8:26-27.

flourish.”⁶⁷ There is a sense in which a pastor can do nothing that is more important than providing a safe place for people to step out of their box and do the things they have never dared do before—to think thoughts they have never dared to think before—to dream dreams they have never dared dream before. Can you imagine Jesus sending out his disciples to do ministry under any other set of circumstances? The twelve must have had this kind of trust in their leader, as is related in the following story:

Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.

These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them.”⁶⁸

He sent them out with no provisions, and if they were not accepted, they were to create a stink—in a strange place with no one to cover their back. These are pretty scary instructions. Jesus must have created some sort of safe environment because: “They went out and preached that people should repent.”⁶⁹ The result of the mission was amazing. “They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.”⁷⁰ They had followed their leader, and now their trust in him was even more profound than it had been. This story stands in stark contrast to the methods employed today. There were no detailed instructions—no script to follow to insure purity of doctrine—no statistical evaluation as evidence of success. It would be interesting to know

⁶⁷ Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, and Ken McElrath, *The Ascent of a Leader* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), 39.

⁶⁸ Mark 6:7-11.

⁶⁹ Mark 6:12.

⁷⁰ Mark 6:13.

how varied the methods and messages were among the several groups. Do you suppose there were six very different approaches employed? Is it possible to entertain the idea that there may have been dissent in the details among partners?

Jesus appears to have had no trouble trusting in his Father, and he invited the Twelve to trust his Father the same way. Gene Wilkes sounds the right note when he says: “When we trust that God is in control of our life, we can take big risks.”⁷¹ Similarly, Thrall, McNicol and McElrath observe, “First we must trust God and, in turn, trust others.”⁷² Could it be that the biggest hurdle in growing a dynamic church is trust in God and each other? Maybe the best measure of a strong leader is no more than faith—faith that God is in control—faith that he is guiding and empowering those I care about—faith that he has the right leader in place for this time and this place. When faith is present in increasing measure, there is freedom to risk doing what the head is leading us to do, whatever body part we happen to be.

⁷¹ Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership*, 131.

⁷² Thrall, McNicol & McElrath, *Ascent of a Leader*, 66.

CHAPTER 5

PLANTING THE GARDEN

The church is Christ's garden. As a result, the question is never to be: "What is our church going to look like?" or "What should we plant?" Rather, our thinking should follow the model of mangers in Christ's garden. Accordingly, we should ask: "Who has Christ brought into the garden?" "What do these plants tell us about how the garden should look? Where would these new plants thrive best?" This is why it is important to avoid five-year plans that are designed to direct the process. Planning should be focused on how we can accommodate what God is doing, and what that will look like in the future. This kind of planning must be kept fluid, since we rarely see the future as God does.⁷³ God is the initiator and the one who empowers.

One of the best tools available to pastors is Natural Church Development (NCD). Perhaps more than any other resource, the NCD principles enable us to be responsive to the unique characteristics of a local congregation and to the ways in which God is living and active in that church. There are eight principles in all, "The ABC's of Natural Church Development:" 1) Empowering Leadership, 2) Gift-oriented Ministry, 3) Passionate Spirituality, 4) Functional Structures, 5) Inspiring Worship Service, 6)

⁷³ "For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,"
declares the LORD.
"As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9.

Holistic Small Groups, 7) Need-Oriented Evangelism, and 8) Loving Relationships.⁷⁴

Each of these characteristics takes the premise that we are to manage the garden in which we ourselves are planted. They each focus on the parts we are to play and leave the parts God plays to Him alone. And each part must be present for growth to occur in the garden.

In this system, most of the characteristics are self-explanatory. However, there are a few that need to be defined, since the terms may be misinterpreted. Empowering leadership means that:

Leaders of growing churches do not try to build up their own power to become all-powerful. Exactly the opposite. They consider it as one of their most important tasks to help Christians develop greater degrees of empowerment, which according to God's plan already belongs to them. They equip, support, motivate and mentor individuals to become all that God wants them to be. Some of these Christians may even be led to go very different ways than their leaders. But empowering leaders can rejoice about such a Christian with all their heart because they know that God has a unique calling for every individual.⁷⁵

Functional structures, while a simple characteristic, can be misunderstood as well.

“The most important criterion for forms and structures in the church is based on whether they fulfill their purpose. Church structures are never an end in themselves but rather a means to an end.”⁷⁶ In holistic small groups “people do not only discuss Bible texts or listen to interesting explanations by experts, but they apply biblical insights to the everyday issues of the participants.”⁷⁷ Need-oriented evangelism avoids the “sales” mentality epitomized in the “The Kennedy Plan” and others. In these plans, developed in

⁷⁴ Christian A. Schwarz, *The ABC's of Natural Church Development* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998), 10-17.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 13.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 15.

the late 20th century, there were scripted questions like: “If you were to die tonight, why should God let you into His heaven?” The difference is that in this system “they share the gospel in a way that meets the questions and needs of non-Christians.”⁷⁸ There are no standard questions designed to create fear. There are only responses to questions posed by the inquirer.

Our job is to tend the soil, making sure that it is fertile and can sustain the growth caused by the Spirit of God. I suppose the illustration of a hospital nursery might be a good model. A baby is placed in the nursery for care. The nursery did not create the baby. The nursery does not cause the baby to grow. The nursery simply creates an atmosphere where growth can occur. In the same way, the church is seen as a place where the things that impede growth are devalued, and the things that facilitate that growth are valued and encouraged. For instance, faith is valued, while doctrine is devalued. Leonard Sweet puts it this way:

If faith is indeed a life (which it is) and not merely a course of study or an intriguing intellectual pursuit (which it was never meant to be), then faith is nothing less than the consuming experience of God. It is not a set of beliefs or even a lifestyle, but breath and pulse and life itself. It is the opposite of hype; it is heartbeat.⁷⁹

That is not to say that instruction should be banned from the church. It is to say that the life is elevated, and the doctrine is relegated to a lower place of importance. Doctrine should be reserved for providing an explanation of the phenomenon of life that is occurring as a new experience for the new plant.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 16.

⁷⁹ Leonard Sweet, *The Gospel According to Starbucks* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2007), 21.

Teamwork in Ministry

As already discussed, form must follow function. The body will take on the design that the Creator has determined. It is the job of leadership to discern the strengths and liabilities of the body as it develops. In other words, instead of mapping out how the garden will look, leadership reacts to the needs of each plant—creating a rich environment in which each person can thrive.

A personal account may give some clarity here. About ten years ago a middle aged man came to our church. We had had some limited outside social contact with him, made possible by a couple in our church. From all appearances Bob (not his real name) was a successful professional. He had a nice home and a well adjusted family. He had bounced from church to church for some time, but could not seem to feel at home anywhere. One of my policies has always been to allow people to come and do nothing but get acquainted and become family. This is a point where I have disagreed with some church growth strategies that encourage leadership to get people plugged in to some kind of ministry right away. My purpose for this strategy has been to allow enough time for relationships to develop naturally. As we get to know each other, we can better assess where the plant fits in the garden. It was probably a year before Bob began to open up to the incredible hurt in his life, though I already knew some of the story because of our outside contact. Bob and his wife had lost their daughter in an auto accident about a year before I met him. There were a myriad of guilt-generating circumstances that were intertwined in the story—none of which need to be exposed here. The short version of the story is that Bob needed time to heal before he could even face ministry of any kind—let alone being open to any kind of intimacy. He was dying inside. The plant seemed mature

enough for fruit, but under the surface, the roots were damaged, and they needed time to recover.

This seems to mirror the parable cited earlier:

A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, “For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?”

“Sir,” the man replied, “leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.”⁸⁰

The request of the gardener was that he be given a chance to enrich the soil, making sure that the plant had every opportunity to become healthy. If health was not the issue, then the plant could be eliminated.

Bob now leads our men’s ministries, is a leader in our Celebrate Recovery group and teaches an adult Sunday school class. Many times he has said: “You saved my life.” I find this statement more than a little unsettling. After being a Christian for more than 30 years, Bob has found fulfillment. In the past he was coerced into teaching Sunday school the way Sunday school should be taught. He is a gifted teacher, but his methods are fresh and relational. His methods did not fit in the matrix of the task-oriented churches Bob had been a part of in the past. We allowed Bob to become the teacher he was created to be, not the teacher the church “wanted to have.” Through the process, Bob has found stability in his spiritual life, because he not only understands how God has wired him, but that God did a good job in the circuitry. He is a thing of beauty—not an oddity.

⁸⁰ Luke 13:6-9.

My mother's garden is a good example here as well. When she bought the seeds to be planted, there was a description on the back of each seed pack that included the number of days each plant needed to produce fruit. She kept track of that date, and began to look for fruit to harvest as the day drew near.

In the church, we must guard against expecting fruit to occur according to the information on the seed pack. There are so many variables in the real world that it is impossible to predict when fruit will occur, but when it does, it is a time to celebrate. As the plant becomes healthy enough and mature enough to produce fruit, the fruit can be harvested and sorted for maximum effectiveness. This is where teams become relevant.

But as Joseph Myers notes:

In my observations of healthy, organic environments, I have noticed the following five elements:

1. People participate as individuals, not as teams or groups.
2. People participate in a decentralized, local way.
3. People participate with the whole of their lives.
4. People participate in a way that is congruous with the way they are asked.
5. The aggregate of participation becomes "known" as the team or group acts, thinks and makes decisions.⁸¹

These decisions must be made by and for the team. No member of the team is allowed to be inactive, or purely instructive in the team. Teams differ from committees in that each member has a specific mission within the team. No one is allowed to make decisions for others to follow. All decisions are made by the team to assist that team's productivity. These team members are much like team members of a football team. There are wide receivers, there are linemen and there are running backs. Each person is gifted to do a specific task that together make up a team. The team is also defined by the aggregate

⁸¹ Joseph R. Myers, *Organic Community* (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2007), 55.

participants. To have a good running team, there must be a good running back and a good blocking back. There also must be an offensive line that can run block. To be a good passing team, there must be a good passing quarterback. There must be good wide receivers. And there must be an offensive line that is good at pass blocking.

The team leader is a little like an offensive or defensive coordinator. The personnel must be evaluated, and a game plan created that leverages the strengths of the players that make up the team. The team leader has a vision for the team, but that vision must adapt to the members of the team and the environment in which the ministry is performed.

At the same time it is important to hear input from each of the team members. Meyers also observes: “When we limit people’s involvement to only what *we* see or confine them to using only the methods *we* deem relevant, we pigeonhole them and close ourselves off to a wealth of possibilities. We also imply that we don’t trust them.”⁸² As with any relationship, we will never get it right all the time, because politics is more art than science. Too tight a grip on the reigns can be just as damaging as too much slack. Responses will vary with each event, with each person, with each team, and with each part of the body of Christ.

When and How to Start Teams

When there is a perceived need and a called person steps forward to meet the need it is time to facilitate the birth of the team. One might say that a person is “called” when he or she begins to see a need within the body, and has a drive to meet that need. We

⁸² Ibid., 60.

believe that any insight encountered by a person of faith is given by the Spirit for the purpose of response by that individual. God does not give me a vision of what you should do. He gives me a vision of what I should do. I am to carry out the mission in concert with all of those on my team, who work in concert with the rest of the local body of Christ, who in turn work in concert with the entire body of Christ.

Not everyone who comes forward succeeds, however. We have even encountered aborted teams. One person has come forward with a ministry need, and a desire to begin that ministry, but no one is willing to become part of the team. The result is that the team never materializes. Wayne Cordeiro's insight is helpful at this point. He says:

The church is not an organization. It is more like an *organism* with living parts that must move and work together as a whole. An individual part cannot stand on its own. If I cut off my arm and plant it in dirt, that arm would not grow into a new body; it would die! So it is with the Body of Christ. Each of us has an individual assignment and role, but apart from the rest of the Body, we are useless. God created us that way! That is *His* design, not ours.⁸³

One of the checks and balances within the body is the body itself. If Christ is leading someone to meet a ministry need, it only follows that he will call others to participate in the effort as well. Fingers don't function without the cooperation of the hand and arm. If a ministry is to begin, and if the Spirit of Christ is the initiator, He will most certainly coordinate the activity. At the same time, not every person in the body is spiritually aware at every moment. Again, this whole exercise is more art than science. My hunch is that all of this is not so much that we accomplish the mission as it is that we are responding to the Master—trusting and following His direction in His strength. Again, the words of Jesus are so helpful here:

⁸³ Cordeiro, *Doing Church as a Team*. 176.

Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?” Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”⁸⁴

When the team does achieve critical mass, care must be taken to insure that there is proper room in the garden, and that the right area is set aside for healthy growth to occur. Just as in gardening, some plants need more sunlight than others, in the church each team needs specific environmental elements to flourish. This is why each team must also be given the necessary resources to thrive and grow. Technical manuals are transitory to say the least. They also are written for specific applications that may or may not fit each specific objective. As a result, many such materials fall outside the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that care must be given to the personnel, the personality of the team, and the mission to be accomplished as material is selected. This is all a part of fortifying the soil in the garden. Spiritual development must be understood as the most important of all growth, but technical development is vital as well.

Sue Mallory adds some breadth to the conversation of this development in her book, *The Equipping Church*. She says:

Please remember that no element of the equipping process is an end in itself, but each one builds on the previous components and prepares for those that follow. Although there are certain steps that follow others on the way to becoming an equipping church, one need not conclude that one step must be complete before the next can begin....The way you appreciate these treasures will affect how the church responds to the changes they will face in the process of transformation.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Matthew 7:21-23.

⁸⁵ Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 116.

It would be much easier if we could do one thing at a time, complete it perfectly, and move on to the next thing. The truth is that the process can look like organized chaos, which can become overwhelming if the leader takes on the responsibility for the success of each mission. But, as has been established earlier, the pastor is only responsible to coordinate resources and provide sustenance for the body. The rest is God's business, and since we are not God, it is rarely a good idea to try and do God's part of the work. This is the most difficult thing for some of us to remember—especially when there are so many who enjoy making God's work a pastor's responsibility.

It is a little like the story of a pastor who was asked: "What is the difference between God and a pastor?" The pastor said: "I don't know. What is the difference?" The response was: "God doesn't think He is the pastor." A messiah complex is a killer in this environment—not only for the body, but for the pastor as well. I can testify to that in my own life.

Who Should Lead the Teams

To propose ministry teams raises the obvious question: "Who should lead these teams?" Ideally, teams should be led by those who have received the vision. This is a general rule with certain exceptions. There is a popular saying in today's church, which goes like this: "God does not call the equipped, he equips the called."⁸⁶

However, while this saying may be popular, that does not mean it is always correct. Still, it rings true with the experience we have had in our local congregation and, in the main, it rings true to the Bible. With reference to the spiritual side, Paul understands that

⁸⁶ In my attempt to isolate the source, I came across six. As a result I have chosen to attribute the saying as a popular one.

God is the responsible party. “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.”⁸⁷

The intellectual side is far less concise, but it is seen in the very foundation of Jesus’ ministry to his disciples. He called twelve diverse people. Some had no formal training, while others had training that had no bearing on the call. Matthew was a tax collector, but the call on his life required him to think very differently than his training demanded. Scholars agree that none of the apostles, with the exception of Paul, who was added to their number after Jesus’ resurrection, had any formal religious training prior to their call. Paul says of himself: “Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.”⁸⁸ In any case, the original twelve were called before they were trained. The original twelve were trained by what we might refer to as “on the job training.” Jesus taught them as they went from place to place—learning as much from what they saw as from what they heard. What we refer to today as “discipling” seems less like the discipling of Jesus’ day and more like catechism. We teach people in a classroom setting where the emphasis is on content. The students never see their teacher in the throes of living the lesson. Jesus taught them on the way—they saw him living life 24/7, and the emphasis seemed to be as much on character and context as it was about the content.

While the point can be argued either way, it is enough to demonstrate that this principle does not violate the model recorded in the Bible. The methods used to equip

⁸⁷ 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.

⁸⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:7.

each person must adapt to each situation, but the principle that we need not be fully equipped to begin ministry is the important idea.

It is also not enough to be looking for something to do. Referring back to the passage cited earlier from Matthew chapter seven, doing something is not the issue. Knowing Christ and responding to His call is the issue. So, teams are to be led by the person receiving the vision.

What Principles Should Guide Teams

Wayne Cordeiro says: “Building Teams does not begin with a certain kind of technique; it begins with a certain kind of heart.”⁸⁹ For us, that heart is “Helping people find freedom in Christ.”⁹⁰ We understand that this slogan means that we are freed from fear, our past, religion, guilt and debt, but more importantly, we are freed to serve. As long as we are bound by the baggage of our own independence from God, we cannot muster the energy or courage required to show our love for Christ through ministry. As we experience the ever increasing freedom made available through the sacrifice of our risen Lord, we can respond with gratitude. This demonstration we refer to as ministry—responding to the call of Christ to be a part of His body. Sometimes it is a call to start a new team. Sometimes it is a call to add vitality to an existing team. Sometimes it is a call to replace someone who is morphing into another area of ministry. Sometimes it is a call to replace someone who had atrophied or died physically.

Wayne Cordeiro also reminds us, “The church is a living organism. It may have organizational needs, but organization alone would cause it to be unhealthy. Like a silk

⁸⁹ Wayne Cordeiro, *Doing Church as a Team* (Ventura: Regal Books, 2001), 177.

⁹⁰ Gladstone Church of the Nazarene, *Policy Manual* (Milwaukie, OR, 2007), i.

plant, the Church could look fine on the outside but lifeless on the inside.”⁹¹ The organization of the church should be complex enough to facilitate ministry, but no more. One of the organizational methods that Cordeiro suggests is for teams within similar areas of ministry to become small groups that can minister and disciple their members. As the team serves together, it creates an ideal atmosphere for discipling and spiritual support. This is an area we have not yet been able to implement, but is certainly is a goal.

Each team should also have a vision that contributes to the overarching vision of the entire body. No matter the area of ministry, each team should be able to answer the question: “How are we helping people find freedom in Christ?” That question applies to the ministry each team performs, but it also applies to the way in which each team performs that ministry. In other words, as the team functions, does the team create an atmosphere of freedom—freedom to grow and change—freedom to express ideas—freedom to change in order to meet changing needs? And as the team ministers, does it contribute to freedom in Christ for the body it ministers to?

Team development is less about planning and more about discerning. I suppose it is a little like my wardrobe. I have found that my size is ever-changing, and if I plan what I will wear ahead of time, I often end up in uncomfortable clothing—resulting in more awareness of restrictions than functionality. If I find what fits comfortably that day, and coordinate that, my day is less about awareness of clothing and more about awareness of life. If teams are planned too carefully, the awareness shifts from mission to minutia—from function to form.

⁹¹ Cordeiro, *Doing Church as a Team*, 179.

The frustrating part of this environment is that it is never finished. It is a little like shoveling sand. The sides keep falling in as each shovel load is excavated. It is also easy to get so enthralled in the shoveling that the time to step back and see the big picture—to enjoy the whole project is lost. For this reason, we realize that we have not developed a very effective method of Sabbath in this process.

The fulfilling part of this experience is to see people explore new territory and to find out that God really is immediately involved in their lives personally. We see the translation from the text to reality. The result is that we experience the exhilaration of living fully alive. Like Bob, we move from frustration—holding on for heaven, to finding fulfillment in the quirky leading of God—living life to the fullest.

CHAPTER 6

INVITATION TO JOIN THE TEAM

An invitation to join the team is really encouragement to act upon the realization that a need exists. Since our breath, as discussed earlier, is a result of the indwelling Spirit of God, these intuitive nudges are also understood to be the subtle direction of that same Spirit. As a result, we are made intuitively aware of the needs within the body of Christ. It is more a change of mind from: “This church lacks ...” to, “I want to express my gratitude for Christ, and I can contribute to a need in our church body by doing....”

More than anything else the invitation to join a team is a call to fall in love with Jesus, because intimacy with Jesus is the foundation for everything that happens. It is an invitation to “Find freedom in Christ.” It is a realization of value in each participant—value given by the Creator, restored by the Savior, and quickened by the Spirit. It is the recognition that ministry is the avenue we have been given to express our love for our Creator and Redeemer. It is the true nature of worship, as penned by the Apostle Paul:

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. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.⁹²

⁹² Romans 12:1-2.

The word Paul used for “worship” is “λατρεία,” which means, “service, servitude; religious service, worship.”⁹³ As a result, it is certainly not a stretch to understand that worship is in fact service or ministry.

This is not to say that people intuitively understand what to do with the longing to demonstrate devotion—the nudging of the resident Holy Spirit. This emotional stirring must be vented, but that may not happen in positive ways, which is the reason for the exercise detailed in this paper. This may also be the issue Paul felt it necessary to address in his instruction to the Romans with regard to acting on the gratitude they were sensing. As a result, it would not be wise to spur spiritual intimacy without offering some kind of assistance in directing the resulting energy into productive ministry.

What Does It Take?

Directing corporate and individual expressions of gratitude requires leadership that is willing to work around the roots of stagnate plants. It takes leadership that is willing to see “well-intentioned dragons”⁹⁴ as persons who need a positive outlet for the energy caused by their gratitude, and spurred by the Spirit of God. It takes leadership that is willing to cede control of the church to the Head of the Church and give room for the rest of the body to discern and act upon the direction given by our Risen Lord. It takes leadership that is willing to manage the garden as it develops. It takes leadership that is willing to view failure as a means of growth and development—seeing it as a positive tool rather than something to be avoided.

⁹³ Harold K. Moulton, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 248.

⁹⁴ A phrase I borrow from Marshal Shelley. Marshal Shelley, *Well-Intentioned Dragons* (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, Inc., 1985).

It takes a church that is willing to be a safe place where people can fail without reprisal. It takes a church that is willing to focus on personal direction, and that avoids critique of other ministers and ministries. It takes a church that is willing to follow Christ regardless of the cost. It takes a church that is willing to see its pastor as a shepherd, leaving management of the body to those called for that purpose.

But Leonard Sweet reminds us that the gospel is not intended to be easily manageable:

Maybe we should warn spiritual seekers in advance that Jesus is not for the faint of heart, instead of “cooling down” the gospel so we can all sip religion comfortably on cushioned, suburban pews. The gospel was not meant to be comfortable or safe. Jesus did not invite lukewarm faith, the brand practiced by the Church of Laodicea. Instead, God promises to spit the lukewarm out of God’s mouth....

Spiritual passion is grande, not lukewarm. The life of faith is a life spent following Jesus, and Jesus is not a two-dimensional, make-believe deity who does our bidding. He leads us into all-consuming experiences of life, and it is crucial that we recognize the irresistible appeal of authentic experience.⁹⁵

So it takes a church that is focused on the mission as handed down by its founder, Jesus Christ. As Clarence Bence points out: “The church was the divinely appointed means of establishing the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. As a God-ordained institution it merited respect and obedience; but only insofar as it remained the means and not an end in itself.”⁹⁶ Any time the church body becomes a club designed to minister to its own exclusively, it ceases to be the church. Its focus must be kept on the transformation of whoever is willing. There are also no limitations of parish involved in

⁹⁵ Leonard Sweet, *The Gospel According to Starbucks* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2007), 33.

⁹⁶ Melvin E. Dieter and Daniel N. Berg, eds., *Wesleyan Theological Perspectives: Vol. 4, The Church* (Anderson, Indiana: Warner Press, Inc. 1984), 304.

this mission. As Wesley said: “I look upon all the world as my parish....”⁹⁷ The mission must not be confined within the walls of a building or the polity of any denomination. It is the transforming grace of our risen Savior for all who respond to his Good News. “Wesley’s understanding of the church was that it is an *act*, a function, a mission in the world rather than a form and institution.”⁹⁸

That is not to say that the church has value only when it is evangelizing the world.

As Bence also points out:

Methodist societies, class meetings, bands, and various agencies for social reform were created, not as substitutes to the established structures of Anglicanism, but as supplemental means of enabling the church to fulfill its mission to bring full salvation to the world.⁹⁹

This is clearly an indication that salvation for Wesley was more far reaching than the initial decision to follow Jesus Christ. So for any Wesleyan thinker, it is the cultivation and direction of individuals who have started on the journey as well—teaching them how to become ministers of the gospel as God has called and equipped them to be. Just as with Wesley: “No program or institution could be justified unless it conformed to scriptural teaching.”¹⁰⁰ That is why Paul reminds us that God calls more than evangelists and preachers. “And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking

⁹⁷ Nehemiah Curnock, ed., *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.* (London: Epworth Press, 1938), p. 217.

⁹⁸ Albert Outler, “Do Methodists Have a Doctrine of the Church?” in *The Doctrine of the Church*, Dow Krikpatrick, ed. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 19.

⁹⁹ Deiter, *Wesleyan Theological Perspectives: Vol. 4, The Church*, 307.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 308.

in different kinds of tongues.”¹⁰¹ Yes, even administrators are necessary for the church to be the church.

It is also important to remember that each of us is a work in progress. Working with people must be more than a vocation; it must be a passion. A passage from “We Really Do Need Each Other” by Reuben Welch resonates with me at this point. It says:

But I discovered that as
I began to love people
and to care for people
and became involved with people,
I had more joy,
more life,
more tears,
more laughter,
more meaning,
and far greater fun than I ever had before.¹⁰²

If working in Christ’s garden is a chore, perhaps I have not yet been transformed. That is the conclusion I draw from this quirky work by Welch. “What a handle—I love you. I release you. I will not judge you. We really do need each other.”¹⁰³

How Should My Garden Look?

The best real world example of a garden that fits this model would be an English garden. An English garden can be mistaken for a weed patch, if one does not have a working knowledge of the plants featured. On my desk I have a plaque that says: “Life is difficult for the organizationally impaired.” I do not remember who gave it to me, but it is a window to my soul. I know where everything is—okay I know where most things are,

¹⁰¹ 1 Corinthians 12:28.

¹⁰² Reuben Welch, *We Really Do Need Each Other* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), 92.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 116.

but they are like an English garden. They are all there, but rows are nowhere to be found. This, however, is not the person I long to be. This is not the person I am when I am not suffering from my habit of biting off too much to chew. I like cleanliness and order. I guess I do not like it enough to elevate it to a higher place on my “to do” list.

The same principle applies in this model of the church body. I long for order and dignity, but the people are too important for me to work at making that desire a reality. When I came to Gladnaz nearly fourteen years ago, the first team we developed was our prayer team. It was in the garden when I arrived. It was a very spiritual team, so that one is a source of pride and decorum. However, the next team was the men’s fishing retreat team. That also existed before I arrived. Then came the sports team—same story—in the garden before I got there. Not very spiritual though. The women’s ministry team followed. I had no idea that the “unspiritual” teams were what we needed most to develop the community that had been starving to the point of extinction. The community needed to be revived in order for anything “spiritual” to find life. After we had acknowledged ministries that were simmering, but had not yet been endorsed—ministries that those in the body felt drawn to work in—we attempted to organize them into a respectable form. Appendix C shows our first attempt at this organization. It was very orderly and organized.

Today, the body is still organized in much the same way, but as for orderly—well, not so much. There are four categories, 1) Worship, 2) Community, 3) Education, and 4) Support. These categories reflect the priorities we consider to be important. Whether you look on our website or at our weekly Sunday bulletin, the same four categories are included. But we no longer have a list of each person on every team. The administrative

load became too heavy as we grew, and the team leaders were more concerned with productivity than reporting. As a result, we decided that the plants were more important than the signs that identified each. Each team is represented on the church board by a board member who is interested in that particular ministry—some of the board members are team leaders as well. No board member is allowed to represent more than two teams to prevent overload. In the beginning, we required monthly reports from team leaders, to be presented to the board by their liaison. This procedure again proved too cumbersome to be effective. As a result, this requirement was dropped as well.

We still keep track of team leaders, and their vision for the future, but we no longer try to keep track of the ever-changing pieces that make up each team. We had to release control to the team leaders in order to allow the teams to function fully.

This project will always look like a partially planted English garden, and the ideal scenario of this garden will probably never see fulfillment in this world. That being said, this team oriented organization can be a realistic goal for which to strive. The deciding factor for management in our church body is this: “Does this procedure help or hinder productivity?” If it helps, it is continually refined to be as beneficial as possible. If it hinders, it is eliminated. If it has no discernable value for ministry productivity, it is considered to be a hindrance, and since it uses resources that could be used effectively in other places, it is either eliminated or changed.

What sometimes looks like organized chaos is the structure of our garden. Form must follow function, and change is the order of the day—not change for change’s sake, but change that facilitates the ever-changing needs of the plants in the garden.

CONCLUSION

What we have discovered more than anything else is that managing this kind of team concept is challenging because the methods of evaluation that permeate our society tend to squelch true creativity. God does not seem to honor the American business management model any more than the American business model seems to honor God. He does not appear to call the truly “beautiful” people of our society. He seems to take great satisfaction in calling the ones who have made shipwreck of their lives—transforming them from the self absorbed failures into people of peace and joy.

It has been interesting to hear new people evaluate our congregants. They see them as I first saw Bob, a well put together professional, with a well-adjusted family. After some time they come to the realization that we are all just a bunch of ragamuffins¹ being redeemed and included in something much greater than ourselves.

Church growth has not been our primary goal, but church growth is happening. Reaching the lost has not been our primary goal, but redemption continues to occur. Creating new ministries has not been our primary goal, but new teams keep popping up.

We have discovered that when we follow the biblically based principles included in this study, transformation truly does occur. People like Bob make statements like, “I have been a Christian for years, but I never dreamed it could be like this. I never sought excitement in my life, but now I feel like I am living on the edge of something greater than myself. I want to do for others what Jesus has done for me.” Another example is Stephan. He said, “When I came here I thought your system was odd, and I didn’t like it

¹ Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 2005).

much.” He came from a traditional church where works were expected, but they were a duty, and there certainly was no joy. Stephan is a man’s man, and a career soldier. He is now ministering from the heart, and the difference is obvious. When conflict arises, instead of getting angry and dominant, he responds with sorrow for the source of the conflict, asking, “What can we do to help the offender discover what we have found?”

This new way of thinking has impacted my life as well. I have discovered that I am working in a system that inhibits my gifting for pastoral ministry. Discovering the information is important, but if it does not lead to action it becomes an “Algernon” experience. In the story of “Flowers for Algernon”, Algernon was given the gift of intelligence, but it was short lived. As his intelligence faded, all that remained was sadness brought on by the memory of what he had lost. In the same way, I have discovered information that will either bring frustration or change. As a result, I am currently investigating options that will meld more closely with who I am and the garden I am in—finding a politic in a different body that will allow others to manage the organization, while I focus on pastoring. There are other lessons I have learned that will go with me wherever I am. I have discovered that when I have focused on the numbers, I have gotten frustrated and felt unfulfilled, but when I began to focus on the growth in people:

I had more joy,
more life,
more tears,
more laughter,
more meaning,
and far greater fun than I ever had before.²

² Reuben Welch, *We Really Do Need Each Other* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), 92.

When I am evaluating with the use of statistical information, I am tempted to yell down at the stragglers: “Come on up. It’s great up here.”³ And I can see the “Janes” lose confidence and hope with each shout. But when I am walking with Jane hand in hand, I realize how beautiful the day is, and how much fun it is to be on the journey—together.

³ Ibid., 124.

APPENDIX A

The Covenant of Christian Character

(This appendix is included as supporting documentation for the discussion beginning on page 10.)

V. The [General Rules] Covenant of Christian Character

27. To be identified with the visible Church is the blessed privilege and sacred duty of all who are saved from their sins and are seeking completeness in Christ Jesus. It is required of all who desire to unite with the Church of the Nazarene, and thus to walk in fellowship with us, that they shall show evidence of salvation from their sins by a godly walk and vital piety; and that they shall be, or earnestly desire to be, cleansed from all indwelling sin. They shall evidence their commitment to God—

27.1. FIRST. By doing that which is enjoined in the Word of God, which is our rule of both faith and practice, including:

(1) Loving God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and one's neighbor as oneself (Exodus 20:3-6; Leviticus 19:17-18; Deuteronomy 5:7-10; 6:4-5; Mark 12:28-31; Romans 13:8-10).

(2) Pressing upon the attention of the unsaved the claims of the gospel, inviting them to the house of the Lord, and trying to compass their salvation (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:14-16; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

(3) Being courteous to all men (Ephesians 4:32; Titus 3:2; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 John 3:18).

(4) Being helpful to those who are also of the faith, in love forbearing one another (Romans 12:13; Galatians 6:2, 10; Colossians 3:12-14).

(5) Seeking to do good to the bodies and souls of men; feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and ministering to the needy, as opportunity and ability are given (Matthew 25:35-36; 2 Corinthians 9:8-10; Galatians 2:10; James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17-18).

(6) Contributing to the support of the ministry and the church and its work in tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38; 1 Corinthians 9:14; 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-10; Philippians 4:15-19).

(7) Attending faithfully all the ordinances of God, and the means of grace, including the public worship of God (Hebrews 10:25), the ministry of the Word (Acts 2:42), the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-30); searching the Scriptures and meditating thereon (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-16); family and private devotions (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Matthew 6:6).

27.2. SECOND. By avoiding evil of every kind, including:

(1) Taking the name of God in vain (Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12; James 5:12).

(2) Profaning of the Lord's Day by participation in unnecessary secular activities, thereby indulging in practices that deny its sanctity (Exodus 20:8-11; Isaiah 58:13-14; Mark 2:27-28; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10).

(3) Sexual immorality, such as premarital or extramarital relations, perversion in any form, or looseness and impropriety of conduct (Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7).

(4) Habits or practices known to be destructive of physical and mental well-being. Christians are to regard themselves as temples of the Holy Spirit (Proverbs 20:1; 23:1-3; 1 Corinthians 6:17-20; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:18).

(5) Quarreling, returning evil for evil, gossiping, slandering, spreading surmises injurious to the good names of others (2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:15; Ephesians 4:30-32; James 3:5-18; 1 Peter 3:9-10).

(6) Dishonesty, taking advantage in buying and selling, bearing false witness, and like works of darkness (Leviticus 19:10-11; Romans 12:17; 1 Corinthians 6:7-10).

(7) The indulging of pride in dress or behavior. Our people are to dress with the Christian simplicity and modesty that become holiness (Proverbs 29:23; 1 Timothy 2:8-10; James 4:6; 1 Peter 3:3-4; 1 John 2:15-17).

(8) Music, literature, and entertainments that dishonor God (1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; James 4:4).

27.3. THIRD. By abiding in hearty fellowship with the church, not inveighing against but wholly committed to its doctrines and usages and actively involved in its continuing witness and outreach (Ephesians 2:18-22; 4:1-3, 11-16; Philippians 2:1-8; 1 Peter 2:9-10). –*Manual*. (2005-2009), (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2005), 23-26.

APPENDIX B

The Code of Christian Conduct

(This appendix is included as supporting documentation for the discussion beginning on page 10.)

A. The Christian Life

33. The church joyfully proclaims the good news that we may be delivered from all sin to a new life in Christ. By the grace of God we Christians are “to put off the old self”—the old patterns of conduct as well as the old carnal mind—and are to “put on the new self”—a new and holy way of life as well as the mind of Christ. (Ephesians 4:17-24)

33.1. The Church of the Nazarene purposes to relate timeless biblical principles to contemporary society in such a way that the doctrines and covenants of the church may be known and understood in many lands and within a variety of cultures. We hold that the Ten Commandments, as reaffirmed in the New Testament, constitute the basic Christian ethic and ought to be obeyed in all particulars.

33.2. It is further recognized that there is validity in the concept of the collective Christian conscience as illuminated and guided by the Holy Spirit. The Church of the Nazarene, as an international expression of the Body of Christ, acknowledges its responsibility to seek ways to particularize the Christian life so as to lead to a holiness ethic. The historic ethical standards of the church are expressed in part in the following items. They should be followed carefully and conscientiously as guides and helps to holy living. Those who violate the conscience of the church do so at their own peril and to the hurt of the witness of the church. Culturally conditioned adaptations shall be referred to and approved by the Board of General Superintendents.

33.3. In listing practices to be avoided we recognize that no catalog, however inclusive, can hope to encompass all forms of evil throughout the world. Therefore it is imperative that our people earnestly seek the aid of the Spirit in cultivating a sensitivity to evil that transcends the mere letter of the law; remembering the admonition: “Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

33.4. Our leaders and pastors are expected to give strong emphasis in our periodicals and from our pulpits to such fundamental biblical truths as will develop the faculty of discrimination between the evil and the good.

33.5. Education is of the utmost importance for the social and spiritual well-being of society. Public schools have a mandate to educate all. They are limited, however, as to their scope and, in fact, are prohibited by court rulings from teaching the basic tenets of Christianity. Nazarene educational organizations and institutions, such as Sunday Schools, schools (birth through secondary), child care centers, adult care centers, colleges, and seminaries, are expected to teach children, youth, and adults biblical principles and ethical standards in such a way that our doctrines may be known. This

practice may be instead of or in addition to public schools, which often teach secular humanism and fall short of teaching principles of holy living. The education from public sources should be complemented by holiness teaching in the home. Christians should also be encouraged to work in and with public institutions to witness to and influence these institutions for God's kingdom. (Matthew 5:13-14)

34. We hold specifically that the following practices should be avoided:

34.1. Entertainments that are subversive of the Christian ethic. Our people, both as Christian individuals and in Christian family units, should govern themselves by three principles. One is the Christian stewardship of leisure time. A second principle is the recognition of the Christian obligation to apply the highest moral standards of Christian living. Because we are living in a day of great moral confusion in which we face the potential encroachment of the evils of the day into the sacred precincts of our homes through various avenues such as current literature, radio, television, personal computers, and the Internet, it is essential that the most rigid safeguards be observed to keep our homes from becoming secularized and worldly. However, we hold that entertainment that endorses and encourages holy living and affirms scriptural values should be affirmed and encouraged. We especially encourage our young people to use their gifts in media and the arts to influence positively this pervasive part of culture. The third principle is the obligation to witness against whatever trivializes or blasphemes God, as well as such social evils as violence, sensuality, pornography, profanity, and the occult, as portrayed by and through the commercial entertainment industry in its many forms and to endeavor to bring about the demise of enterprises known to be the purveyors of this kind of entertainment. This would include the avoidance of all types of entertainment ventures and media productions that produce, promote, or feature the violent, the sensual, the pornographic, the profane, or the occultic, or which feature or glamorize the world's philosophy of secularism, sensualism, and materialism and undermine God's standard of holiness of heart and life.

This necessitates the teaching and preaching of these moral standards of Christian living, and that our people be taught to use prayerful discernment in continually choosing the "high road" of holy living. We therefore call upon our leaders and pastors to give strong emphasis in our periodicals and from our pulpits to such fundamental truths as will develop the principle of discrimination between the evil and good to be found in these media.

We suggest that the standard given to John Wesley by his mother, namely, "whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of your body over mind, that thing for you is sin," form the basis for this teaching of discrimination. (33.2-33.4, 903.12-3.14)

(Romans 14:7-13; 1 Corinthians 10:31-33; Ephesians 5:1-18; Philippians 4:8-9; 1 Peter 1:13-17; 2 Peter 1:3-11)

34.2. Lotteries and other forms of gambling, whether legal or illegal. The church holds that the final result of these practices is detrimental both to the individual and society.

(Matthew 6:24-34; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-11; Hebrews 13:5-6; 1 John 2:15-17)

34.3. Membership in oath-bound secret orders or societies. The quasi-religious nature of such organizations dilutes the Christian's commitment, and their secrecy contravenes the Christian's open witness.

(1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 2 Corinthians 6:14—7:1; Ephesians 5:11-16; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17)

34.4. All forms of dancing that detract from spiritual growth and break down proper moral inhibitions and reserve.

(Matthew 22:36-39; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 10:31-33; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 3:1-17)

34.5. The use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, or trafficking therein; giving influence to, or voting for, the licensing of places for the sale of the same; using illicit drugs or trafficking therein; using of tobacco in any of its forms, or trafficking therein.

In light of the Holy Scriptures and human experience concerning the ruinous consequences of the use of alcohol as a beverage, and in light of the findings of medical science regarding the detrimental effect of both alcohol and tobacco to the body and mind, as a community of faith committed to the pursuit of a holy life, our position and practice is abstinence rather than moderation. Holy Scripture teaches that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. With loving regard for ourselves and others, we call our people to total abstinence from all intoxicants.

Furthermore, our Christian social responsibility calls us to use any legitimate and legal means to minimize the availability of both beverage alcohol and tobacco to others. The widespread incidence of alcohol abuse in our world demands that we embody a position that stands as a witness to others. (903.12-3.14)

(Proverbs 20:1; 23:29—24:2; Hosea 4:10-11; Habakkuk 2:5; Romans 13:8; 14:15-21; 15:1-2; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:9-12, 19-20; 10:31-33; Galatians 5:13-14, 21; Ephesians 5:18)

(Only unfermented wine should be used in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.) (413.11, 427.7, 428.2, 429.1, 802)

34.6. The unprescribed use of hallucinogenics, stimulants, and depressants, and the misuse and abuse of regularly prescribed medicines. Only on competent medical advice and under medical supervision should such drugs be used.

(Matthew 22:37-39; 27:34; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 9:24-27)

B. Marriage and Divorce and/or Dissolution of Marriage

35. The Christian family, knit together in a common bond through Jesus Christ, is a circle of love, fellowship, and worship to be earnestly cultivated in a society in which family ties are easily dissolved. We urge upon the ministry and congregations of our church such teachings and practices as will strengthen and develop family ties. In particular, we urge upon the ministry the importance of teaching and preaching clearly the biblical plan of the permanence of marriage.

The institution of marriage was ordained by God in the time of man's innocence, and is, according to apostolic authority, "honourable in all;" it is the mutual union of one man and one woman for fellowship, helpfulness, and the propagation of the race. Our people

should cherish this sacred estate as becomes Christians, and should enter it only after earnest prayer for divine direction, and when assured that the contemplated union is in accordance with scriptural requirements.

They should seek earnestly the blessings that God has ordained in connection with the wedded state, namely, holy companionship, parenthood, and mutual love—the elements of home building. The marriage covenant is morally binding so long as both shall live, and breaking of it is a breach of the divine plan of the permanence of marriage.

(Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:21-24; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; Ephesians 5:21—6:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4)

35.1. In biblical teaching, marriage is the commitment of male and female to each other for life, reflecting Christ's sacrificial love for the Church. As such, marriage is intended to be permanent, and divorce an infraction of the clear teaching of Christ. Such infractions, however, are not beyond the forgiving grace of God when this is sought with repentance, faith and humility. It is recognized that some have divorce thrust upon them against their will or are compelled to resort to it for legal or physical protection.

(Genesis 2:21-24; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 7:36-50, 16:18; John 7:53—8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 7:10-16; Ephesians 5:25-33)

35.2. Ministers of the Church of the Nazarene are instructed to give due care to matters relating to solemnizing marriages. They shall seek, in every manner possible, to convey to their congregations the sacredness of Christian marriage. They shall provide premarital counseling in every instance possible before performing a marriage ceremony including proper spiritual guidance for those who have experienced divorce. They shall only solemnize marriages of persons having the biblical basis for marriage. (107-7.1)

35.3. Members of the Church of the Nazarene are to seek prayerfully a redemptive course of action when involved in marital unhappiness, in full harmony with their vows and the clear teachings of the Scripture, their aim being to save the home and safeguard the good name of both Christ and His Church. Couples having serious marital problems are urged to seek counsel and guidance of their pastor and/or any other appropriate spiritual leaders. Failure to comply with this procedure in good faith and with sincere endeavor to seek a Christian solution, and subsequent obtainment of divorce and remarriage, makes one or both parties subject to possible discipline as prescribed in 504-4.2 and 505-5.12.

35.4. Through ignorance, sin, and human frailties, many in our society fall short of the divine plan. We believe that Christ can redeem these persons even as He did the woman at Samaria's well, and that sin against God's design for marriage does not place one beyond the forgiving grace of the gospel. Where a marriage has been dissolved and remarriage has followed, the marriage partners are enjoined to seek the grace of God and His redemptive help in their marriage relation. Such persons may be received into the membership of the church at such time as they have given evidence of their regeneration and an awareness of their understanding of the sanctity of Christian marriage. (27, 107.1)

C. Sanctity of Human Life

36. The Church of the Nazarene believes in the sanctity of human life and strives to protect against abortion, embryonic stem cell research, euthanasia, and the withholding of reasonable medical care to handicapped or elderly.

Induced Abortion. The Church of the Nazarene affirms the sanctity of human life as established by God the Creator and believes that such sanctity extends to the child not yet born. Life is a gift from God. All human life, including life developing in the womb, is created by God in His image and is, therefore, to be nurtured, supported, and protected. From the moment of conception, a child is a human being with all of the developing characteristics of human life, and this life is dependent on the mother for its continued development. Therefore, we believe that human life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception. We oppose induced abortion by any means, when used for either personal convenience or population control. We oppose laws that allow abortion. Realizing that there are rare, but real medical conditions wherein the mother or the unborn child, or both, could not survive the pregnancy, termination of the pregnancy should only be made after sound medical and Christian counseling.

Responsible opposition to abortion requires our commitment to the initiation and support of programs designed to provide care for mothers and children. The crisis of an unwanted pregnancy calls for the community of believers (represented only by those for whom knowledge of the crisis is appropriate) to provide a context of love, prayer, and counsel. In such instances, support can take the form of counseling centers, homes for expectant mothers, and the creation or utilization of Christian adoption services.

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes that consideration of abortion as a means of ending an unwanted pregnancy often occurs because Christian standards of sexual responsibility have been ignored. Therefore the church calls for persons to practice the ethic of the New Testament as it bears upon human sexuality and to deal with the issue of abortion by placing it within the larger framework of biblical principles that provide guidance for moral decision making.

(Genesis 2:7, 9:6; Exodus 20:13; 21:12-16, 22-25; Leviticus 18:21; Job 31:15; Psalms 22:9; 139:3-16; Isaiah 44:2, 24; 49:5; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:15, 23-25, 36-45; Acts 17:25; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:16; 7:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6)

The Church of the Nazarene also recognizes that many have been affected by the tragedy of abortion. Each local congregation and individual believer is urged to offer the message of forgiveness by God for each person who has experienced abortion. Our local congregations are to be communities of redemption and hope to all who suffer physical, emotional, and spiritual pain as a result of the willful termination of a pregnancy.

(Romans 3:22-24; Galatians 6:1)

Genetic Engineering and Gene Therapy. The Church of the Nazarene supports the use of genetic engineering to achieve gene therapy. We recognize that gene therapy can lead to preventing and curing disease, and preventing and curing anatomical and mental disorders. We oppose any use of genetic engineering that promotes social injustice, disregards the dignity of persons, or that attempts to achieve racial, intellectual, or social superiority over others (Eugenics). We oppose initiation of DNA studies whose results might encourage or support human abortion as an alternative to term live birth. In all cases, humility, a respect for the inviolable dignity of human life, human equality before

God, and a commitment to mercy and justice should govern genetic engineering and gene therapy.

(Micah 6:8)

Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research and Other Medical/Scientific Endeavors that Destroy Human Life after Conception. The Church of the Nazarene strongly encourages the scientific community to aggressively pursue advances in stem cell technology obtained from sources such as adult human tissues, placenta, umbilical cord blood, animal sources, and other nonhuman embryonic sources. This has the righteous end of attempting to bring healing to many, without violating the sanctity of human life. Our stand on human embryonic stem cell research flows from our affirmation that the human embryo is a person made in the image of God. Therefore, we oppose the use of stem cells produced from human embryos for research, therapeutic interventions, or any other purpose.

As future scientific advances make new technologies available, we strongly support this research when it does not violate the sanctity of human life or other moral, biblical laws. However, we oppose the destruction of human embryos for any purpose and any type of research that takes the life of a human after conception. Consistent with this view, we oppose the use, for any purpose, of tissue derived from aborted human fetuses.

Human Cloning. We oppose the cloning of an individual human being. Humankind is valued by God, who created us in His image, and the cloning of an individual human being treats that being as an object, thus denying the personal dignity and worth bestowed on us by our Creator.

(Genesis 1:27)

Euthanasia (Including Physician Assisted Suicide). We believe that euthanasia (intentionally ending the life of a terminally ill person, or one who has a debilitating and incurable disease that is not immediately life-threatening, for the purpose of ending suffering) is incompatible with the Christian faith. This applies when euthanasia is requested or consented to by the terminally ill person (voluntary euthanasia) and when the terminally ill person is not mentally competent to give consent (involuntary euthanasia). We believe that the historic rejection of euthanasia by the Christian church is confirmed by Christian convictions that derive from the Bible and that are central to the Church's confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Euthanasia violates Christian confidence in God as the sovereign Lord of life by claiming sovereignty for oneself; it violates our role as stewards before God; it contributes to an erosion of the value the Bible places on human life and community; it attaches too much importance to the cessation of suffering; and it reflects a human arrogance before a graciously sovereign God. We urge our people to oppose all efforts to legalize euthanasia.

Allowing to Die. When human death is imminent, we believe that either withdrawing or not originating artificial life-support systems is permissible within the range of Christian faith and practice. This position applies to persons who are in a persistent vegetative state and to those for whom the application of extraordinary means for prolonging life provide no reasonable hope for a return to health. We believe that when death is imminent, nothing in the Christian faith requires that the process of dying be artificially postponed. As Christians we trust in God's faithfulness and have the hope of

eternal life. This makes it possible for Christians to accept death as an expression of faith in Christ who overcame death on our behalf and robbed it of its victory.

D. Human Sexuality

37. The Church of the Nazarene views human sexuality as one expression of the holiness and beauty that God the Creator intended for His creation. It is one of the ways by which the covenant between a husband and a wife is sealed and expressed. Christians are to understand that in marriage human sexuality can and ought to be sanctified by God. Human sexuality achieves fulfillment only as a sign of comprehensive love and loyalty. Christian husbands and wives should view sexuality as a part of their much larger commitment to one another and to Christ from whom the meaning of life is drawn.

The Christian home should serve as a setting for teaching children the sacred character of human sexuality and for showing them how its meaning is fulfilled in the context of love, fidelity, and patience.

Our ministers and Christian educators should state clearly the Christian understanding of human sexuality, urging Christians to celebrate its rightful excellence, and rigorously to guard against its betrayal and distortion.

Sexuality misses its purpose when treated as an end in itself or when cheapened by using another person to satisfy pornographic and perverted sexual interests. We view all forms of sexual intimacy that occur outside the covenant of heterosexual marriage as sinful distortions of the holiness and beauty God intended for it.

Homosexuality is one means by which human sexuality is perverted. We recognize the depth of the perversion that leads to homosexual acts but affirm the biblical position that such acts are sinful and subject to the wrath of God. We believe the grace of God sufficient to overcome the practice of homosexuality (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We deplore any action or statement that would seem to imply compatibility between Christian morality and the practice of homosexuality. We urge clear preaching and teaching concerning Bible standards of sexual morality.

(Genesis 1:27; 19:1-25; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:8-10)

E. Christian Stewardship

38. Meaning of Stewardship. The Scriptures teach that God is the Owner of all persons and all things. We, therefore, are His stewards of both life and possessions. God's ownership and our stewardship ought to be acknowledged, for we shall be held personally accountable to God for the exercise of our stewardship. God, as a God of system and order in all of His ways, has established a system of giving that acknowledges His ownership over all human resources and relationships. To this end all His children should faithfully tithe and present offerings for the support of the gospel. (140)

(Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:24-34; 25:31-46; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 12:13-24; 19:11-27; John 15:1-17; Romans 12:1-13; 1 Corinthians 9:7-14; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6-15; 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Hebrews 7:8; James 1:27; 1 John 3:16-18)

38.1. Storehouse Tithing. Storehouse tithing is a scriptural and practical performance of faithfully and regularly placing the tithe into that church to which the member belongs. Therefore, the financing of the church shall be based on the plan of storehouse tithing, and the local Church of the Nazarene shall be regarded by all of its people as the storehouse. All who are a part of the Church of the Nazarene are urged to contribute faithfully one-tenth of all their increase as a minimum financial obligation to the Lord and freewill offerings in addition as God has prospered them for the support of the whole church, local, district, educational, and general. The tithe, provided to the local Church of the Nazarene, shall be considered a priority over all other giving opportunities which God may lay upon the hearts of His faithful stewards, in support of the whole church.

38.2. Fund-raising and Distribution. In the light of the scriptural teaching concerning the giving of tithes and offerings for the support of the gospel, and for the erection of church buildings, no Nazarene church should engage in any method of fund-raising that would detract from these principles, hinder the gospel message, sully the name of the church, discriminate against the poor, or misdirect the people's energies from promoting the gospel.

In disbursing to meet the requirements of the local, district, educational, and general programs of the Church of the Nazarene, local churches are urged to adopt and practice a financial apportionment plan, and to pay general, educational, and district apportionments monthly. (130, 154, 155-55.2, 413.21)

38.3. Support of the Ministry. "In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:14). The church is obligated to support its ministers, who have been called of God, and who, under the direction of the church, have given themselves wholly to the work of the ministry. We urge therefore that the members of the church voluntarily commit themselves to the task of supporting the ministry by gathering money weekly for this holy business and that the pastor's salary be paid regularly every week. (115.4)

38.4. Life Income Gifts, Planned and Deferred Giving. It is essential in the exercise of Christian stewardship that careful thought be given as to what shall be done with one's income and possessions over which the Lord makes the Christian a steward during this life. The Church of the Nazarene, recognizing the need for faithful stewardship in this life and the God-given vision to leave a legacy for the future, has established the Church of the Nazarene Foundation to enhance Christian stewardship through planned and deferred giving. Civil laws often do not provide for the distribution of an estate in such a way as to glorify God. Each Christian should give attention to the preparation of a last will and testament in a careful and legal manner, and the Church of the Nazarene through its various ministries of missions, evangelism, education, and benevolences—local, district, educational, and general—is recommended for consideration.

F. Church Officers

39. We direct our local churches to elect as church officers only persons who profess the experience of entire sanctification and whose lives bear public witness to the grace of God that calls us to a holy life; who are in harmony with the doctrines, polity, and practices of the Church of the Nazarene; and who support the local church faithfully in attendance and with tithes and offerings. (113.9-13.10, 127, 145, 146)

G. Rules of Order

40. Subject to the applicable law, the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws of government in the *Manual*, the meetings and proceedings of the members of the Church of the Nazarene, local, district, and general, and the committees of the corporation shall be regulated and controlled according to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (latest edition) for parliamentary procedure. (113, 203, 300.3)

H. Amending the Covenant of Christian Conduct

41. The provisions of the Covenant of Christian Conduct may be repealed or amended when concurred in by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting of a given General Assembly. –*Manual*. (2005-2009), (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2005), 49-60.

APPENDIX C

Organizational Chart

(This appendix is included as supporting documentation for the discussion beginning on page 111.)

CATEGORY	MINISTRY TEAM	TEAM LEADER	TEAM MEMBERS	FUNCTION	BOARD LIAISON
WORSHIP	9:00 A.M. WORSHIP	Tanya Thusty	Tanya Thusty	worship planner/singer	Russ Hill
			Mike Rehkop	drummer	
			Carolyn Watt	keyboardist	
			Delores Watt	organist	
			Sheri Schoenborn	singer	
			Cliff Watt Jr.	singer/MC	
			Terry Thusty	sound booth	
	11:00 A.M. WORSHIP	Trish Lynch	Trish Lynch	worship planner/singer/keyboardist	Russ Hill
			Mike Rehkop	drummer	
			Carolyn Watt	keyboardist/singer	
			Russ Hill	MC	
			Aimee Rehkop	singer	
			Cliff Watt Jr.	singer	
			Craig Beals	singer	
			Sheri Schoenborn	singer	
			Tanya Thusty	singer	
			Darrell Diebel	sound booth	
			Terry Thusty	sound booth	
	CHILDREN'S CHURCH	Tressa Girt	Tressa Girt	leader	Linda Sibold
			Apral Harrel	helper	
			Robin Gill	substitute leader	
			Sharon Hill	children's reading books	
	PRAYER	Bertha McCabe	Bertha McCabe	group 2/coordinator	Sharon Hill
			Cliff & Carolyn Watt	contact person/group 1	
			Yvonne Roland	contact person/group 4	
			Arlie & Lois Lloyd	group 1	
			Craig & Lindy	group 1	

Beals

Jim & Esther Sink	group 1
Ray & Barbara Hopperstad	group 1
Russ Buttolph	group 1
Trish Lynch	group 1
Bud & Virginia Taylor	group 1 prayer captain
Dan & Sheri Schoenborn	group 2
Darrell & Mary Diebel	group 2
Helen McLaughlin	group 2
Mike & Aimee Rehkop	group 2
Steve & Chelle Watt	group 2
Ted & Kady Brown	group 2
Tracy Hill	group 2
Cliff Sr & Delores Watt	group 2 prayer captain
Bob & Linda Schadewitz	group 3
Diana McLaughlin	group 3
Jerry & Nadine Cobb	group 3
Margie Doria	group 3
Merle Langnese	group 3
Russ & Betty Dean	group 3
Ruth Olin	group 3
Naomi Pollard	group 3 prayer captain
Anna Mae Luzar	group 4
Dallas & Mackie Wells	group 4
Jim, Nancy & Wayne Cooper	group 4
Linda Sibold	group 4
Milton & Marcia Gudmendsen	group 4
Terry & Tanya Tlusty	group 4
George & Doddie Scouten	group 4 prayer captain
Chuck & Mary Jo Moore	group 5
Darren & Becki Armstrong	group 5
Marie Sagner	group 5
Mary & Bud	group 5

CATEGORY COMMUNITY			Rikke		
			Pam Wyss	group 5	
			Robin Gill	group 5	
			Russ & Sharon Hill	group 5	
			Walt & Caroline Schoenborn	group 5 prayer captain	
	MINISTRY TEAM	TEAM LEADER	TEAM MEMBER	FUNCTION	BOARD LIAISON
	FELLOWSHIP	Yvonne Roland	Yvonne Roland	coordinator	Robin Gill
			Ann Borden	funeral luncheons	
	MEN'S MINISTRIES	Chuck Moore	Chuck Moore		Chuck Moore
			Cliff Watt Jr		
	SENIOR ADULT MINISTRIES	George Scouten	George Scouten	president	Linda Sibold
			Marcia Gudmundsen	secretary/treasurer	
			Yvonne Roland	vice president	
	SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES	Yvonne Roland	Yvonne Roland		Yvonne Roland
	SMALL GROUPS	Chuck Moore	Chuck Moore	small group leader	Chuck Moore
			Carolyn Watt	BABAGOI host	
			Sharon Hill	BABAGOI leader	
			George & Doddie Scouten	small group hosts	
			Delores Watt	small group leader	
			Walt Schoenborn	small group leader	
	SPORTS	Dan Schoenborn	Dan Schoenborn	softball/awards/fishing retreat	Mike Rehkop
			Darrell Diebel	softball	
			Mike Rehkop	softball	
			Terry Tlusty	softball	
	WELCOME & VISITATION	Marie Sagner	Marie Sagner	welcoming coordinator	Marie Sagner
			Mary Jo Moore	greeting cards	
			Jim Cooper	usher/greeter	
			Russ Buttolph	usher/greeter	
			Walt Schoenborn	usher/greeter	
			Wayne Cooper	usher/greeter/absentees	
			Betty Dean		
			Caroline		

Schoenborn
Doddie Scouten
George Scouten
Mary Rikke
Jessica Gill
Jim Sink
Linda Sibold
Mandy Hostetler

**WOMEN'S
MINISTRIES**

Sharon Hill

Sharon Hill

discussion & outreach
coordinator

Sharon Hill

Betty Dean

menu coordinator

Carolyn Watt

music & retreat coordinator

Diana

McLaughlin

baby & wedding showers

Helen

McLaughlin

financial

Linda Schadewitz

phone contacts & outreach

Linda Sibold

special projects

Robin Gill

publicity

Yvonne Roland

information coordinator

CATEGORY

MINISTRY TEAM

TEAM
LEADER

TEAM
MEMBER

FUNCTION

BOARD LIAISON

EDUCATION

**NAZARENE
MISSIONS**

INTERNATIONAL

Yvonne
Roland

Yvonne Roland

president/junior missions

Yvonne Roland

Bertha McCabe

Alabaster

Delores Watt

reading books

Diana

McLaughlin

secretary

Esther Sink

LINKS

vice president/Holiness

Sharon Hill

Today

**NAZARENE YOUTH
INTERNAT.**

Craig Beals
Darrell
Diebel

Craig Beals

advisor

Linda Sibold

Darrell Diebel

advisor

Aimee Rehkop

college/career

Amanda Hostetler

college/career

April Beykovsky

college/career

Brandon Watt

college/career

Brook Davis

college/career

Heather Morrison

college/career

Josh Davis

college/career

Mark Schoenborn

college/career

Mike Rehkop

college/career

Brent Watt

high school

Jessica Gill

high school

Ryan Schoenborn

high school

SUNDAY SCHOOL	Linda Sibold	Linda Sibold	SS supt/primary teacher	Linda Sibold
		Tanya Tlusty	board member	
		Diana McLaughlin	board member/primary teacher	
		Robin Gill	board member/primary teacher	
		Craig Beals	college/career teacher	
		Sheri Schoenborn	dialogue class facilitator	
		Darrell Diebel	high school teacher	
		Jessica Gill	nursery	
		Mary Diebel	primary teacher	
		Yvonne Roland	primary teacher	
		Cliff Watt Sr.	quarterly teacher	
		Carolyn Watt	substitute children's teacher	
		Chuck Moore	substitute dialogue facilitator	
		Bertha McCabe	substitute quarterly teacher	
		Sharon Hill	teacher/board member	

MINISTRY TEAM	TEAM LEADER	TEAM MEMBER	FUNCTION	BOARD LIAISON
ADMINISTRATIVE	Steve Watt	Steve Watt	coordinator	Steve Watt
		Cliff Watt Jr.	church pastor	
		Sharon Hill	church treasurer	
		Yvonne Roland	church board secretary	

BUDGET & FINANCE				Sharon Hill
		Sharon Hill	church treasurer	
		Bertha McCabe	counting team I	
		Russ Buttolph	counting team I	
		Russ Hill	counting team II	
		Yvonne Roland	counting team II/financial secretary	
		Becki Armstrong	counting team III	
		Robin Gill	counting team III	
		Sheri Schoenborn	counting team III	
		Doddie Scouten	substitute counter	
		Mary Rikke	substitute counter	
		Walt Schoenborn	substitute counter	

CAMPUS EXPANSION	George Scouten	George Scouten		George Scouten
		Chuck Moore		
		Mike Rehkop		
		Steve Watt		

DECORATING	Nancy Paul	Nancy Paul		Robin Gill
	Esther Sink	Esther Sink		
		Apral Harrel		

		Caroline Schoenborn		
		Corinne Erkenbeck		
		Diana McLaughlin		
MAINTENANCE	Russ Buttolph	Russ Buttolph	building	Steve Watt
		George Scouten	building	
		Helen McLaughlin	building	
		Ray Hopperstad	grounds	
		Barbara Hopperstad	grounds/trash	
		Mary Rikke	kitchen	
PUBLICITY	Carolyn Watt	Carolyn Watt	special projects	Robin Gill
		Robin Gill		
		Trish Lynch		
		Yvonne Roland	news letter	
TECH	Terry Tlusty	Terry Tlusty	9:00/11:00 a.m.	Russ Hill
		Darrel Diebel	11:00 a.m.	
TRANSPORTATION		Darrell Diebel	driver	Steve Watt
		Cliff Watt Jr.	driver	
		Russ Hill	driver	
		Steve Watt	driver	

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